

Nikola Stoyanov (1994, Varna) is a visual artist and independent researcher based in Sofia, Bulgaria. He works in the intersection of research based and speculative practices in both the artistic and academic fields. He has authored numerous exhibitions and texts on topics ranging from geo-philosophy and techno-paranoia to most recently post-soviet conspiratorial thought.

In his practice he is heavily inspired by the brute idea of photography as an unfinished project. Visually his work borrows techniques of scientific and technological abstraction interweaving the humanities with the technology.

Stoyanov also authors and translates philosophy and theory in several niches of contemporary thought such as theory-fiction, hauntology and the work of the CCRU. He is classically educated in philosophy and history of technology in the United Kingdom.

Contacts

email: av0id.biz@gmail.com
tel: +359 (0) 885 05 09 19
website: newdegeneration.xyz
Instagram: [avoid.nd](https://www.instagram.com/avoid.nd)

Solo Exhibitions

2023

Postcards and Contraband
Nature Morte

2022

Latent Space
Re:Process
Grey Zone/Dispositive

2021

I-lxa
In:Process

Group Exhibitions

2023

Exemplary Home
Death Valley

2022

Destructive Sensuality

2021

Allegorical Impulse

Academic work

2023

“On the Border of Life” article in Simulacrum Magazine, NL

2023

“Paranoid Semiotics”, talk Sofia University Culture Center conference
“Theoretical fictions and para-literature” talk BAS literature dept. confrence

“Transit Routes” talk with national custom agency chief drug enforcement officer

“Zones of Ecological History” article in Journal for New Social Vision

2022

“The Ontological Status of
“Generative Art and its Meaning” article in Derzine magazine

2021

“Accelarationism Today” talk with KOI books publishing

2020

“Xenofeminist Manifesto” official Bulgarian translation

Education

Professional Teachers Degree
DIKPO
Varna 2021

BA (Hons.) Philosophy
and Sociology
University of Sussex
Brighton,
United Kingdom 2016

Computer Science
St. Clement of Ohridski
Varna 2013

Cambridge Certificate of
Proficiency in English (CPE)
British Council 2012

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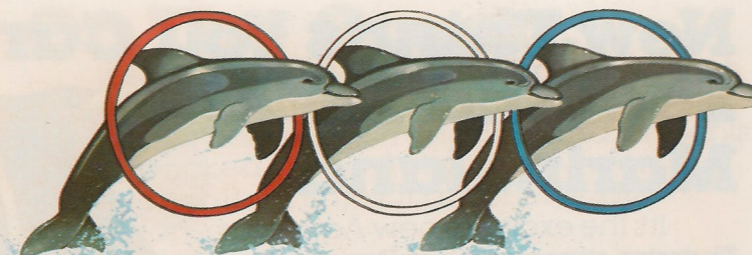
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Sea World

