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RELEASE



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Re(Cover) Story

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Addis
International
Video Art
Festival

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December 26 - December 30/ 2024



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5th Edition

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ADDIS VIDEO ART FESTIVAL



PRESS RELEASE

Theme: የማንስራሪያ ተረኮች Re(Cover) Story

Daily front pages across platforms circulate crisis, desperation and disasters, fueling division and despair. Our focus fragmented, analysis paralyzed, we struggle to discern urgent news from narratives designed to mask them. War, post-pandemic economic doom, scarcity, conflicts, inflation, deficit, unregulated AI, climate apocalypse, displacement, and new wars broadcast a hopeless reading of our times.

Within these turbulent currents, can art recover our stories and be a healing device to envision possibilities, will, and connectedness? What potential does video art hold to reframe these realities? Addis Video Art Festival presents works that examine these current conditions and related topics with open artistic input.

SELECTED ARTISTS

AFRONTACIONES (F.) COPINGS - SELF-TESTIMONY. NARRATIVAS DE LA MEMORIA Y LA VIOLENCIA DEL HABITAR, 11'21" . JESSICA A. RODRIGUEZ . MEXICO-CANADA

BEZUNA, 2023, 7'30" . SAIF ALSAEGH . USA

BIRTH OF A GRENADE, 16MM B/W, 2022, 7'28" . SHUBHANGI SINGH . FINLAND/INDIA

DEATH OF LOGIC, 2023, 15', C'CESIRHE SEDNEY . BELGIUM . NETHERLANDS

DÉTRESSE SYMPHONIQUE, 2022 10'04" . MARCO JOUBERT . CANADA

DZATA: THE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGICAL CONSCIOUSNESS, 2023, 8'25" .

FRANCOIS KNOETZE, RUSSEL HLONGWANE, AMY LOUISE WILSON . SOUTH AFRICA

HERE AND THERE, NOW AND THEN, 2022, 7'10" . CHERYL PAGUREK . CANADA

JOY, 2023, 11' . JULIETA TETELBAUM . ARGENTINA

LOOK AT YOUR LIGHT, GRANITE, 2023, 7'42" . RIIKKA HAAPASAARI . PORTUGAL

SMOKE CLOUD, 2022, 5'13", SHAHAR MARCUS . ISRAEL

THE INSUFFERABLE WHITENESS OF BEING, 2028, 12'32" . ANXIOUS TO MAKE (LIAT BERDUGO + EMILY MARTINEZ) . USA

WHAT KIND OF TIMES ARE THESE, 2024, 2'10" . DIPIN CHENAYIL . INDIA





In an era saturated with crisis narratives—conflict, environmental collapse, and technological upheaval—time-based media becomes a vessel for transformative storytelling. The 5th Addis Video Art Festival brings together works that reimagine fragmentation as a site of poetic and reflective possibility. These works turn narrative into a source of healing, revealing the undercurrents of our age while envisioning futures grounded in empathy and resilience. They invite us to reconsider this medium’s role in reframing stories of crisis, using the temporal and sensory dimensions of time-based media to facilitate recovery and transformation.

Riikka Haapasaari’s *Look at Your Light*, Granite exemplifies this potential through a surreal exploration of environmental awareness. The video art imagines granite’s consciousness, presenting a meditative portrayal that transcends human-centered narratives. By adopting a geological perspective, Haapasaari invites us to appreciate our entanglement with deep time and the material world, suggesting that confronting planetary crises may require a fundamental rethinking of our relationship with nonhuman entities. The slow, contemplative pacing of the film mirrors the vast scale of geological time, subtly reminding viewers of the interconnectedness of all matter and acknowledging stories independent of human urgency.

In *Bezuna*, Saif Alsaegh reflects on the impact of war on personal and collective memory through fragmented narrative techniques. The film’s disjointed imagery and rhythmic solo drumming evoke the untranslatable nature of grief. Each fragment acts as a reminder of how war shatters continuity, the haunting percussion echoes through the narrative. Alsaegh uses time as a crucial element: the rhythm, or lack thereof, becomes a representation of interrupted lives and histories.

