

# No True Self Didactic Panels

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## 1. Exhibition Title:

### ***No True Self***

Arvida Byström (Sweden), Thibaut Henz (Belgium), Artor Jesus Inkerö (Finland), Hanna Putz (Austria), Jana Schulz (Germany), Andrzej Steinbach (Germany/Poland) and Thomas Taube (Germany)  
Curated by David Ashley Kerr (Australia)

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## EXHIBITION INTRODUCTORY PANEL

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## 2. Exhibition Introduction:

*No True Self* is a major exhibition of an emerging generation of critically acclaimed contemporary artists, featuring unique perspectives from Austria, Belgium, Finland, Germany, Poland and Sweden.

The artists address important and universal questions of gender, sexuality, agency and cultural identity in the extreme present, representing the generation shortly before the digital native generation at the precipice of the post-digital, and possessing a variety of unique approaches to photomedia, truth and artifice, and the presentation of the human subject.

Presented to Australian audiences for the first time, *No True Self* investigates the blurring of private and public realms and the agency of the individual within a post-digital society. *No True Self* asks us to confront our performative selves, and consider how we connect, amidst such an uncertain future.

Today, there is less and less communication between physical bodies, and more reliance through our digital limbs. Images, and importantly, photography, play a crucial role in this digital ether, and exploring new ways in which artists use this ubiquitous medium today can help us better understand both the malleable present and uncertain future of our digital (and IRL) existence.

Curated by David Ashley Kerr (Australia), *No True Self* features Arvida Byström (Sweden), Thibaut Henz (Belgium), Artor Jesus Inkerö (Finland), Hanna Putz (Austria), Jana Schulz (Germany), Andrzej Steinbach (Poland) and Thomas Taube (Germany).

**The curator would like to thank Linsey Gosper and Made Spencer-Castle, Wendy Straume-Tsai, Max Straume-Tsai, and the Centre for Artistic Research of the University of the Arts Helsinki.**

Steinbach's black & white portraits methodically play with the gestural language of fashion photography and traditional photographic portraiture, which he repeatedly subverts, paring away at the image to reveal hints of the residual identities of his models.

In *Figur II*, a young woman uses a garment to create a mask, her movements documented in each image, with our sense of clarity made deliberately ambiguous as we are made to consciously search through the various codes of gesture, attire, and finally, toward unclear signifiers of race and culture, intention and meaning.

In *Figur I*, Steinbach similarly distorts our perception of signifiers. An androgenous subject is posed in a gestural language and dress that forces the viewer to consider the gendered aspects of representation.

### Biography

Andrzej Steinbach (b. 1983 in Czarnkow, Poland) is interested in the signifiers of photographic portrayal and how our assumptions of representation turn individuals into "characters". At times political and containing various subtexts to revolt, Steinbach's photographs cast a critical gaze squarely at the ubiquitous and unambiguous norms perpetuated by governments and algorithms. Challenging our assumptions of identity using superficial factors and pluralities of gesture, body language, clothing, race, and by subverting the conventions of photographic portraiture to which we are accustomed, he renders the familiar, unfamiliar.

In 2017 Steinbach received the German Federal Prize for Art Students and has exhibited throughout Europe and North America, including group exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) New York and the Centre de la Photographie in Geneva, Switzerland.

Steinbach is represented by Galerie Conradi, Hamburg.

### Works

*Untitled (Figur II, from the series Figur I, Figur II)*

2015

90 cm x 60 cm

10 Fine Art Prints (5+5)

*Untitled (Figur I, from the series Figur I, Figur II)*

2015

90 cm x 60 cm

4 Fine Art Prints (2+2)

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## ARTOR JESUS INKERÖ

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Finnish artist Artor Jesus Inkerö presents their video work, *Swole* (2017), as well as a series of poster portrait works.

In their poster works, *Kim* (2017), *Justin* (2016), and *Caitlyn* (2017), the artist poses themselves as three iconic pop culture figures, restaging three viral images of these “stars”: Kim Kardashian’s Paper Magazine “Break the Internet” cover, Justin Bieber’s photoshoot for Calvin Klein and Vanity Fair’s image of Caitlyn (formerly Bruce) Jenner.

The posters are free for visitors to take home.