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THE dynasty
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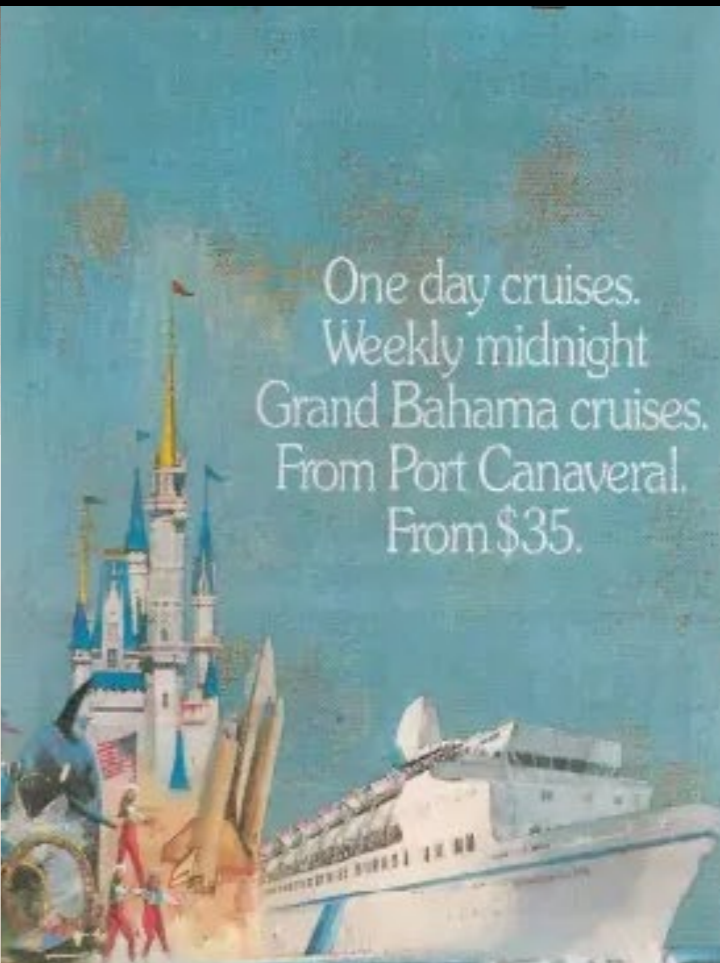
MARINELAND
OF FLORIDA

On the ocean between St. Augustine and Daytona Beach on A-1-A.



Клас 1	МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ТРАНСПОРТА	Серия В
КАРТА ВАЖИ ЗА ЕКСПРЕС		
ЗА БЕЗПЛАТНО ПЪТУВАНЕ № 004045		
ПО ЛИНИЯТА СОФИЯ - ПЛОВДИВ - СОФИЯ		
издадена на ЕДИН СЛУЖИТЕЛ ОТ У-НИЕ МИТНИЦИ		

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Postcards and Contraband

ReBonkers, Varna
07-21.09.2023

In collaboration with ↓
Aaron Roth

Curator ↓
Hristo Kaloyanov

Sound design ↓
Yan Lechev

Images clockwise
from upper left: ↓

Embargo Dystopia (2023)
conspiracy walls, projection mapping,
newspaper clippings, maps,
assassination photography
two 120x90cm cardboard

Two Channel
CRT video installation
20 minutes

Excerpt from
accompanying book

Spaceframe (2023) Aaron Roth
oil on canvas and metal frame
130x100cm

Archival Footage
Video Installation
Installation
Book

The present exhibition is an attempt at reading the transition period from communism to democracy in Bulgaria, through the figure of the border crossing. It is a child of archival fever basing itself on de-classified as well as found documents. To shed light into the underground of memory that is the hauntological process of what Bulgarians call transition. Tracing shady mob figures, hushed rumours and declassified documents, newspaper clippings and seminal assassination photographs it investigates the post-soviet conspiratorial line of thought as a instrument or technique of working though the trauma of unregulated lack of lustration after a transition from one political regime to another.