C’Cesirhe Sedney’s *Death of Logic* pulls viewers into an introspective, ego-dissolving journey. The guttural sounds create an existential struggle that is embodied, culminating in a moment of surrender. As the protagonist embraces an elemental, watery transition, the narrative transforms into a requiem for the self and a philosophical meditation on the human need to grieve our attachment to linear, ego-driven thinking. Here, time is not linear but cyclical, capturing the inevitability of change and the dissolution of the individual self.

Symphonic Distress by Marco Joubert, in collaboration with musician Yuliya Zakharava, translates the emotional devastation of war into a gripping audiovisual experience. The burning of roses at dusk serves as a poignant symbol of beauty consumed by the passage of time and conflict. Joubert employs stark contrasts between human and animal visages, capturing raw, unfiltered emotions and turning collective suffering into an elegy. The symphonic arrangement and carefully constructed visual language emphasize the continuity of anguish, creating a work that lingers in the mind long after viewing. This film’s exploration of wartime emotions highlights the capacity of time-based media to evoke visceral responses, turning images and sounds into a shared emotional landscape.

Dipin Chenayil’s *What Kind of Times Are These* layers Adrienne Rich’s poetry over visuals of an ancient Indian village, connecting past and present struggles. By juxtaposing contemporary challenges with historical imagery, Chenayil highlights the recurrent nature of social and political turmoil. The film’s use of temporal layering gives weight to the idea that art and poetry are as vital now as ever, serving as tools for resistance and endurance. Through this interplay, Chenayil transforms the act of contemplation into one of mourning and resolve.

Cheryl Pagurek’s *Here and There, Now and Then* uses dance to explore the porosity of time and identity. The film’s seamless transitions between physical and virtual, invite viewers to allow the media to teach the eyes about reality, of how history is lived and remembered. The dancers move through blurred boundaries, embodying a vision of interconnectedness that is crucial for understanding our shared future. Pagurek’s choreography, intertwined with the temporal flow of film, emphasizes the fluidity of existence.

Dzata: The Institute of Technological Consciousness by Francois Knoetze, Russel Hlongwane, and





Amy Louise Wilson crafts a speculative narrative around indigenous African technological practices. The fictional institute reimagines technological advancement as a culturally embedded process, resisting Western-centric progress narratives. By weaving together documentary and poetic media, the video art asserts the importance of diverse knowledge systems, reclaiming development stories from a broader, historically conscious perspective. The layered temporalities of *Dzata* highlight how history, culture, and technology are intertwined, advocating for a future where indigenous practices inform and enrich global conversations on progress.

Julieta Tetelbaum's *Joy* balances humor and heartbreak in the story of a 65-year-old autistic woman navigating desire and loss. Her surreal relationship with a mannequin partner touches on themes of isolation, aging, and neurodivergence. The film's whimsical yet melancholic tone invites viewers to challenge societal perceptions of gender conformity and neurodivergence, celebrating the absurd joys that can exist alongside longing. Here, time functions as both a source of melancholy and a space for unexpected delight, reflecting the complex, layered experiences of desire and identity in later life.

Birth of a Grenade by Shubhangi Singh examines colonial legacies through the history of saltpeter's global trade. The video art's hand-processed, scratched visuals—etched with natural materials—transform the medium into a tactile mourning for a world shaped by extractive violence. Singh's film connects historical exploitation to modern ecological crises, offering an aesthetic experience that resists passive viewing. The deliberate use of time, both in the film's materiality and narrative arc, evokes a sense of slow violence and the ongoing repercussions of colonial history.

The Insufferable Whiteness of Being by Anxious to Make critiques the utopian fantasies of crypto-colonialists in Puerto Rico. Using satire, archival footage, and text overlays, the film exposes the exploitative visions behind modern technological promises. By connecting past colonial legacies to present-day inequalities, this piece demands a critical examination of who benefits from notions of progress. The film's temporal disjunctions reflect the dissonance between utopian dreams and the realities they often obscure, challenging viewers to question the ethics of contemporary development.

