



Videodrome & S.O.F.A. are thankful to the 4 international artists from the contemporary video art scene for their support and participation in these alternative events, entirely based on volunteer initiatives.

Commissioned by Irene Panzani for S.O.F.A.  
Curated by Prisca Meslier for Videodrome-Paris

**S.O.F.A.** shared office  
for the arts

V I D E O R O M E

# THE MYTH OF PLENTY



## VIDEO CYCLE THE MYTH OF PLENTY

Curated for GIUNGLA - October 16th to 18th

In a contemporary landscape that asserts itself as much digital as natural, the question of the place of man and our claim to escape our condition, brings back the ancestral fears of obsolescence and scarcity into the field of representations.

Metaphorically, the cornucopia, a thousand-year-old image whose representation has been abundant since antiquity, is synonymous with an unlimited source of benefits.

It is growth, the only possible option towards the future. It is evolution, the inexhaustible full. It evokes a nature of peace, contemplation and poetry and seems to indicate a place of privileged plenitude. This image of abundance reassures us. However, the great myths in their diversity shed light on the fears that have accompanied us since the dawn of humanity: to disappear, to miss, to suffer. Ambivalences appear, a threat of exhaustion and emptiness.

This video cycle offers a collective reflection on the myth of abundance - of nature and technology - as an imaginary resource and source of understanding of our vision. As an integral part of these environments, to what extent Man identifies with them and transcends them? These works allow us to think, according to plural conceptions of space and time, the multiplicity of possible relationships that human beings have always maintained with the spaces they inhabit and the environments they create in order to ensure their survival.

A reflection on the tools any human community has to reinvent itself. Build a new understanding of the world we live in because this world has changed and the human being is no stranger to this change. It brings us back to our imaginations of paradise, our mythologies, our frustrations, but also our responsibilities.

The cycle is divided into 4 parts: Abundance, Abuse, Decline & Obsolescence.



## SECTION 1 THE ABUNDANCE

SILVIA LIMA

Infinite Resource I, 2000

Courtesy of the artist & Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia

## SECTION 2 THE ABUSE

SERENA JV ELSTON

Horn of Plenty, 2020

Courtesy of the artist

## SECTION 3 THE DECLINE

ROBERTA LIMA

Embodiment of Water - Finland, 2018

Embodiment of Water - The Ice Cube, 2018

Courtesy of the artist & Charim Galerie

## SECTION 4 THE OBSOLESCENCE

CAROLINE MESQUITA

The Machine Room, 2018

Courtesy of the artist & Carlier Gebauer Berlin, T293 Rome, & Union Pacific, London

## SILIVA RIVAS

A pioneer in video art and installation since the 90's, Silvia Rivas investigates the construction and perceptions of natural phenomenon, through the prism of digital vocabulary and experimentations. Mainly driven by the exploration of figurative and embodied time - the internal perception of the present, surrounded by the density of the past, the resistance of the future and the inevitability of circumstance - Rivas challenges the capacity of video medium to operate passages, capture gestures and transcend the human quest for more. More time, more information, more resources, more progress etc...

With *Infinite Resource*, Rivas illustrates this endless search for natural material in a video experimentation that seems to already define humans through the lens of digital data. With an avant garde technology-based vocabulary her work evokes this never-ending quest for abundance, running in circles. Here, human beings seem trapped in search for their place in an environment and ambition they created themselves. Silvia Rivas questions the dilemma that reminds us that life is pure contingency. The urgency, the wait, space, ambiguity and the dual nature of things, the coexistence of human nature and technology are repeated thematics in her artistic productions with varied poetics, sophisticated and strong images that have become identificatory of her artistic discourse.

Silvia Rivas (Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1957) was the first audiovisual Argentine artist to have received the Guggenheim fellowship and other awards. She represented her country in major international biennales, exhibitions and institutions. Silvia Rivas's works belong to several prestigious national & international collections and recognized institutional collections including: Museum of Latin American Art of Buenos Aires, MALBA – Costantini Foundation, Argentina; Museum of Modern Art of Buenos Aires, Reina Sofia Museum Collection, Madrid, Spain, among others.

Serena JV Elston's artistic approach is deeply rooted in the study of human nature in modern time, and the organic connection. The central question of her work investigates what challenges we face in this modern technological race for the new. What have we left behind that we should weave back in again? The narrative of her artwork deals with the dysfunction that persists throughout all levels of society. Her work navigates through the disciplines of architecture, agriculture, and ancient history to search for those forgotten tools that connect us to the land, to the people, and to ourselves.

*Horn of Plenty* is a poetic and enigmatically sinister video art piece which reinterprets highly positive mythological iconography of the cornucopia to propose a vivid critique on how Western European mythology and folklore have built and reinforced a framework of extractive, domination-focused ecological policies. Through this ecocritical lens, the myth of the cornucopia is explored as an agricultural mirage of unending abundance that continues to influence.

The act of tearing the horn from her head is the act of severing the means of production from the body - the feminine - the earth. Untethered to the limitations of the body, the horn seems to endlessly reproduce wealth and nourishment. It beguiles man with the mirage of unending abundance: there is no need for forethought, just immediate desires. In an act of sardonic revenge this severed appendage reveals itself as finite. Its contents diminish, forcing one to reach ever deeper into the horn, only to grasp the dwindling remains. And just like we are treating the natural resources, we are treating the technological ones, with thirst and impulsion. Indeed, the minimalist aseptized setting and a careful attention to the content of the horn here resonate with digital devices, elements of what has once been high-tech dissolving into black oil.

