of a shared social history. The rapidity of the change undermined all the certainties that people had known, however meagre, and left precisely nothing in their place, except the ruthlessness of the marketplace and its mentality of every man for himself. In the seeming absence of any centralised social order, both organising the practical business of everyday life and the very idea of Ukrainian national identity were up for grabs. Accounting for the various attempts to solve these—not unrelated—problems is at the heart of Poliakov's work, but he seems to have realised that they could not be represented just with conventional photographic methods, so he turned instead to study what he describes as the 'unique visual culture' of the urban environment.

It is perhaps those aspects of Ukrainian culture that were suppressed by the fictional social unity of the Soviet satellite states that have sought to reassert themselves most forthrightly in the uncertain decades since the collapse. The tension between the desire to exploit the opportunities afforded by the dramatic swing to a capitalist economy, along with the free-for-all attitude that it enabled, and the hope that an authentically Ukrainian culture might be restored in its place, is the essential subtext of this work. It is also at least partly the background to recent civil unrest in the country, a conflict between corruption and reform, but Poliakov's attention is resolutely fixed on how these tensions appear in the everyday. Regardless of the fact that the objects of his study look as much like contemporary sculpture or performance as they do the tangible results of social and historical process, that's precisely what they are. But they are also the product of human decisions and human needs, and as such represent the perhaps doomed attempt to organise the world in some meaningful, lasting way.

All images from the series *Lviv—God's Will* © Viacheslav Poliakov, courtesy of the artist

VIACHESLAV POLIAKOV (b. 1986, UA) obtained his MFA from Kherson State University in 2007. In 2012, Poliakov began combining photography with his graphic and motion design career in order to pursue personal projects. Poliakov has been part of international art projects and exhibitions in Ukraine, Poland, Georgia, France, Germany, and the Netherlands. In 2017, Poliakov was shortlisted for the Krakow Photomonth ShowOff and was a finalist for the Grand Prix Fotofestival Lodz. In the spring of 2017, Poliakov was selected as one of fifteen emerging photographic talents for the shortlist for the prestigious Prix Levallois.

DARREN CAMPION (b. 1984, IE) writes about contemporary practices in photography. Since 2009, he has maintained *The Incoherent Light*, a blog dedicated to exploring various perspectives on the medium. He is a frequent contributor to several publications, most notably *Super Massive Black Hole*, *Of the Afternoon*, and *Paper Journal*, where he has a regular series of features.

Transposition



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— Text by Kim Knoppers

It must have been a strange experience for regular visitors to the Albertov Botanical Garden in Prague. Suddenly, there in the middle of the pond in the tropical greenhouse, in their very own Botanical Garden, stood an elegant but extraordinarily out-of-place structure. Two plywood panels supported each other to serve as the foundation for an installation of digitally manipulated photographs, artificial grass, bright strip-lights, concrete, stone, plate glass, and house plants bought in a major commercial retail store.

The photographs were clearly taken in the greenhouse. One image even shows the exact place where the installation now shines self-consciously, perhaps even a touch guiltily. After all, didn't the installation disrupt the visitor's idyll of escaping for a moment from hectic daily life into this small expanse of pure nature? At the same time the installation could hardly be reproached, since it was honest and showed exactly what a botanical garden sometimes tries to hide, namely that it is a man-made structure, an imitation of an idea of what we believe nature to be.

The young but already solidly coherent oeuvre of Mark Dorf is characterized by the use of photography along with sculpture and digital media. In his practice he analyses how digital technology and science influence the way we look at the world and determine our relationship with nature. According to Dorf there is no longer any untouched landscape, unaffected by human beings. He sees physical nature, the built environment and the digital world not as separate and opposing entities but as a holistic whole, in which everything is linked and everything influences everything else. In his work he strives to achieve a synthesis of these natural, built and virtual landscapes.

Elaborating upon his installations in Prague, last spring Dorf presented the series *Transposition* in its entirety for the first time at Postmaster Gallery in New York. The digital photos he used for that installation were made in the New York Botanical Gardens and the Brooklyn Botanical Gardens. They were characterized by deliberately visible gradients, basic photoshop tools like clone stamp and blending effects. Everything that goes to make up *Transposition* was derived from nature, from elements that are essential conditions of life, such as light, trees and plants. The various objects he incorporates into his installations are in some cases so transformed for use in our daily lives that the relationship with the original physical phenomenon is barely discernible. Think strip-lights, plywood and the common house plants.

The pastel-coloured frames Dorf has added to the photos, along with the rectangular pieces of glass placed over

them, are a metaphor for our view of nature, which is still driven by a longing for undisturbed natural beauty of the kind translated into the digital visual clichés that appear in the advertisements of tourist organizations.