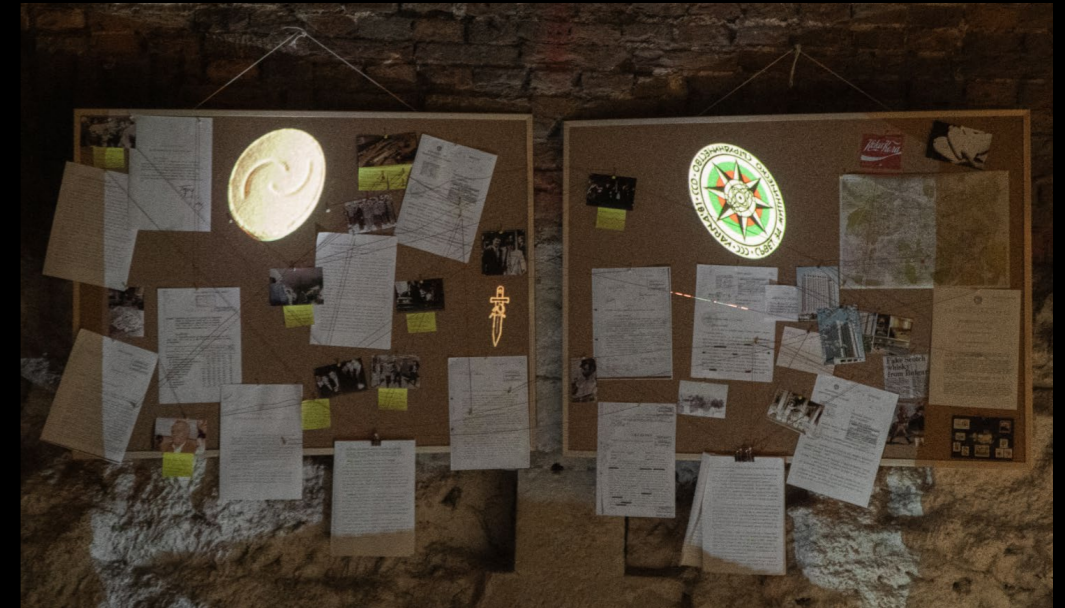
“Postcards and Contraband” has its inception in investigation of a professional yet eerily personal work archive of the Bulgarian Customs Agency, Directorate for Combating Drug Trafficking from 1975-1985. The service notes, photographs, negatives, summaries and reports found mark the routines of inspection

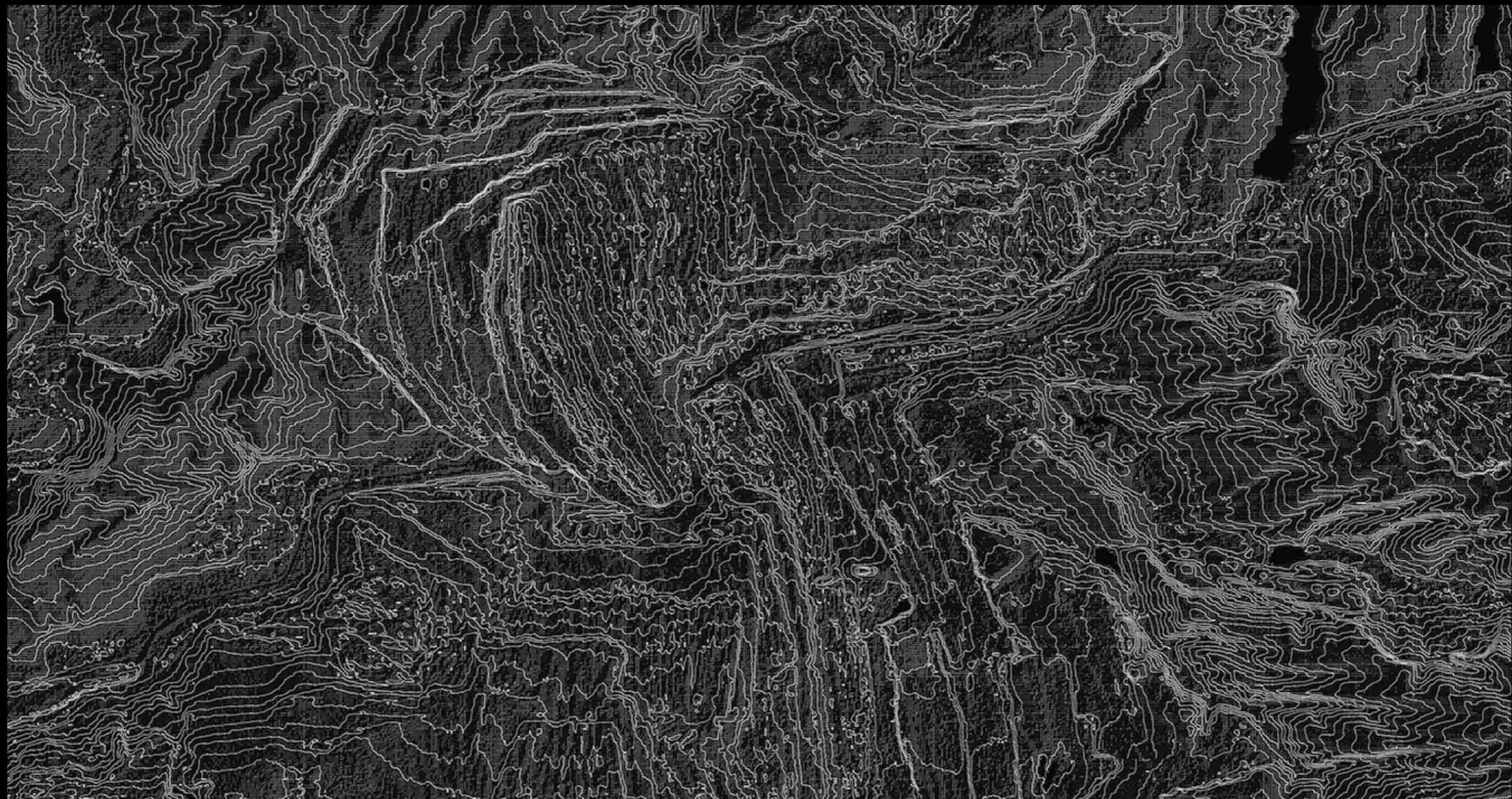
and regulation of transit that the Customs Agency work undertakes, but also the diplomatic image the Customs Agency had to maintain in the face of international community.