Jessica A. Rodriguez's *afrentaciones (f.) copings - self-testimony. Narrativas de la Memoria y la Violencia del habitar*, stands as a powerful auto-ethnographic exploration of violence and memory in Uruapan, Mexico. The film weaves personal and collective narratives to reveal how violence embeds itself in daily life, shaping identity and community. By turning the cityscape into an archive of trauma and resistance, Rodriguez uses the language of film to transform individual coping mechanisms into collective testimony. The layered temporal structure captures the reverberations of violence across generations, emphasizing the endurance of memory and the ongoing struggle for healing.

Shahar Marcus's *Smoke Cloud* visualizes the artist's role in today's uncertain world. As Marcus walks through a barren desert, a torch trailing black smoke behind him, he becomes a paradoxical lighthouse—marking presence not with light, but with darkness. The thick, ephemeral clouds of smoke symbolize the ambivalence of artistic action: Are artists guiding, disrupting, or merely signaling existence in a disoriented world? The film's interplay between the desert's stillness and the dynamic movement of smoke encapsulates art's dual role as both beacon and disturbance, prompting reflection on its purpose in an age of crisis.

By engaging landscapes—urban and natural—as active narrative agents, these videos harness time-based media to articulate themes of trauma, transformation, and existential questioning. Rodriguez's work maps Uruapan as a scarred yet resilient memory space, while Marcus's desert becomes a canvas for meditating on the role of the artist. Together, they illustrate the medium's power to make the invisible visible, using time to unravel layered truths and propose new forms of understanding. These videos challenge us to see crisis not as an endpoint, but as a starting point for collective healing, encouraging us to move forward with renewed awareness and empathy.



Artist Mulugeta Gebrekidan //////////////////////////////////////

This edition is dedicated to the multi-talented artist, friend, and father of three, Mulugeta Gebrekidan, who was kidnapped and killed by armed abductors in Ethiopia. Mulugeta's video art pioneered a new way of exploring the power of photography by incorporating audio and motion elements in Ethiopia. He believed that expressing his ideas on a two-dimensional canvas was insufficient, which led him to begin

experimenting with lens-incorporated mediums. His first video art was created in 2008 at the former Asni Gallery inside Ferensay Park.

Mulugeta studied painting at Addis Ababa University's Fine Arts and Design School. Before expanding into multiple mediums such as photography and performance art to express his artistic vision, he worked as a studio artist and graphic designer. He participated in numerous exhibitions and video art festivals worldwide and attended five residency programs, various workshops, and festivals across Africa, Europe, and the United States. Additionally, he received the Innovation Award at the "KLA ART 014" Festival Exhibition in Kampala, Uganda.

Guest Programs //////////////////////////////////////

"Natural Proximity: Latvian Contemporary Video Art"



Over the Real (IX Edition)



"The Anthropocene Foundry", The New Museum of Networked Art



"In Praise of a High Shadow", Instansvideo Festival



ABOUT //////////////////////////////////////

Addis Video Art Festival intends to provide a platform for innovative video art in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The festival will screen throughout the city in a variety of locations including street corners, rooftops, public centers and art centers. By sharing video art in both conventional and non conventional settings, the festival will reach both the artist community and the everyday passerby. The festival aims to create a dialogue between local, and international artists by encouraging digital media culture.

Initiated by Ezra Wube (Organizer) and his team Mihiret Kebede (Co-organizer , Artist / Curator . Ethiopia / Austria), Betelhem Makonnen (Artist . Ethiopia / U.S.A.), Kibrom Gbremedhin (Artist/ Educator . Ethiopia / U.S.A.), Dagrun adalsteinsdottir (Artist/ Curator . Iceland and Chiara Cartuccia (Curator/ Artist . Italy).

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