Transposition is a term used in music, mathematics and linguistics. If in a composition a series of notes is systematically put into a different key, thereby changing the melody, we call it transposition. If in linguistics a word is moved from one semantic class to another, for example turning a noun into an adjective, again this is called transposition. Dorf does something similar by extracting the original elements of the landscape and putting them into his work in their transformed shape, derived from the digital world, the built world, and our improvised version of nature.

Dorf formulates a fascinating answer to the question I myself posed in a piece I wrote for the *On Earth* issue of *Foam Magazine* in 2016: 'How can the effects of human dealings on earth, in which an important part is played by relationships between science, power, politics, economics, law and technology, be depicted by artists?' I sought the answer to this question is research-based art, but Dorf formulates his answer in a way that is both intelligent and aesthetically attractive. In doing so he uses the image-object dichotomy of photography and the digital tools of photoshop. With his series *Transposition*, Dorf single-handedly moves the genre of landscape photography in the Anthropocene forward. He does so in a layered way that I have never seen before, making an appeal to both our intellect and our aesthetic capacity.

All images from the series *Transposition* © Mark Dorf, courtesy of the artist

MARK DORF (b. 1988, US) graduated from the Savannah College of Art and Design with a BFA in Photography and Sculpture (2011). Dorf's work explores the post-analogue experience: society's interactions with the digital world and its relationship to our natural origins. Dorf's work is included in the collections of Fidelity Investments, Deutsche Bank, Avery Library at Columbia University, Thomas J. Watson Library at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Savannah College of Art and Design. Dorf has received several grants, the most recent of which was the prestigious Mayer Foundation Grant (2015).

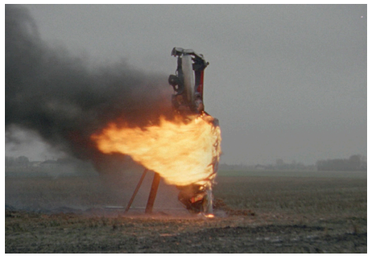
KIM KNOPPERS (b. 1976, NL) is an art historian (University of Amsterdam) and a curator at Foam. Since 2011, she has worked on exhibitions by Adam Broomberg & Oliver Chanarin, Anne de Vries, Jan Hoek, Lorenzo Vitturi and Jan Rosseel to name but a few. Kim is founder of *Artists' Recipes*, which explores the intersection of art and food. She lives and works in Amsterdam, but also stays in Istanbul on a regular basis.

Big Bangers

— Text by Jörg Colberg

In the world of contemporary photography, the focal point is the well-made picture. Whatever was in front of the camera thus ends up being just a part of the overall subject, and it might actually become eclipsed by the photographer's technical and/or artistic abilities. Exhibitions or photobooks then are created around and with the photographs to convey the desired message. This model works well, even though in principle it is also oddly limiting. Unlike, say, paintings, photographs always look and feel flat, making a visit to a gallery or museum a slightly strange experience given that only the walls offer visual stimuli, with the vast remainder of the space going unused.

In some areas of photography, this kind of artifice stands in the way of the overall goals. For example, in documentary or photojournalistic work, the medium's underlying indexicality matters greatly; if what is in the picture was not in front of the camera, then the underlying contract is broken. To help the pictures, text is typically employed to carry the message, especially the parts that photographs are unable to convey (you cannot photograph someone's inner life).



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How or why the single picture should stand for an event is not as clear as one would imagine. After all, events typically have a far longer duration than the very short periods of time caught in single photographs. Exposing a viewer to an 'after' picture might trigger her or him to imagine the 'before,' of course. But the actual event leading from the 'before' to the 'after' is left to the viewer's imagination, which, granted, makes photography a great tool: it's incredibly specific and just as incredibly vague at the same time.

As David De Beyter's *Big Bangers* demonstrates, showing more than a single photograph of an event does not necessarily bring us much closer to that event itself. After all, at the end of the day we're still only looking at pictures, pictures that won't deliver the sounds and smells one might imagine happening as cars burn or crash into each other; mediation will always be just that: mediation. The artist himself noted that he 'had to take the landscape out of the frame to bring it back to the experience of the exhibition.' How could this be done? How could, again in the artist's words, the experience be conveyed that 'one is immersed in a chaotic musicality coming from the noises of engines, the grinding of the tires, the crashes of the cars, hammer blows or even cries of children'?

To begin with, De Beyter's sequences of photographs break through the barrier of photography's decisiveness, given that each frame manages to hold equal weight. While we are of course tempted