The leading suspicion here is that the found archives give only a partial insight into the organized “hidden transit” - a term behind which the communist government of the People’s Republic of Bulgaria concealed the smuggling trade carried out by the State Security through commercial enterprises and organizations. These traces are fragments of a wide-ranging system of customs regulations, trade routes, economic interests, international agreements, and geopolitical particularities.

More about the exhibition [here](#).

Coverage:
[Bulgarian Telegraph Agency](#), [Bulgarian National Radio](#), [Culture News](#), [Parallel43](#), [News Paper Utro](#)





Nature Morte

Goethe-Institut, Sofia
07-21.09.2023

Curator ↓
Hristo Kaloyanov

Sound design ↓
Anton Shishkov

Images clockwise
from upper left: ↓

Untitled (2023)
Photo print
27x23cm

Topographical 3D-print
led, plastic, wood
70x40cm

Excerpt from
accompanying book.

Ibid.

photography
photogrammetry
topological 3D print
multichannel video-Installation
book

Nature Morte is a multimedia project that plants the philosophical question firmly into the ground - on a part of the country's highly restricted critical infrastructure, the "Martisa East Mining Complex". In an attempt to find different approaches to reach the excavation and its visualization, open data from satellite and geological surveys and measurements were used, through which the digital topography of the mines has been built.

The visuals obtained from satellite images can be called operational, as a continuation of the "operational image" coined by the German director Harun Farocki, denoting "images that do not represent an object, but are part of an operation". And most briefly, the current operation can be described as a philosophy on the ground, tracing the operation of the mining-geological activity and the inevitably accompanying administration, proposing the subsequent uprooting and displacement of the anthropocentric view.

Although the cosmic time of geofor-
mation - the million-year superim-
position of layers that proceeds in
relative calm, where separate ele-
ments barely interact, there are also
short periods of ruptures record-
ed in the layers. The excavation of
rocks, clay, minerals, stones and
ash unfolds the earth's bowels, from
where traces of long-sunken worlds
are made visible. This is where our
operational activity on the critical
infrastructure of the Maritza-Iztok
mines begins.

More about the exhibition [here](#).