In their video work *Swole* (2017), Inkerö undertook an intensive bodily transformation. Gaining over 20kg of muscle for the project, Inkerö submerged themselves into the world of intensive bodybuilding, dieting and supplement taking. *Swole* documents a real-life commitment and long-form engagement with bodybuilding subculture, in particular the way in which online culture reinforces a mainstream concept of masculinity.

*Inkerö’s works examine the comfort we seek through identification with others and through the stability of generic forms and predictable behaviours. Their work joins the world of appearances with the personal project of self-fashioning and highlights the conflation of self and other as an omnipresent mode of control in late capitalist society. In short, Inkerö’s videos explore the choices we make—and the limitations we encounter—in order to identify with or feel connected to those around us.* - Helga Christoffersen

### Biography:

Artor Jesus Inkerö (b. 1989 in Helsinki, Finland) is a critically acclaimed Finnish artist who works across photography, video and performance, creating works that the artist terms, a “holistic bodily project”. Embracing hyper-masculine bodybuilding standards and using the supplements, gestures, attire and behaviours associated with this subculture, Inkerö (who uses the pronoun “they”) manipulates both the viewer and the external qualities of self-representation. Conflating artist and persona, they use online culture in their work as part of their self-transformation—a performance that is both a physical and a social experiment—and that addresses the visual and societal expectations of gender.

Inkerö has exhibited in numerous high-profile group and solo exhibitions across Europe and the USA, including at the National Museum of Finland, Helsinki (2019); New Museum, New York (2018); and SALTS, Basel (2017). Inkerö is currently an artist in residence at the Rijksakademie Residency in Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

### Works:

*Swole*  
2017  
Single channel video  
7:00 mins.

*Kim*  
2017  
Digital poster print, unlimited edition.

*Justin*  
2016  
Digital poster print, unlimited edition.

*Caitlyn*  
2017  
Digital poster print, unlimited edition.

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## ARVIDA BYSTRÖM

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Arvida Byström's wallpaper works are a common feature of her colourful installations, often combining text, image and static and interactive digital elements.

Here Byström blends the digital with the physical world through a series of fabric and commissioned wallpaper works, as well as a video work in the middle of the room.

Her most recent self portrait, created in wallpaper specially for CCP, plays with physical and virtual reality by using the dog mask filter on Instagram in physical form, and features a QR code linked to her new interactive website. Her other wallpaper is an assemblage of some of her work to date; a combination of her most iconic phone selfies, still lives and documented performances.

Byström's video work *Disembodied Daughter* (2018) is a playful critique of the Apple assistant "Siri" and our presumptive associations toward this ubiquitous digital avatar, taking on the voice of Siri as Narrator and dissecting "her" visual connotations.

### Biography:

Arvida Byström (b. 1991 in Stockholm, Sweden) is an artist, Instagram influencer and role model of the digital native generation. Byström rose to mainstream fame for her brand collaborations and photographic work celebrating femininity in all its forms, including visualising female body hair and the menstrual cycle. She has exposed the ways in which online culture has been weaponised against feminine and queer bodies, as well as combating the censorship of these bodies on social media platforms, most notably through the publication *Pics Or It Didn't Happen: Images Banned from Instagram* (2017, Prestel) co-edited with artist Molly Soda and authored by Chris Kraus.

Byström is also a member of *The Ardorous*, a collective of creative female professionals established by artist Petra Collins, and whose manifesto includes ending the destructive culture of a one-sided representation of women. She has presented work extensively throughout Europe, including exhibiting and performing at London's Tate Modern and the Modern Art Museum in Stockholm, Sweden.

Byström is represented by Gallery Steinsland Berliner, Stockholm.

## Works:

*Untitled*  
2020  
Wallpaper  
315 x 763 cm

*Untitled*  
2020  
Wallpaper  
315 x 1344 cm

*Disembodied Daughter*  
2018  
HD Digital Video  
1:31 minutes

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## HANNA PUTZ

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Hanna Putz presents a series of images produced in the last 5 years, and which feature in her latest publication *Everything else is a lie* (2019). As she explains in a recent interview, “where there is a lie, there is also truth”. Working slowly and methodically, Putz shoots exclusively on film and spends a lot of time with her images, cropping details and assembling captured gestures and moments. Putz sees little point in our digital hyper present in doing something that already exists in the same way, and this reflects in the originality of her images. These moments are those from her public and private spheres, moments of aggressiveness, loneliness, and tenderness. Circumstances known to us, but perhaps not seen by all.