Serena JV Elston (b. USA, 1987) received her degree in Architecture and Sculpture from MassArt and presents scholarly work on the topics of mythology, olive oil, and immersive design. She's received national acclaim for her project *Siren Island* (San Francisco, 2018), a constructed floating island offering spa treatments and live theater on the water.

## ROBERTA LIMA

Water is the first, sacred and prime natural element. A source of life and a promised gift for mankind - granted. But is it really? Our societies have grown understanding that we are over-consuming this symbolic natural resource, which is altogether an organic necessity, a biological technology, a social bond and a political strength. In the series *Embodiment of Water*, Brazilian-born Austrian artist Roberta Lima investigates the wide range of meanings and human-connections potentials encompassed in this element, until it disappears in resilience or resistance.

The contextualization of human's body and place as well as the search for emancipatory and empowering processes are central questions in the artist's approach, may that be through performances, videos or installations.

During a trip at Shoutoku Shuzo in Fushimi, while accompanying a female chief sake brewer, Lima experienced the learning process of transformation. In the past, women were forbidden to acquire this knowledge and *savoir-faire*. Through this encounter, Lima came to understand the importance of water in its varied aspects: organic as well as social. And how can water be used as a metaphor for resilience.

The series *Endodiment of Water* illustrates her investigations on the environment (natural as well as social) created by men, and the different apprenticeships we need to experience to find our place in it. This series also symbolizes the inevitable fate of a wasted resource. In *Embodiment of Water- Finland*, Lima is surrounded by water in solid states while herself is transforming liquid into gas, evoking the immediate disappearance of the element. In opposition with J.J. Rousseau for whom the depiction of liquid water in landscapes resonates with feelings of hope and happiness, here the evaporation insists on the vacuity of its unseasable presence and the decline of the resource. In this sense, Lima proposes a subtle parallel between social/natural, women/water, identifying with the element and transcending it, but also showing the different states of decline it faces.

Lima was born in 1974 in Manaus, Brazil. After graduating with a degree in architecture in 2001, Lima moved to Vienna where in 2007 she earned a Master's degree in Fine Arts and in 2013 her PhD in Philosophy. Thereafter she worked as lecturer and Assistant Professor for the Contextual Painting Class at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. In 2017 Roberta Lima moved to Helsinki, where she now lives and works.

In Caroline Mesquita's work 'The Machine Room' nature has already disappeared, giving way to humanoid objects which intervene to take care of what already seems obsolete: the human.

Caroline Mesquita is developing a sculptural practice that extends to the video medium, offering multimedia experiments with a strong narrative load. Her work explores the vitality and complexity of matter (artificial or human) with notions of religion, incarnation, transformation, sensuality and sociability. With her technique of assiduous intervention on the material, Mesquita manipulates metal like a form of painting in constant transition. These material transformations provide a framework for narration about human experience and relationships between individuals.

It is in her stop-motion videos, the second part of Mesquita's production, that the sheets of metal that have become volumes are, for some, set in motion. With *Machine Room*, Mesquita deals with several types of metamorphoses: that of the material which becomes a figure and comes to life with the hands of the artist sculptor, then which comes alive with the hands of the artist-videographer, but also those of the world which surrounds us, making reference to the accelerating social transformations, in particular with regard to relations between men and their creations. Some indeed see in it the construction of worlds where inter-species relationships are possible, and where the mechanisms of opposition and hierarchical classifications are ineffective.

Caroline Mesquita graduated from the École des Beaux-Arts de Paris in 2013. She received the price of the Fondation d'entreprise Ricard in 2017. Among her recent solo exhibitions: "The Ballad", 221A (Vancouver, 2017); "Night Engines", Center Pompidou (Paris, 2018); "Astray", Kunsthalle Lissabon (2018) and Galeria Municipal (Porto, 2019).



Conceived to eXPlore the possibilities of the video medium, discover the creation of contemporary artists and offer an unparalleled viewing experience, Videodrome devotes its energy and resources to displaying engaged artists and propose innovative programs in alternative spaces. It encourages conceptual exploratory work, with a focus on the emerging contemporary art scene, in a dialogue with more established artists.

The first nocturnal sessions "The Videodrome Nights" took place in 2014 in a former subway station transformed into an underground art space and club. Since then Videodrome has kept filling the streets of Paris with savage screenings "The Videodrome Rides" during which films are projected in the facade of the buildings from a moving car, and has also been screening in New York, Shanghai and London.

VIDEODROME-PARIS.com



Giungla is a multidisciplinary exhibition curated by S.O.F.A. It is located in the heart of the Botanical Garden of Lucca, and supported by the City Council of Lucca and the Fondazione Banca del Monte di Lucca. The exhibitions questions the themes of human/technology/nature.

S.O.F.A. is a non-profit association founded in 2016 by 6 women who deal with culture in various ways (press attaché, anthropologist, gallery director, curator, performer, art historian). with the objectives of enhancing the artistic heritage and promoting contemporary art, the work of young artists and art professionals, by creating opportunities for collaboration and sharing of knowledge and experiences. Giungla proposes a video cycle + a performance by Giulia Perelli and conferences with Tommaso Guariento, Clemente Pestelli aka Guido Segni, Lorenzo Sansoni, Luca Pagani and Giovanni Maria Martini at the Botanical Garden.