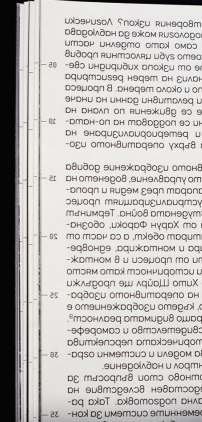
Critique:

["Towards a geosophy of the catastrophe"](#) Filip Stoilov

["Kintsugi. Dealing with trauma in the summer of 2023"](#) Boyana Djikova

Coverage:

[Bulgarian National Television, Bulgarian National Radio, Bloomberg TV, Bulgarian Telegraph Agency, Impressio, Boy Scout Magazine, Artnews Cafe, Darik Radion](#)





Latent Space

Doza Gallery, Sofia
09.09-21.09.2022

AI-generated images
fake acrylic paintings
theory-fiction dossier
video installations

curator ↓
Hristo Kaloyanov

sound design ↓
Yan Lechev
Anton Shishkov

Latent space is where the gaze of artificial intelligence alone draws the picturesque horizon, delving into the hidden rooms of secret research centers, intelligence organizations, and classified databases.

It covertly smuggles synthesized images in the guise of acrylic paintings. The accompanying dossier is at once a full-length investigation into the history and philosophy of techno-paranoia and a theory-fiction tale (hidden in footnotes) of time-traveling AI trying to bootstrap itself into existence.

The project plays into the fear of the perpetuation of AI art, at a very early stage of its adoption. It utilizes crude and, up to that point, unrefined forms of AI image synthesis algorithms.

More than a hallucination and less than reality. In the latent space, nothing is new, like for the absolute genius of the past, but only experienced as such in the schizophrenic

grip of the clinically imprisoned. Like traditional painting, every tick, every deviation in artificial intelligence creates a forged reality - unique and complete in itself. The emerging visual field is hyper-referential without offering an imitation of reality; it cannot be repeated in its creation and final result. The mechanics of this type of painting challenge the basic principle of the technique, where a function can be repeated under the same conditions.



Images clockwise
from upper left ↓

Untitled (2022)
acrylic on canvas print
90x62 cm, private collection

Untitled (2022)
acrylic on canvas print
90x62 cm, private collection

Untitled (2022)
acrylic on canvas print
90x62 cm,



Re:Process

Arhis Gallery, Varna
21.05-05.06.2022

photography
video game
fictional tourist map

curator ↓
Hristo Kaloyanov

sound design ↓
Yan Lechev

“RE:PROCESS” paints the city as a cyber-gothic overlay of everyday life combining the disparate fields of street photography and the gothic character of early video game design. From within the construction and deconstruction of urban spaces, traces emerge upon the urban surface, a peculiar language, through which different modalities of appearance are formed and unfolded. Easy to find but tough to comprehend, the signs, grilles, and hanging cables are our entrance to a forgotten archive of urban fabric.

What remains hidden here is the photographic eye inside of the camera obscura, looking at the image-reality, a seductive drift into an uncannily familiar alien world.

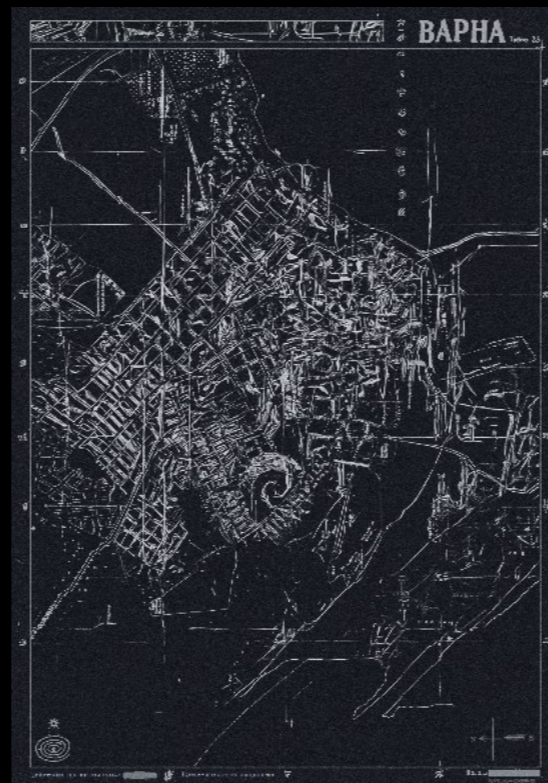
A speculative body devoid of space; a body which dreams for the exclusion of the world and imagines the other of a place, an object, an event.

