

KÖNIG GALERIE

JULIAN ROSEFELDT
PENUMBRA

17 JUNE – 7 AUGUST 2022
ST. AGNES | NAVE

KÖNIG GALERIE presents PENUMBRA, an 85-minute film by Julian Rosefeldt in the NAVE of ST. AGNES.

What does the past of a distant future look like? A distant future to which humankind will be driven by the unleashed forces of neoliberal capitalism, climate change, and populism? Julian Rosefeldt's 85-minute film PENUMBRA (2019–2022) is not a work of science fiction. Instead, it points to our current situation, albeit within a fictitious framework that paves the way for a paradoxical enigma: who will we be when we are gone? The new work follows up on the 43-minute film IN THE LAND OF DROUGHT (2015–2017) – the condensed version of Rosefeldt's filmic interpretation of Joseph Hayden's oratorio *The Creation*. In a similar vein, PENUMBRA originates from a film work, planned as a visual backdrop for Robert Schumann's oratorio, *Scenes from Goethe's Faust*, at the opera houses in Antwerp, Ghent, and Montpellier.

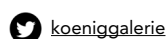
For his two key works of German literature, *Faust: A Tragedy, Part I and II* (1808–1832), Johann Wolfgang von Goethe created a visionary protagonist in the scientist and entrepreneur Dr. Faust. As a character, Dr. Faust anticipated the great issues of our time: capitalism, post-colonialism, the exploitation of nature, and environmental disasters. For the oratorio, Schumann selected a few fragments of Goethe's masterpiece to compose music for, and for Rosefeldt's filmic adaptation, the artist fragmented Schumann's romantic composition to use as a soundtrack.

Akin to IN THE LAND OF DROUGHT the new work PENUMBRA focuses on the notion of what happens »after us.« Looking back from a distant, imagined future upon the post-Anthropocene – the aftermath of significant human influence on our planet – the film addresses this problematic relationship between humans and their impact on Earth. Humankind appears to have left for good. A computer-generated visualization introduces us to their new territory, where they're found trying their luck on a faraway planet, the desert plains congested with urbanization. But once again, failure prospers and only some frantically built space settlements seem to grant shelter. On the planet's surface, abandoned megacities linger within the dystopian landscape whilst artificial circular plantations lurk at their peripheries, nourishing their last inhabitants.

The camera hovers meditatively over the desolate landscape and the ruined megapolises. Connoting surveillance, the satellite/drone/bird's-eye view removes human perspective, keeping us onlookers at a distance. After flying across what looks like one of the last remaining artificial forest islands, the computer-generated images fade back into real camera footage and we dive deep into the woods where we finally arrive at a hidden techno rave, crowded by drugged young ravers dancing in happy ecstasy from bright daylight into the night in a kind of last escapist ritual.

When writing *Faust I*, and especially *Faust II*, Goethe possessed a clairvoyant vision of our time. He foresaw the destructive power of greed, capitalism, and globalization, and simultaneously celebrated a utopian vision of a better world. Zooming in on this foresight, the searching camera abandons its reliance on computer-generated images to gradually reveal the remaining tenants of the barren landscape. Angles shift, perspectives enlarge, and extreme slow motion accentuates the movements of the raving youth, lost within their state of trance. A hint of optimism unfolds; their escape tentatively weighs against the threshold of their own extinction.

Text: Ellen Lapper



EXHIBITIONS

BJARNE MELGAARD
Relapse
ST. AGNES | CHAPEL
21.06 – 24.07.2022

DENNIS OSADEBE
Modern Magic
KÖNIG LONDON
16.06 – 16.07.2022

JOHANNES WOHNSEIFER
The Ella in Umbrella
KÖNIG SEOUL
01.06. – 03.07.2022

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Opening Hours
Tue – Sat 10 AM – 6 PM
Sun 12 PM – 6 PM

KÖNIG GALERIE

The Berlin-based artist Julian Rosefeldt (b. 1965 in Munich) studied Architecture in Munich and Barcelona (MA 1994). He is internationally renowned for his visually opulent and meticulously choreographed moving image artworks, mostly presented as complex multi-screen installations. Since 2011, Rosefeldt is Professor of Media Art at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich.

Recent solo shows were held at the Museum MACAN (2020), Jakarta; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington (2019); The Israel Museum, Jerusalem (2019); Musée d'Art Contemporain Montréal (2018); Auckland Art Gallery (2018); Nikolaj Kunsthal, Copenhagen (2017); HOW Art Museum, Shanghai (2017), National Gallery Prague (2017); Park Avenue Armory, New York (2016); Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin (2016); Sprengel Museum Hanover (2016); and ACMI – Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Melbourne (2015).

Recent group exhibitions include The Cindy Sherman Effect, Kunstforum Wien (2020); Hollywood and other Myths, Tel Aviv Museum of Art (2018); and the 1st Riga Biennial (2018).

Rosefeldt's works are included in renowned collections worldwide, among others: the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Goetz Collection, Munich; Nationalgalerie Berlin; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; The Israel Museum, Jerusalem; CIFO – Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation, Miami; and Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney.



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