

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

AES+F: Tatiana Arzamasova, Lev Evzovich, Evgeny Svyatsky & Vladimir Fridkes
Anton Svyatsky, Dmitry Khankin, George Arzamasov
Multimedia Art Museum Moscow
Triumph Gallery, Russia

English

AES + F

THE FEAST OF TRIMALCHIO

Every summer Es Baluard invites an international artist to present a thematic project in the Aljub space; thus, after the Swiss artist Thomas Hirschhorn, in 2017, a year when we are focusing on currents and transformations of the phenomenon of tourism, it is the Russian collective AES+F, comprised of Tatiana Arzamasova (1955), Lev Evzovich (1958), Evgeny Svyatsky (1957) and Vladimir Fridkes (1956) who bring one of their most complex works to Mallorca, situated between hyperrealism and the fantastic, the seductive and the critical: *The Feast of Trimalchio*.

The Feast of Trimalchio (2009-2010) is a videographic work in 3D as a spectacular, excessive interpretation of the feast of Trimalchio based on an imaginary island that houses a luxury resort where all possible landscapes are found, like a kind of paying paradise with architecture reminiscent of landmarks of classical painting. The guests that land on it encounter a human ecosystem of assorted cultures and races where guests and hosts, servers and served are immersed in a role play and pursuit of pleasures somewhere between the tragic and the absurd. In *The Feast of Trimalchio* ideology, history and ethics converge in a utopian setting, considered from a surrealist, extreme perspective based on the combination of pleasure and leisure with hyper-consumerism.

Trimalchio is the name of a character from the Roman work of fiction *Satyricon* by Petronius, an arrogant former slave who becomes rich and appears in the part entitled “Cena Trimalchionis” (“Banquet of Trimalchio”, often translated as “Dinner with Trimalchio”). Like a Jay Gatsby in his excessive parties, the absence of the same situates the spectator in the choreography between the members of this strange resort anchored in an imprecise time where anything is possible.

This group of artists has been working together since the late ‘eighties and their work is characterised by the use of digital effects and high-technology treatment mixing languages of advertising, popular culture, the most famous myths or classical painting, to pose different questions on contemporary society where violence, war or the drift towards mass consumerism are some of the problems set forth.

Exhibition dates: 14/07/2017-17/09/2017

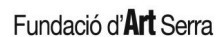
Museum opening hours:

Tuesday to Saturday: 10 - 20 h.

Sundays: 10 - 15 h.

Mondays closed

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For the first time in a museum institution in Spain, Es Baluard presents an individual exhibition dedicated to the Russian collective AES+F. In addition, the exhibition coincides with the collective display “Ciutat de vacances”, a production that is similarly complex and multifaceted based on the subject of tourism.

Nekane Aramburu

The Feast of Trimalchio (2009-2010) by AES+F

In “Satyricon”, the work of the great wit and melancholic lyric poet of Nero's reign, Gaius Petronius Arbiter, the most celebrated part is “The Feast of Trimalchio” (*Cena Trimalchionis*). Thanks to Petronius's fantasy, Trimalchio's name has become synonymous with wealth, luxury, gluttony and unbridled pleasure.

The decadence described so masterfully, of course, by Petronius contrasts with the brevity of human existence.

We searched for an analog in the third millennium and Trimalchio, the former slave, the nouveau riche host of feasts lasting several days, appeared to us not so much as an individual but as a collective image of a luxurious hotel, a temporary paradise which one has to pay to enter.

The hotel guests, the «masters», are from the land of the Golden Billion. They are keen to spend their time, regardless of the season, as guests of the present-day Trimalchio, who has created the most exotic and luxurious hotel possible. The hotel miraculously combines a tropical coastline with a ski resort. The “masters” wear white which calls to mind the uniform of the righteous in the Garden of Eden, or traditional colonial dress, or a summer fashion collection. The “masters” possess all of the characteristics of the human race - they are all ages and types and from all social backgrounds. Here is the university professor, the stockbroker, the society beauty, and the intellectual. Trimalchio's “servants” are young, attractive representatives of all continents who work in the vast hospitality industry as housekeeping staff, waiters, chefs, gardeners, security guards and masseurs. They are dressed in traditional uniforms with an ethnic twist. The “servants” resemble the brightly colored angels of a Garden of Eden to which the “masters” are only temporarily admitted.

On one hand the atmosphere of “The Feast of Trimalchio” can be seen as bringing together the hotel rituals of leisure and pleasure (massage and golf, the pool and surfing). On the other, the “servants” are more than attentive service-providers. They are participants in an orgy, bringing to life any fantasy of the “masters”, from gastronomic to erotic. At times the “masters” unexpectedly end up in the role of “servants”. Both become participants in an orgiastic gala reception, a dinner in the style of Roman saturnalia when slaves, dressed as patricians, recline at table and their masters, dressed in slaves' tunics, serve them.

Ultimately, the delights of “The Feast of Trimalchio” are spoiled by catastrophes, which encroach on the Global Paradise.

*This work is part of *The Liminal Space Trilogy* with *Last Riot* (2007) and *Allegoria Sacra* (2011).

Biography

AES+F is an artist collective formed as AES in 1987, by three Russian artists: Tatiana Arzamasova (1955), Lev Evzovich (1958), Evgeny Svyatsky (1957), and joined in 1995 by Vladimir Fridkes (1956), at which point the group was renamed to AES+F. The collective works in photography, video, and animation, as well as more traditional media, such as painting, drawing, and sculpture. AES+F's early work included performance, installation, painting, and illustration. Well known for their monumental video-art installations that Gareth Harris describes as “monumental painting set in motion”, AES+F create grand visual narratives that explore contemporary global values, vices and conflicts.

AES+F exhibited internationally for the first time in 1989 with a solo show at Howard Yezerski Gallery in Boston, and a performance at the Carpenter Center at Harvard University in Cambridge. The collective achieved worldwide recognition and acclaim in the Russian Pavilion at the 52nd Biennale di Venezia in 2007 with *Last Riot* (2007), the first in a trilogy of large-scale, multichannel video installations that have come to define the AES+F aesthetic. The second of the series, *The Feast of Trimalchio* (2009), appeared in Venice in 2009, and the third, *Allegoria Sacra* (2011), debuted at the 4th Moscow Biennale in 2011. Together, all three projects premiered as *The Liminal Space Trilogy* in September 2012 at the Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin, and the Moscow Manege, the central exhibition hall of the artists home city. The Trilogy was shown in the Museum of Fine Arts in La Chaux-De-Fonds, Switzerland (June-September 2014). Most recently all three videos were shown at Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY (June-September 2015). AES+F's newest project, *Inverso Mundus*, was presented at the 56th Venice Biennale as a collateral event at the Magazzini del Sale.

The group had more than 100 solo exhibitions at museums and commercial galleries worldwide. AES+F works have been shown in such prestigious venues as the Neuer Berliner Kunstverein (Berlin, 1995), the Moderna Museet (Stockholm, 1999), Tate Britain (London, 2007), the Passage De Retz (Paris, 2007), The State Russian Museum (St. Petersburg, 2007), MACRO Future (Rome, 2008), Moscow Museum of Modern Art (Moscow, 2008), Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza (Madrid, 2011), ZKM (Karlsruhe, 2011), the Vanhaerents Art Collection (Brussels, 2013), Musée des Beaux-Arts (La Chaux-de-Fonds, 2014) and many others.