

Atomic Tonic

Curated by Gelitin

VSPACE presents ATOMIC TONIC, a group exhibition curated by Austrian artist collective Gelitin, composed of Ali, Florian, Tobias and Wolfgang. The exhibition is part of an ongoing series of artist-lead curated projects.

ATOMIC TONIC is a five-artist exhibition, guided by Gelitin's personal intuitive responses to the work of fellow artists Kris Lemsalu (b.1985), Karl Holmqvist (b. 1964), Philipp Fleischmann (b. 1985) and YBDG – Young Boy Dancing Group (2014).

The exhibition incorporates video, drawing, watercolor and photography, exuding Gelitin's attention to energy and process in art making.

Discussing Kris Lemsalu's recent watercolor works, which go hand in hand with her multidisciplinary practice, Wolfgang is particularly curious about the order in which they are created - do the watercolors come before or after the sculptures? "I'm not sure if she does the drawings before or after making her sculptures, but who cares? Kris Lemsalu is a sorceress. She works her magic whether you like it or not. She is here to enchant us all." *Earth Wind and Fire* is a compact, brightly colored watercolor that exemplifies Lemsalu's visceral iconography, that merges nature and the human figure, to portray both the spiritual and the instinctive sides of every human being. Her work is often understood as evoking sexual liberation and naked nature.

Nakedness is a significant component of Young Boy Dancing Group's practice. Founded in 2014, this artist collective made their first performance in Paris, at the Silencio Club. Florian is particularly fond of their radical, free approach to performance: "The images YBDG produce on stage while performing, just make me happy, because I have never seen anything like their visual aesthetic ever before. I very much like to see something new. The first time I saw their photographs of stacked bodies and physical formations, they struck me immediately. They have humor, are sensitive, acrobatic, beautiful, fresh and new." The photographs selected for *ATOMIC TONIC* are powerful abstract compositions - naked bodies stacked together creating unique totem-like structures. Despite their fleshiness and exposure of naked body parts, they avoid classical representations

of the human body by omitting arms, faces, hands, to create new, impossible body shapes.

Karl Holmqvist (b. 1964) is best known for his works involving texts, poetry and readings. He manipulates text and language as sculptural and performative material rather than two-dimensional entities limited to the surface of the paper. The exhibition's two-word, slogan-like title, *ATOMIC TONIC* may be a reaction in and of itself to Holmqvist's treatment of language and its creative power. Not quite an anagram, not quite a rhyme, *ATOMIC TONIC*, is more like a punch: it reminds us at once of the devastating power of the ATOM, but also of the notion of the atom as unit, and individuality vs. collectivity.

Philipp Fleischmann's video work emancipates the image from the frame – what we see is not a recording of movements, rather, the fire-like masses are "merely a trace of the passing of the film through the cinematographic camera". Fleischmann developed a new type of camera that allows the film to be exposed all at once, thus abolishing the film frame. In his films, the artist has concentrated on representing, nearly exclusively, the architecture of iconic cultural spaces, thus confirming the intellectual affinity of his practice with the tradition of conceptual art, whose recurrent motifs include the criticism of the "white cube."

Ali, Florian, Tobias and Wolfgang met in 1978, when they started to work increasingly together, they began exhibiting collectively as Gelitin in 1993. They live and work in Vienna.

Kris Lemsalu (b.1985) is an Estonian artist based in Tallinn, Estonia and Vienna, Austria. In her works, be those drawings, sculptures, installations or performances, she merges animals and humans, in an attempt to portray both the spiritual and the instinctual sides of every human being. Her art is often described as visceral, evoking sexual liberation and naked nature.

Karl Holmqvist (b. 1964) is a Swedish artist who lives and works in Berlin, Germany. He is mostly known for his works involving texts, his poetry and various readings.

Philipp Fleischmann (b. 1985) lives and works in Vienna, Austria. He studied at School Friedl Kubelka for Independent Film, Vienna; Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts (Gerard Byrne), Copenhagen; Academy of Fine Arts Vienna (Dorit Margreiter).

Young Boy Dancing Group is an artist collective created in 2014 on the occasion of their first performance in Paris, at the Silencio Club. The group strives to interact with the public through, what founding members Manuel Scheiwiller, has described as 'crazy collective energy'. Since 2015, the group has been run by him, in collaboration with Maria Metsalu and Nicolas Roses. They do not release any communication in advance, and no performance is ever announced beforehand. When touring, the group works with 2-5 local performers to be more integrated in the community.