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Superluminal

14 September – 20 May 2023

Superluminal, opening in September in the Budapest Light Art Museum, a newly established and already hugely successful institution, is a worthy continuation of its stunning debut exhibition. If possible, the new exhibition raises the bar: it features the most exciting representatives and spectacular projects of the extraordinarily popular contemporary art trend of light art through a selection by artists from Hungary and the international scene.

One of the fundamental natural constants is the speed of light in vacuum, which can be measured precisely, without any uncertainty, and can be regarded as an absolute value.

This physical constant is lent special significance (besides it being the speed of gravitational and electromagnetic waves) by the fact that, according to the theory of relativity, it is the absolute limit of speeds possible in nature: the speed of two physical objects relative to each other can never exceed the speed of light. Several physicists have tried to circumvent this absolute limitation by making theoretical propositions spanning from wormholes to the controlled ‘crumpling’ of space-time, one of which – who knows – might actually make superluminal (faster than light) travel possible one day.

Since the speed of human perception is by far slower than the speed of light, the big question is how our view of the world would change if human perception were possible in structures faster than the speed of light in a vacuum. How would we see the world from a superluminal position?

The exhibition titled *Superluminal* makes an attempt to present artistic approaches that are open to shifting away from exclusively anthropocentric interpretations accepting only one truth towards directions taking perception to thus far unexplored structures – even faster than the speed of light – and thus potentially recontextualising the physical phenomenon of light itself.

The forty or so artworks displayed here by local and international artists have light at their centre, while going beyond light’s generally used definition in physics as electromagnetic radiation perceptible to the human eye. Exploring various themes from supernovas to black holes, from artificial nature to parallel universes, from programmed neural networks to radiating glass objects and from the Northern Light enclosed in crystalline structures to the choreography of light on the retina, the artworks seek new perspectives within and beyond the realms of visibility.

Besides the dual nature of light (particle and wave), the thematic horizon of the displayed artworks extends to the invisible ranges of the electromagnetic spectrum: radioactive radiation, analogue and digital image and sound radiation, cosmic frequencies, and so-called very low frequencies, which can also be discovered in nature. The hierarchy between scientific, speculative and metaphysical approaches ceases here, giving space to contradictions, paradoxes, transitions between endpoints

and critical approaches examining the human relationship to nature, ranging from photosynthesis through synthetic sunshine and the environmental effects of light pollution to sunshine exploited and turned into a commodity.

Embedded into a historical context through art historical forerunners and original or authentically reconstructed works of the foremost artists of Hungarian origin, such as László Moholy-Nagy, György Kepes, Victor Vasarely, Nicolas Schöffer and Vera Molnar, the exhibition seeks to present light-objects, installations as well as interactive and immersive light constructions made by the most significant local and international representatives of contemporary light art in recent years.

In the exhibition spaces of the Hold Street Market, turned into total black boxes, visitors can encounter artworks by some of the internationally most acclaimed studios creating immersive projections: the Zünc Studio from London, the Nohlab from New York, as well as fuse* and the NONE Collective from Italy. The New York-based, Lithuanian-born Žilvinas Kempinas will participate with two spectacular installations, and a powerful kinetic sculpture by Philip Vermeulen, a successful young talent of the Dutch art-science scene, will debut in Budapest. From among the regular invitees to international contemporary museums and exhibition venues, *Superluminal* will feature István Csákány and Attila Csörgő, two Hungarian artists living abroad, Goran Petercol from Croatia, the Russian-born Vadim Fishkin and a young French artist, Justine Emard, among others.

Exhibiting artists:

István Csákány, Attila Csörgő, Disnovation.org, Justine Emard, Vadim Fishkin, fuse*, Ahmet Said Kaplan, Žilvinas Kempinas, György Kepes, Áron Kútvölgyi-Szabó, MAOTIK, Svätopluk Mikyta, László Moholy-Nagy, Vera Molnar, Nohlab, NONE Collective, Gábor Ősz, Goran Petercol, Olivier Ratsi, RaumZeitPiraten, Sébastien Robert, Sárgany (Bence Barta & János Borsos), Nicolas Schöffer, Dávid Ariel Szauder, Agnus Szekeres & Katalin Tesch, Loránd Szécsényi-Nagy, Andrea Sztojánovits, Gabey Tjon a Tham, Victor Vasarely, Gyula Várnai, Philip Vermeulen, Kit Webster, Zünc Studio

Curators: Barnabás Bencsik, Borbála Szalai

Assistant curator: Dalma Kovács

High resolution images:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1t0uVZ0PBrh7wh1n6PUprFOrFGT020FHs?usp=sharing>

Photo: Dávid Bíró/Light Art Museum Budapest

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