
Pakui Hardware
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Pakui Hardware, *Underbelly*, 2019. Installation view at MdbK Leipzig, Germany. Photo: Ugnius Gelguda. Courtesy the artist

BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead is pleased to present a new site specific commission by Lithuanian artist duo, **Pakui Hardware**, 28 November 2020 – 18 April 2021.

Pakui Hardware

For their first solo exhibition in the UK, Pakui Hardware (artists Neringa Cerniauskaite and Ugnius Gelguda) will present a newly devised commission created specially for BALTIC's level 2 gallery space, exploring the subject of robotic and virtual care at a particularly significant moment when we find ourselves more concerned than ever with the quality and accessibility of healthcare.

Pakui Hardware's work considers the movement of capital through bodies, technology and materials and how it shapes our realities. Reminiscent of futuristic or biological settings, their hybrid sculptures and installations use materials such as glass, artificial fur, textiles, leather, chia seeds, soil, silicone, metal and plastics. In recent years, their work has explored questions around contemporary medicine, imagining possible futures where material limitations are transcended by fragmenting, multiplying and recreating human and non-human bodies.

Recent work such as *Underbelly* (pictured) explored the artist's interest in the digitisation and quantification of health, bodily experiences and transformations, data gathering and 'data philanthropy'. This autumn at BALTIC, the artists consider another, ever more present, layer of such digitisation in their exploration of robotic and virtual care.

For their new installation at BALTIC, the space will be transformed into an environment that resembles a clinical surgery room where human presence – with the exception of the visitor themselves – is replaced by technology. Glass objects affixed to a hanging surgical lamp sculpture will create a sense of warmth and care, in contrast to the alienated coolness of its steel arms that make anthropomorphic reference to surgeon's hands. Suspended between physical and virtual, bodily and digital, transparent thermoformed or resin 'bodies' will be abstracted into sculptural biomorphic shapes that are both present and erased at the same time. Partially inspired by paintings by Lithuanian artist Teresė Rožanskaitė from the 1970s and 80s, these 'bodies' are traces, shells of 'flesh', dominated by technology.

As a researcher Jeannette Pols notes, there is no pure 'cold' technology and 'warm' human body – it is always a subtle and complex interaction between these poles. Virtual care is not seen here as something inherently threatening, but as a weaving of actions and actors of humanity, technology and economy. The work speaks to wider questions around the problems of access to healthcare in neoliberal systems for poor, remote and marginalised groups to which virtual care technology can be seen as both a possible positive solution, and as an opportunity for the system to turn the most vulnerable over to technological care. And of course, the ever more urgent questions around health data gathering and exploitation are referenced in the work.



NOTES TO EDITORS

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About Pakui Hardware

Pakui Hardware is the name coined by curator Alex Ross (NY) for the collaborative artist duo Neringa Cerniauskaite and Ugnius Gelguda, which began in 2014. The title Pakui Hardware refers to Pakui – special attendant of Hawaiian Goddess, who could circle Oahu island six times in a day. Thus Pakui Hardware is high-speed and brand politics as mythic semio-commodity as well as the desire to transcend the material limitations. Semio-Capital meets materiality.

The duo's work spans around the relationship between materiality, technology, and economy. How technology is shaping current economy and the physical reality itself, including the human body. In relation to the velocity of technological development, the matter becomes both an obstacle and a vehicle. These questions are analyzed through such examples as High Frequency Trading, Prometheism, synthetic biology and new materiality.

Their latest solo shows include Underbelly, Museum der bildenden Künste Leipzig (MdbK), Germany; Thrivers, Polansky gallery, Prague (both 2019); Extrakorporal, Bielefelder Kunstverein, Germany; The Return of Sweetness, Tenderpixel gallery, London (both 2018); Creatures of Habit, Trafó Gallery, Budapest; SIC, Helsinki, and Artissima, Turin, IT; On Demand, EXILE, Berlin (all 2017); Vanilla Eyes, MUMOK, Vienna (2016); Lost Heritage, Kim?, Contemporary Art Centre, Riga (2015); The Metaphysics of the Runner, Contemporary Art Centre (CAC), Vilnius and 321 Gallery, Brooklyn, New York (both 2014).

Ugnius Gelguda is an artist based in Berlin. Neringa Cerniauskaite is an artist, curator, writer. She contributes texts for exhibitions' catalogues and international magazines (*Artforum*, *Flash Art*, *Parkett*, *ARTMargins.com*, *MAP*, *Mousse magazine*). She is an editor of the web-based art magazine www.artnews.lt that was launched in 2008. She is a M.A. graduate, 2014, at Bard College Center for Curatorial Studies, NY.

Both artists are based in Berlin and Vilnius.

About BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art

BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art creates and produces exhibitions, events and learning opportunities which explore the work of artists from across the world, art and creativity. Located on Gateshead quayside, BALTIC has 2,600 square metres of exhibition space making it the UK's largest gallery dedicated to the art and artists of today and tomorrow. BALTIC welcomes visitors free of charge, all year round to experience art, talks, performance and activities in a fully accessible building. Over 8 million have walked through BALTIC's doors so far. Beyond its bricks, BALTIC connects and exchange with communities, individuals and groups supporting creativity, social connections and wider understanding of the world.

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