Despite the structuring principle in photography, the eye evades the

fixed position. With certain parameters it gains an entry point into reality where possible cases for editing can be traced.

More about the exhibition [here](#).

Coverage:
[Bulgarian National Radio](#)



Images clockwise
from upper left: ↓

Black Volga (2022)
photo-print 120x120cm
private collection

Untitled (2021)
photo-print 90x36 cm

Night Map (2022)
fictional foldable
tourist map 40x29cm



002766

Grey Zone /Dispositive

The Matrix, Sofia
28.04.2022

video game
3D kit-bashed
photo-grammetry

collaboration with ↓

SABA PRODAKTION
Peter Chinovsky
Isabelle Nesheva
Sofia Dimova
Sara Postolle
Martijn De Geele
Orlin Dvoryanov
Agathe de Limoges &
Victor Deletraz
Elena Chergilanova

The city - transfigured into a gray zone emptied of people, of lights, immersed under water or discarded in the wild cosmos, folded beyond practicality, it represents a capsule emptied of its nature, emptied of its structures of power, emptied of its social bodies. A dispositive without practice, without knowledge and expertise, without our institutions and without time - a pure assemblage.

The project presents a virtual cityscape assembled out of distorted models of our familiar urban environment, rearranged into a non-euclidian vista. A photogrammetric landscape attained through the view of microsecond tics of satellites, scanning the earth's surface porpously and aimlessly, a virtual derive of Varna's unconscious, in the form of an interactive dream.

Image ↓

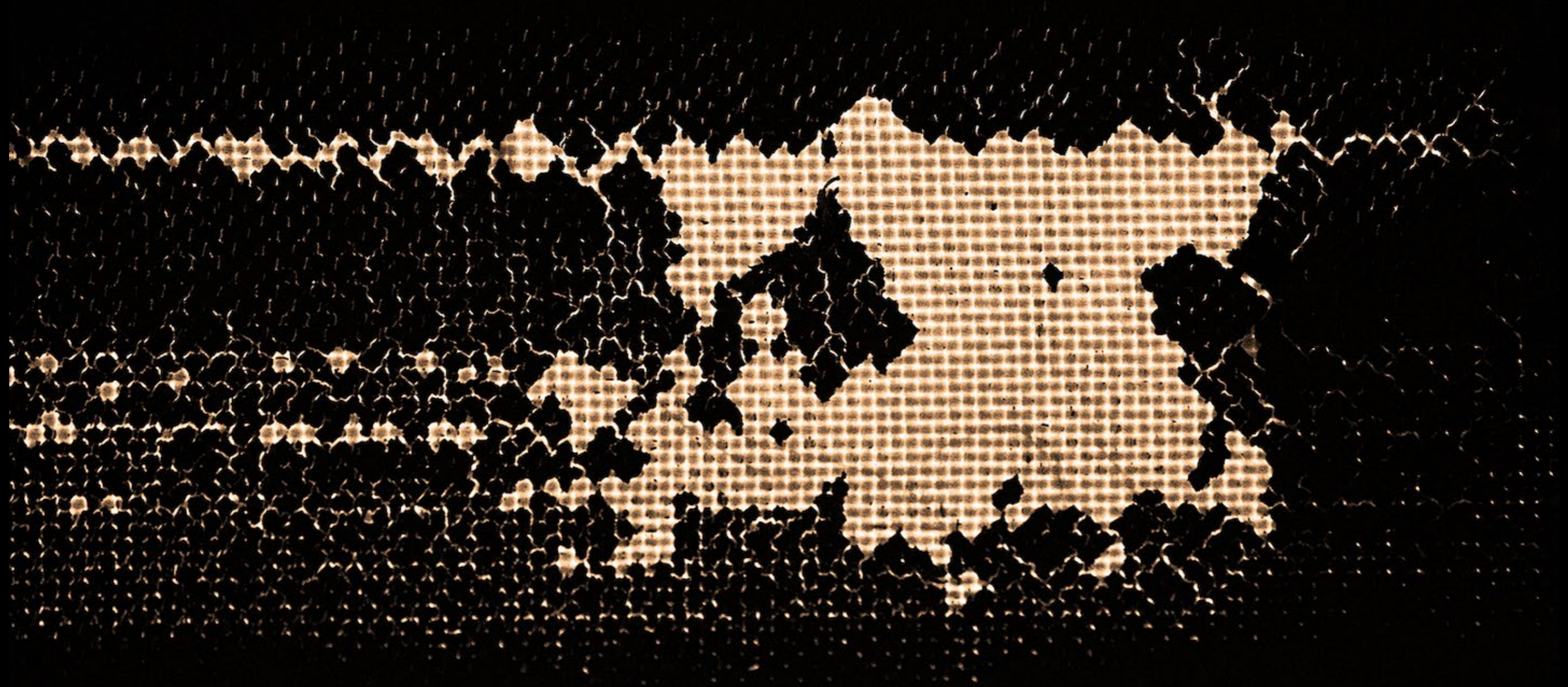
Sill from Kit-bashed 3D model of a neighbourhood in Varna, accessible as a fully interpretative video game level. Full video [here](#).

