

Video Art and Experimental Film Event | VAEFE II

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March 25, 2023

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VAEFE edition II | Walk-in cinema program



Design by Manon Jeuken

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Screening dates:
30.06. – 02.07.
2023

Walk-in cinema
Free entry
8 – 11 pm

With:

Tommy Becker (USA), Sumin Kim (KR), Armando López Castañeda (MX), Occitane Lacurie (FR), Lo Yuen Ming & Lin Chun Yao (HK & TW), Miguel Rozas Balboa (CL/BE), Georgina Pantazopoulou (GR/NL), Claire Maske (USA), Derya Durmaz (DE/TR), Mara Chavez (MX), Daria Pugachova (UA), Karen Akerman & Miguel Seabra Lopes (BR), Oleksandr Stupak (UA), Moayad Alhariry (SY/NL), George Hiraoka Cloke (UK), Vali Karimnia (IR), Cheryl Pagurek (CA), Sabine Gruffat (FR/USA), Tasha Arlova (BY/NL), Pierre Chaumont (CA), Rebecca Birch (UK), Aylin Kuryel (TR)

Press:

[See the program by each day.](#)

Walk-in Cinema

Film event on Solidarity

Solidarity means to stand up for a cause. To rise to one's feet can be personal and political, in support of a person, group of people, idea, or even more-than-human, in the belief that goes beyond one's perspective. Solidarity unites and ultimately takes the side of the one who is denounced by a ruling and oppressive order. It unites because it seeks a situation change and expresses support. It weaves the net. Solidarity is a hopeful ideal and act; fueled by love and care as much as by anger, exhaustion, and despair.

Solidarity is an action which opposes staying still. It can be as immense as an ocean braided with communication cables. Finally, however, it must enact as particular as a drop from the watering can. It requires a choice, a reconsideration of values, an awareness of privilege, and acting with empathy when 'the one' needs support. While in fact 'the one' is never the same for everybody. Therefore, solidarity continues to be difficult yet so easy, uniting yet excluding, an urgent yet neglected act for sustaining lives.

Although, at SEA Foundation, we prepared this event with the intention of providing a platform for multiple voices, we have to deal with the trouble of choosing whom we highlight. There is no possibility of being located in a certain geographic area, and growing up within a certain system of beliefs and power structures while staying objective and unbiased. With the online and local reach of the SEA Foundation which largely relies on Westernised means of spreading the word, we are not able to hear all expressions of solidarity which matter. Even within the SEA team, we will be individually moved by different narratives, thus, only through dialogue, and supporting each other's choices, will we be able to stand in solidarity.

About VAEFE

The second edition of Video Art and Experimental Film Event (VAEFE) is a three-day film event featuring video art and experimental films with a duration of up to 20 minutes. The film event presents a three-hour selection of short films from artists and filmmakers who reinvent

and explore new approaches to Solidarity and support acts of solidarity through their work. Each day from 8 – 11 pm we present 7 – 8 films in a block of one hour which is repeated in a loop.

About 350 submissions from around the world were sent to us via an Open Call that was published on multiple platforms and via word-of-mouth. Artists and filmmakers shared with us their messages in moving images that required attention. Through the waiver system of submission fees, which gave filmmakers a choice to make a financial contribution, and after paying the transaction fees, SEA Foundation is able to send a donation to Artists at Risk. Thank you to everyone who was able to pay the submission fee! Artists at Risk is a Finnish NGO supporting artists and art labourers whose lives and freedom are at risk regardless of their geographic location such as Maria Vtorushina, who was a curator in residence at SEA Foundation in 2022 after Russia started the war in Ukraine.

We feel that the topic of Solidarity is closely connected to finding a common cause and sharing an urgency. Similarly, as in the theme of Commons and Commoning which was explored within the first edition of the VAEFE festival in 2021, we deem the digital film format suitable for exploring the ways in which the stories of solidarity are told.

Further in the text, we explain the films' selection.

Matter of relating

Solidarity is always an act of relating, sharing an opinion or feeling. The films in this section question *How do we relate and live together*. The need for questioning and re-approaching (co)existence comes as a necessary response to today's pressing issues of environmental, political, and social dimensions. The selected films adopt a critical approach to relating, poetically telling stories that make us reconsider how far solidarity can go and in which ways urgency can be depicted.

The film *Drumoh* (2021) by Mexican director Armando López Castañeda is centred around a long-forgotten language, spoken by those who were always standing in solidarity with humankind: the trees. To stand against extractivist practices, the film encourages humans to listen to non-human languages. The art-rock film called *The Mirror Neuron* (2021) by US artist Tommy Becker investigates the interconnectedness of humans and the sun through the activation of the empathy neuron.

The narratives here ask who is 'we', and where 'we' starts and ends, such as in the film of the South Korean filmmaker Sumin Kim called *To us* (2021). The film explores the notion of 'we' in its potential to be uniting as much as excluding. The film *Chipped Shores* by artist Mara Chavez weaves together indigenous wisdom and storytelling to explore the memory of and resistance against extractive colonialism in the south of Mexico.

