

Press Release

“all the lonely people”

In loving memory, Kaari Upson (1972 – August 18 2021)

December 4, 2021 – January 22, 2022; LAXART, 7000 Santa Monica Blvd., West Hollywood, CA 90038

Saâdane Afif, Vajiko Chachkhiani, Louisa Clement, Lauren Halsey, Annika Kahrs, Susan Philipsz, Anri Sala, April Street, Thomas Struth, Andrea Zittel



L.A./Berlin, November 16, 2021 – To celebrate the 25th anniversary of Villa Aurora, **VATMH** (Villa Aurora & Thomas Mann House) and LAXART present the exhibition “**all the lonely people**” at LAXART. The exhibition, curated by Berlin based Nana Bahlmann, examines the ancient figure of the hermit against the backdrop of the current pandemic. The show presents examples of loneliness, melancholy, and longing, as well as physical and mental withdrawal. Some of the works by former Villa Aurora fellows and Los Angeles-based artists, have been created during periods of personal isolation, others have been newly conceived for the exhibition. Before L.A., “**all the lonely people**” was shown in Berlin at **silent green** in autumn 2021.

“**all the lonely people**” makes the experience of isolation and solitude visible. In doing so, the artworks take up traditional motifs associated with hermitage— retreat into nature, contemplation, and the dualities of inside and outside, exchange and silence, exclusion and trauma—and apply them to some of today’s urgent questions. They offer new perspectives on loneliness in the digital age, off-grid self-sufficiency, and imaginary places of refuge in the midst of gentrification and systemic oppression.

Nana Bahlmann, Curator: “Being alone has taken on a completely different meaning in the long months of lockdown. Artists have some tools to offer in dealing with isolation, since distance is an essential part of artistic positioning towards the world. Art transcends loneliness by making it visible, interpreting it, and allowing the opportunity to share that experience, and that’s what we’re trying to do with this exhibition.”

Heike Catherina Mertens, Executive Director VATMH: “For many artists, Villa Aurora is a place of retreat and contemplation, similar to a hermitage, where inspiration for new things emerges from a distance. For writers and journalists who are threatened in their homeland, it is at the same time - as it was for Marta and Lion Feuchtwanger in 1943 - a place of refuge, a sanctuary. We wanted to highlight these aspects with an exhibition on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the house as artist’s residence, reinforce the exchange between the art scenes in Los Angeles and Berlin.”

The selected works explore the motif of the hermit through photography, video, sculpture, sound, and installations: **Vajiko Chachkhiani**’s video *Life Track* presents an impressive image of a physically and mentally isolated man whose loneliness takes place in the midst of our society, yet remains invisible. **Louisa Clement**’s *Representative*, a lifelike self-portrait of the artist as a “Real Doll,” thematizes the solitude of lives lived increasingly online and the alienation from oneself experienced when virtual avatars become noticeably distinct from reality. **Thomas Struth**’s *Vacuum Chamber*, *JPL, Pasadena* and *GRACE-*



Follow on Bottom View, IABG, Ottobrunn depict metaphorical, yet real places of hermetic isolation and evoke notions of boundless distance, expanding the idea of alienation to outer space. Bahlmann's exhibition toggles between nature and artificiality, as in the works of **Annika Kahrs** and **Andrea Zittel**. In *Playing to the Birds*, **Annika Kahrs** revives artistic echoes of retreating into nature and shows the attempt to overcome its solitude through music and communication across species. **Andrea Zittel's** *Wall Sprawl (Next to Las Vegas Bay)* – aerial photographs of fringe areas where the wideopen desert meets largescale urban developments montaged into an ornamental, all encompassing wallpaper – depicts the encounter between the natural world and civilization and will cover almost the entire exhibition space, framing the exhibition as a whole. **April Street's** *Still Life at 12 o'clock* references nature as an imagination and creates a fantastic landscape where physical reality and the artist's inner world are united into a single pictorial plane, while **Lauren Halsey** imagines the collective refuge of many marginalized groups in the artist's native South Central LA, In *Trees and Flowers* **Suzan Philipsz** lends her voice to the fear of the outside experienced during isolation, whilst **Anri Sala's** early video work *Uomoduomo* captures the isolated existence of an unhoused person, forced to live on the fringes of society. In a new work, **Saâdane Afif** explores strategies of shared authorship in the context of artistic self-encounter.

The exhibition is accompanied by a **supporting program** of films, readings, talks, performances. More informations to follow.

The exhibition is generously supported by the German Federal Foreign Office, the Berlin Senate Chancellery, the Friede Springer Foundation and a private patron.

The Los Angeles version of the exhibition was further made possible through support from the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts and the LA Arts Recovery Grant.

About Villa Aurora – In the 1940s and 1950s, Martha and Lion Feuchtwanger's legendary Los Angeles home was a refuge for artists and others escaping Nazi persecution. Its residents went on to have a tremendous impact on life and culture in the United States. In 1995, Villa Aurora became an artist residency and since then has hosted over 350 artists, reclaiming its title as a home for international cultural exchange. While at Villa Aurora, artists are inspired by American culture and nature, the legacy of exile, and its artists in residence. Villa Aurora has been affiliated with the Thomas Mann House since 2017. Every year, Villa Aurora awards grants and three-month residencies to artists in the fields of visual arts, musical composition, film and literature. Villa Aurora hosts a lively public program in collaboration with local partners. | www.vatmh.org

About LAXART – LAXART is a nonprofit visual art space that promotes developments in contemporary culture through exhibitions, publications, and public programs. LAXART believes that contemporary art is a means of understanding key issues of our time with all their inherent contradictions. Contemporary art assumes many forms. Rather than provide answers, it raises questions. Through a range of offerings, LAXART contextualizes contemporary art both socially and art historically. LAXART's programs are free and designed to be accessible to the general public. | www.laxart.com



Press Contacts

Melissa Parsoff

Parsoff Communications

T: +1 516 445 5899

mparsoff@parsoff-communications.com

www.parsoff-communications.com

Villa Aurora

Friedel Schmoranzer

Head of Fellowship Programs

520 Paseo Miramar

T: + 1 310-454-4231

friedel.schmoranzer@vatmh.org

www.vatmh.org

Send/Receive

Anne Maier

T: +49 170 2907585

anne@sendreceive.eu

www.sendreceive.eu