## Biography:

Hanna Putz (b. 1987 in Vienna, Austria) is a self-taught artist, interested in conveying moments that defy our culture of ubiquitous self-awareness. Documenting everyday moments from the tender to the absurd, Putz provokes the notion of authenticity and of self-presentation, and what she calls ‘the high demands of self-representation’ today.

Putz’s work has been exhibited internationally, including at Kunsthalle Vienna, the Museum of Contemporary Photography, FOAM Museum, The Photographers Gallery, Autocenter Berlin, and at the 6th Moscow Biennale. Her work has been featured extensively in magazines such as DUST Magazine, TAR Magazine, New York Magazine, as well as a recent feature in the British Journal of Photography. Her latest publication, aptly titled *Everything else is a lie* (2019) is out now from PAM PAM Publishing.

## Works:

*Untitled*, 2015–19  
18 Archival inkjet prints  
40 x 30 cm, 106 x 80 cm

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## THIBAUT HENZ

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Flâneuring through cities and countries, public and private spaces, Belgian photographer Thibaut Henz documents the nuances of high and low culture, the melancholy and beautiful ugliness of our modern condition. Henz presents a new installation of his most recent work from 2018 to now. Henz alternates between snapshots and staged portraiture in a visceral and affronting approach to images and photography as a medium, while drawing from and subverting the long tradition of street photography.

This new installation created for *No True Self* represents Henz's oeuvre as a whole, as previous photographs appear and reappear in every new exhibition, sprawling out like mould on the gallery walls. There are no specific places; only bodies, colours, forms, and creatures of the night, illuminated - blitzed with an unforgiving flash.

### Biography:

Thibaut Henz (b. 1988 in Liège, Belgium) belongs to a generation whose perception of the world is strongly influenced by the reception of digital images. Henz creates images that are at once visceral, affronting and beautiful, and installed like mould spreading on a damp sharehouse wall. Henz's photographs, commonly depicting transient moments, gestures, and close-ups of intimate and fragmented moments in time, form an incoherent and chaotic whole that speaks to the melancholy of our modern condition. Henz was awarded the [Ars Viva](#) award in 2019, a prestigious award for promising young visual artists previously awarded to Wolfgang Tillmans, Thomas Demand, Peter Piller and Anna Oppermann, et.al. Henz has exhibited extensively in Europe, including the recent exhibition 'Antarctica: An exhibition on Alienation' at Kunsthalle Vienna, Austria.

### Works:

*Untitled*, 2018–19  
24 Framed Archival inkjet prints, 35 x 50 cm, 70 x 50 cm

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## JANA SCHULZ

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Remaining with her subjects for weeks, sometimes months, German artist Jana Schulz uncovers sensitivities within groups and individuals, and more specifically, of (and between) young men. These are tender, raw and revealing moments we find ourselves struggling in our digital age to uncover in any meaningful way, as we consistently view ourselves within the context of the stage, watched and witnessed by an omnipresent, digital gaze.

Schulz, a trained photographer, came to video art through the work *Blaue Perle*, a piece set in a cult East German nightclub of the same name (translating to Blue Pearl), a place where people danced for themselves, of unbridled inhibition in its illuminated multicoloured glory. Slowed down to 50% speed, this work, presented in the night projection window, focuses on deistic moments of gesture and mimicry in what can be seen as a kind of "prolonged photography" or rather, something straddling the line in-between the two mediums.

In her two-channel video *being on concrete (counting money, observing Dijon)* Schulz shows her protagonists “performing” for the camera, but more importantly, what seem like “backstage” moments where one’s guard is down, and notably up, such as when counting money on a New York street, or an aspiring street dancer learning to flip. Trading, sorting, gesticulating, the young men in Schulz’s *being on concrete* are from the same boxing gym in the Bronx, and who spend their evenings as street performers, earning cash which they diligently sort, count and distribute amongst themselves at the end of each night.