Grey Zone / Dispositive is a massive photogrammetry recreating the urban space of Varna. Based on satellite images of the city, it presents its double.



The video-game installation also relies on a cutting edge AI-denoiser, a technology whose artifacts contribute to distort the visual field into a dreamlike watercolour drawing. An initial version of Grey Zone / Dispositive, in the form of a video installation, was presented as part

of the exhibition Temporary Crisis, part of the Sofia Underground Festival (2022). Later, the developed video game was part of the exhibition „RE:Process“ in the city of Varna (continuation of the exhibition „In Process“, 2021). More about the video-game [here](#).



In:Process

photography
photo-book

KO-OP Gallery, Sofia
06-16.01.2021

The drive to capture the city as an affective totality was what led to the inception of this project. Thought, structured and implemented over the urban grid it draws a hyper-fiction. Its origins lie in the delirium of government documents, their leaks and their inaccessibility. Its target, the return to the archive.

In:Process aims to present photographs of objects from the everyday urban space. In the processes of construction and disintegration, marks are found on the urban surface, a kind of language through which various modalities of appearance are formed and developed. Easy to find, but difficult to understand, signs, bars, hanging cables will be our entrance to a forgotten archive of urban fabric. The quotidian presence of these objects is thus fragmentary in accord with their functional use.

The procedure at hand follows the opposite direction where posed out of its given context the object loses its practicality and in being shown

“nude” serves as a terminal for a parallel world of industrial teleology and material corporeality.

“In:Process” is a theoretical fiction based on the near reality of everyday life, a meditation on degradation and emergence but mainly a method of reversing infrastructural sublimation. It is the loading screen to a city that was but might not be.

“In Process” (“В процес”)
Stoyanov, N., Kaloyanov, H., 2020,
ISBN: 978-619-188-514-5.

More information about the exhibition click [here](#).

Coveredge:

[Bulgarian National Television](#), [Boy-Scout Magazine](#), [Dnevnik](#), [Bulgarian National Radio](#), [Mika Magazine](#), [KO-OP](#).

Images clockwise
from upper left: ↓

Untitled (2021),
photo-print, 50x50 cm
private collection

Untitled (2021)
photo-print, 50x50 cm

Untitled (2021)
photo-print, 50x50 cm

Untitled (2021)
photo-print, 50x50 cm

