

## Programma

### ***You, Porn!***

10:00 - 10:10 Matteo Bittanti, introduction

10:10 - 10:25 Marco De Mutiis, *Choose Porn*

This performative introduction will attempt to map the different ways in which images and image technologies have intensified our pornographic ways of seeing. The presentation will playfully explore contemporary habits of computational and photographic production and consumption, from the excesses of binge watching to the fetish of screen resolution, from the photographed object as a proxy for unfulfilled desires to the image as an improved version of flawed realities. Rewriting the infamous *Choose Life* monologue from the iconic 1996 movie *Trainspotting*, *Choose Porn* invites the audience to fully embrace and push to the extreme our latent desires, sublimating them through the powers of the networked and digital image.

10:25 - 10:45 Andy King, *You Are All I See/On 2D Love*

Looking at an office space with its rows of computer screens with desktop wallpaper backgrounds of over-saturated tropical islands, it's clear that escapist imagery is embedded into the architecture of the everyday. Proxy realities avoid grey areas – which contain the majority of human experience – either through catastrophization or enhancement. Self-help books can try their best to list the benefits of aligning expectations to reality, but the meme economy paints a completely different picture: realistic images are born to die. On the internet, images compete for attention at a pace never possible before, and the winning images are the ones that dare to break bounds. Online platforms that actively encourage an aggressive sharing of memes have given birth to a number of extreme subcultures. *Volcels* are voluntary celibate men who no longer find real women attractive, or no longer wish to, believing that the *idea* of a woman is superior to its physical counterpart. They consciously reject reality – which they find to be a poor representation of popular culture – and substitute romantic relationships with pornography, VR, fictional characters, dating sims and sex dolls. Volcels often speak of their love for fictional characters as being pure, because they perceive fantasy relationships as being uncontaminated by the fallibility of humans. Some men go as far as to semi-ironically pledge virginites to each other in order to remain 'pure' for their 'waifus' – imaginary girlfriends based on fictional anime characters. Since exposure to internet pornography predates first physical sexual encounters, real experiences end up being compared to exaggerated simulations, rather than the other way round. This can result in disappointment, and increase the desire for further escapism – a need that industries are happy to exploit. *You Are All I See* is a series of 34 photographs that play out a love story between a voluntary celibate man and a string of fantasy women. The images explore the tension between heightened fictional worlds and the gritty realities they fail to mask: kitschy utopias peel away to reveal neglected spaces overrun with waste. It is the result of a voyeur surveilling other voyeurs – a woman looking at men looking at fantastical representations of other women.

10:45 - 11:05 Matteo Bittanti

11:05 - 11:25 Danaé Panchaud, *Museums and the legitimation of the gaze*

Museums were envisaged as places for education, aimed in particular at the working classes. This education was to be conveyed through the gaze, obviously directed at the exhibits, but interestingly also at the other visitors. It was indeed expected that in such a public place, mixing higher and lower classes, the latter could also educate themselves by observing the higher classes and learning to mimic their behaviour.

One of the effects of museums is the legitimisation of the gaze, be it turned to artworks or the crowds. Anything a visitor is peering at has been vetted for his gaze. At the same time, looking in

museums remains a very public activity, as the spectator is aware of always being viewed viewing (by other visitors, museum staff, and often CCTV).

Therefore, by legitimising the gaze, museums therefore play a significant role in defining what is suitable to being gazed at and in normalising the act of seeing. This presentation will examine the regimes and the dynamics of viewing in the museum, as well as the role and responsibility of museums in framing the gaze.

11:25 - 12:00 Mona Schubert in conversation with Andy Kassier, *insta-males. Self-pornification on social media*

"Is this the best a man can get? It's only by challenging ourselves to do more, that we can get closer to our best." In the beginning of 2019 Gillette launched an ad campaign dealing with toxic masculinity in the wake of 2018's #metoo-debate and got a huge backlash on YouTube for being too generalizing. What does masculinity in this day and age even mean? Social media seem to reinforce a representation of gender binaries with males appearing in fast cars, showing off muscles and expensive business attires. Being both the subject and the object of the picture, the male influencer turns his self(ie) into a product. Under the term "insta-males", assistant curator of Fotomuseum Mona Schubert will approach this phenomenon during an interview-performance with German concept artist and social-media-superstar Andy Kassier. Which attributes are considered #male-representative? What is the best way to take a #male selfie? What should be the #goals in a #male #instalife?

12:00 Q&A and open discussion