In *Golden Boys. İğdir. Maravilla. Monterey Park* focuses on groups of young men from boxing clubs in Turkey, Mexico and the USA respectively. Observing the dynamics, power structures, and nuanced intimacy between the young men with her unique “gaze”, Schulz documents the young men engaged in various rituals and performative behaviours, but away from the main stage - delicate, intimate, and extremely personal.

## Biography:

Jana Schulz (b. 1984 in Berlin, Germany) uses photography, video and sound to explore interpersonal communication and relationships, preoccupied with making visible how we navigate everyday conditions. Working with groups of male protagonists, she eloquently toys with the documentary mode of representation from her female standpoint, often digressing between the staged and the non-staged, presenting fictive realities based on intimate observations and combining these with abstract imagery. Ranging from moments of extreme concentration to indifferent casualness, Schulz’s works operate on the border between truth and fiction, the strange and familiar, the surreal and the all-too-real.

Schulz has participated in residencies in Villa Aurora in Los Angeles and ISCP in New York, the Transart Triennale, and exhibited extensively throughout Europe, including at the Museum of Fine Arts Leipzig, Kunsthalle Vienna, Austria and recently at the Les Rencontres Internationales Film Festival, Paris. She is a current participant in the BPA - Berlin Program for Artists.

## Works:

*being on concrete (counting money, observing Dijon)*

2019

2 Digital HD videos, colour, sound

05.19 min., 06.13 min.

*Golden Boys. İğdir. Maravilla. Monterey Park*

2018

3x Digital HD videos, colour, sound

17:33 min

## Night Projection Window

*Blaue Perle*

2013–14

Single channel video

11:28 min

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*Blaue Perle*  
2013–14  
Single channel video  
11:28 mins

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## THOMAS TAUBE

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German media artist Thomas Taube presents a special commissioned version of his acclaimed video work *Narration* for CCP. This work examines our use of characters in both performative media and in the world, both referencing the mediums of film, theatre and the construction of stories, but also the fallibility of truth we play with in aspects of everyday life. Concerned with this tension between imagination and truth, spectator and protagonist, Taube also toys with our expectation of linearity and the moving image in this densely atmospheric and complex work.

### Biography:

(b. 1984 in Munich, Germany) has a background in Theology and Film Studies, whose work often deconstructs the elements of film and cinema from its traditional linear narrative structure, and with it, the creation and enacting of character roles. A former student of Candice Breitz and Clemens Von Wedemeyer, the German artist was a recipient of the International Studio and Curatorial Program New York (ISCP) fellowship. Taube regularly works for State and National Theater companies on their digital production, won the Marion Ermer Prize for *Narration* in 2016, has participated in the Les Rencontres Internationales Film Festival and several commercial and museum exhibitions throughout Europe.

Thomas Taube is represented by R E I T E R, Galleries, Leipzig/Berlin

### Works:

*Narration*  
2020  
Single Channel 2K video  
40:00 mins (looped)



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## DAVID ASHLEY KERR (CURATOR)

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David Ashley Kerr (*b. 1986, Yarram, Australia*) is a curator, writer and trained photomedia artist.

David's work is centered on staging relationships between victim and aggressor, body and landscape, voyeur and performer. Nature, melancholy, the gaze and ritual are what drive his creative practice as a whole. His recent research and writing examines intimacy in the post-digital in relation to image culture and human connection.

Kerr has played an active role in arts development in Melbourne (Naarm), Australia, and in 2013 he co-founded curator-led gallery Strange Neighbour with fellow artist-curator Linsey Gosper. He worked as a lecturer at Photography Studies College and Deakin University before relocating to the EU in 2015. In 2018 Kerr was Art-Fellow at the University of Helsinki, Finland, and since then is a researcher at the Center for Artistic Research (CfAR) of the University of the Arts Helsinki.

Kerr holds a PhD (Art History) from Monash University, Master of Fine Art from RMIT University and Bachelor of Media Art from Deakin University, Australia. Participating in exhibitions, residencies, conferences and events internationally in various capacities, he is also the creator of [workworkworkworkworkwork.com](http://workworkworkworkworkwork.com) – An experimental platform for text, image and artwork regarding the representation of labour in contemporary art.

He lives in Weimar, Germany.