Structures of support

The films about places, networks, structures, and methods that provide support. Support as a political choice is the urge/need to fight with/for collective bodies and uncover-subvert social constructs or systems of oppression. These structures are changing the lives of others such as in the case of the squatting community in the City Plaza in Athens. In her film *Alexander St. 2019* (2020), French filmmaker Occitane Lacurie takes us back to the squat which provided tangible yet utopian solidarity and safe ground for refugees between the years 2016 – 2019. The film *Not in Sight* (2023) by Chilean-Belgian filmmaker Miguel Rozas Balboa aims to show an empowering image of refugees by staging a video sequence of a young African refugee covered with golden survival blankets, staring at us, and demanding to be seen.

Hong Kong & Taiwanese filmmaker/artist duo Yuen Ming Lo & Chun Yao Lin collaborated together on the film *Archiving The Scene* (2023). As a reaction to the front-line protests in Hong Kong during 2019-2020, they share a painting tutorial as an accessible method of political expression that enables people to reproduce their own content. *Manifest of Her Practice* (2022) by Greek interdisciplinary artist, designer and architect Georgina Pantazopoulou suggests a manifest, a method for unlearning and learning anew towards radical domesticity which is based on her grandmother's gender performativity.

Ukrainian performer Daria Pugachova directed the performance film *I will close the sky so you could breathe* (2022) during her residency in Sofia, Bulgaria. The artist invited the public to participate in the performance and weave the camouflage net over her body, however, the act remained a solitary action. If not in person, a call to unite is thus weaved via the video work. *guarda vieja 3458 timbre 3/6* (2023) by artist duo Karen Akerman & Miguel Seabra Lopes was formed in response to the oppressive political reality that followed Brazilian former government's election into office. The film focuses on the first attempts of the artists' child to stand and works as a metaphor for the struggle against apathy.

Work in progress *Undermine* by British artist Rebecca Birch records the experiences of a community campaigning against fracking in Lancashire, UK. It is made with the cooperation of the community of local protectors, many of them middle-aged women, who are engaging in political action for the first time in their lives.

Acts of care

The films in this category are highlighting personal or political acts of care but also what lack of care feels or looks like. They are poetical or radical, manifesting care in different forms and towards various actors while portraying the fragility entailed in relationships – personal, social, material, and with our shared environment.

German-based Turkish filmmaker Derya Durmaz made the short film called *Will You Come With Me?* (2022) in which a woman directly demands the right to own her body and asks for help in a system which may be partly progressive but not as responsible when it comes to

intimate relationships. *I Gave it to You* (2022) was made during the COVID-19 pandemic by the US artist and filmmaker Claire Maske and explores the direct physical ramifications of being in a community with one another and navigating how to best support a friend.

The Colours of Life (2023) by Ukrainian filmmaker Oleksandr Stupak is a little message to humanity; a symbolic essay about nature and human intervention in its harmony and cycle, about the notions of death and birth. It was made in the background of war and devoted to caring, tenderness and kinship. Similarly, Taiwanese filmmaker George Hiraoka Cloke made the film *Listen Closely* (2022) with the intention of encouraging the act of listening as a vital tool to help us make kin with myriad life forms, inspire knowledge-sharing and foster solidarity across human and non-human networks.

The Iranian filmmaker Vali Karimnia presents the film *Warcelona* (2021) which adopts a different viewpoint on the subject of war, with the hope that solidarity nurtured through sports can become a bridge of friendship between groups in conflict. *Diyar* (2022) by Syrian/Dutch artist Moayad Alhariry is an animation made in solidarity with refugees who are forced to leave their homes and to make a decision about their next destination, carrying and treasuring the memories of their most familiar, physical space of care.

Animacy of the street

The street is a body of mass. To join a happening on the street provides almost a bodily experience, in a sunrise of the possibility to change something into something else. Street protests are the happenings which enter the realm where strangers become related, where individuals become a collective body. The street can be the most significant realisation of social resistance – the birthplace and basis of movements and the expanded space to practice direct democracy. The films belonging in this frame are centered around struggles staged in the street and highlight the potential these public space encounters have in nurturing feelings of solidarity.

Canadian artist Cheryl Pagurek made the short film *Green tea cup: collectivities* (2017) which records contemporary news footage projected into her immigrant grandmother's vintage tea cup, showing the contrast between the dynamics of the street protests and the fragility of the bone china ceramics. Turkish filmmaker Aylin Kuryel documented the workers' struggle in the film *Side by Side* (2022). In this film, two people from the Migros warehouse workers struggle, attempt to look at images of resistance and raise questions about the visual memory of standing 'side by side' through four photographs.

The film *Take it Down* (2021) depicts the Confederate statues across the South of the US which were erected as propaganda tools legitimizing racism in the era of Jim Crow laws. The film directed by Sabine Gruffat calls for taking down monuments commemorating oppressive history in public space. The 2021 film *For a While (The Story Of Loukanikos)* by Pierre Chaumont explores the story of Loukanikos, a dog who became the icon of the 2011 anti-

austerity movement in Greece. This work represents the potentiality of interspecies collaboration towards radical imaginaries and solidarity coming from unexpected sources of agency.

However, revolutions are not only experienced on the street as we can see in the film *Dear Revolution* (2021) by NL-based Belarusian artist Tasha Arlova. The artist shares a personal letter to a revolution that happened in Belarus in 2021; shot from the perspective of an emigrant, the film shows how an individual copes with the unsettling situation happening in their homeland.

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