

Respawn

Curated by Bob Bicknell-Knight

Bob Bicknell-Knight, Roc Herms, Emily Mulenga, Léa Porré, Total Refusal, Georgie Roxby Smith and Angela Washko

Opening Wednesday 17th April 2024, 6 – 9 pm

18th April - 18th May 2024, Thursday to Saturday, 2 – 5 pm or by appointment

SEAGER, Distillery Tower, 2 Mill Lane, London, SE8 4HP, UK



Total Refusal. How to Disappear, 2020. Video with sound. 21 min 6 sec. Courtesy of the artist.

Respawn is the third show in the four-part exhibition series Matchmaking at SEAGER, exploring how artists make work with and about video games.

The exhibition investigates violence, war and politics in the digital realm. The exhibition will reflect upon how artists use video games and game aesthetics to speak about conflict, from exploring the history of deserters through the lens of digital warfare to confronting misogynistic portrayals of women in games.

Each exhibition in the series is accompanied by a reading list of books that inspired the ideas behind the exhibition, as well as a number of books selected by the exhibiting artists that inform their practice, available to read within the gallery space.

With artworks from Bob Bicknell-Knight, Roc Herms, Emily Mulenga, Léa Porré, Total Refusal, Georgie Roxby Smith and Angela Washko, curated by Bob Bicknell-Knight.

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Bob Bicknell-Knight (b. 1996, Ipswich, UK) is a multidisciplinary artist and curator working with digital media producing films, paintings, sculptures and installations. His practice comes from a place of pessimism, exploring power structures that proliferate online and in new forms of technology. Bicknell-Knight runs the online curatorial platform [isthisit?](#), and has previously curated exhibitions at The Art Station, Saxmundham, UK (2023); [Senne], Brussels, BE (2021); Harlesden High Street, London, UK (2019); Annka Kultys Gallery, London, UK (2018) and arebyte Gallery, London, UK (2018). Selected solo exhibitions include Sunday School at Number 1 Main Road, Berlin, DE (2023); Insert Coin at CABLE DEPOT, London, UK (2023); Non-Player Character at Klaipėda Exhibition Hall, Klaipėda, LT (2023); Digging History at INDUSTRA, Brno, CZ (2021); Eat The Rich at Galerie Sono, Paris, FR (2021); It's Always Day One at Office Impart, Berlin, DE (2021) and Bit Rot at Broadway Gallery, Letchworth, UK (2020).

Roc Herms (b. 1978, ES) is an artist working with photography as a learning tool, exploring an interest in the Internet, video games and parallel realities. On the same year of Herms' birth, Gary Thurek and his assistant Carl Gartley sent the first mass email with advertising purposes, reaching 393 users at the Advanced Research Projects Agency Network (called the ARPANET), unaware that they just sent the first example of what would later be known as SPAM. 28 years later Herms discovered photography as a tool to learn, and he manages to combine it with his interest in the Internet, video games and parallel realities: showing his passion for technology and the need to take a step further in the photographic practice. His works have been exhibited in "From Here On" (Centre d'Arts Santa Monica, Barcelona) and "Photography 2.0" (Circulo de Bellas Artes, Madrid) curated by Joan Fontcuberta, as well as in the Noorderlicht Photo Festival (Netherlands), Platine Festival (Germany), Fotomuseum Winterthur (Switzerland), Hammer Museum (USA) and Les Rencontres d'Arles (France).

Emily Mulenga (b. 1991, UK) is a multimedia artist whose practice spans video, digital collage, sculpture and live coded music. Using visuals and sound that draw upon video games, cartoons and the internet, her practice explores themes of capitalism, feminism, technology, millennial nostalgia, love and existential anxieties. Mulenga's output reflects a ravenous consumption of digital media, where gloss and escapism meet humour and unease, spanning past, present and future. Mulenga has exhibited internationally and led projects at Tate Britain, Firstsite and Camden Art Centre. She holds an MA in Fine Art from Chelsea College of Arts, funded by the Frank Bowling Scholarship.

Léa Porré (b. 1996) is a French and Belgian artist based in London. She graduated from the Royal College of Art in 2021 and Central Saint Martins in 2018. Her research-led practice investigates cyclical time through the interrelations of memory, history and myth, specifically deep mapping historical and sacred sites. These sites are re-imagined through 3D Worldbuilding to create Videos, Installations, Sculptures and Framed Paintings. She imagines impossible encounters taking place in cyclical time, as a strategy of resistance against linear time, by blending reality, dreams, and tales, creating transhistorical visions. She aims to channel a form of healing towards our complex heritage, whilst using it as a tool for future forecasting. She has exhibited her work internationally, most recently at Pavillon Southway and MAMO Modulor in Marseille, Center Pompidou and Brownstone Foundation in Paris, Residence Gallery, COB Gallery, Paradise Row Projects, Tate Modern in London, UK.

Total Refusal is a pseudo-marxist media guerilla focused on the artistic intervention and appropriation of mainstream video games. They upcycle video games in order to reveal the political apparatus beyond the glossy and hyperreal textures of this media. Since its foundation in 2018 the collective has been awarded with numerous prizes like the Diagonale Film Award for the Best Short Doc, the Contemporary Visual Arts Award of Styria Province and Vimeo Staff Pick Award among others. Total Refusal has been screened at more than 130 film and video festivals like Berlinale (2020), Doc Fortnight at MOMA New York and IDFA Amsterdam (2018) and they been exhibited at various exhibition spaces like the Architecture Biennial Venice 2021, the HEK Basel (2020) and the Ars Electronica Linz (2019).

Georgie Roxby Smith (b. 1976, Melbourne, AU) works across a range of disciplines exploring new pathways between virtual and physical worlds. Employing a variety of tools - including 3D graphics, live performance, shared virtual and gaming spaces, installation and projection - these works explore the increasingly blurred border between identity, materiality, reality, virtuality and fantasy in contemporary culture. Since 2012 Roxby Smith has been focusing on online identity, gender representation and violence in video games, particularly that directed towards women on screen and in online communities. Roxby Smith has exhibited extensively

both nationally and internationally including Art in Odd Places, New York, Prospectives International Festival of Digital Art Nevada, Game Art Festival at Hammer Museum Los Angeles, Gamerz Festival (FR), Festival Miden (GR) and Generation i.2 - Aesthetics of the Digital in the 21st Century at Edith Russ Huas for Media Art (DE). Other highlights include curating and showing in NOW13: New Media Art Now, Substation Contemporary Art Prize and Self Help at Rawson Projects Brooklyn, curated by Jocelyn Miller (MoMa PS1).

Angela Washko (b. 1986, Pennsylvania, USA) is an artist, filmmaker, and experimental game developer who creates new forums for discussions about feminism in spaces frequently hostile towards it. Her practice spans interventions in virtual environments, performance art, media installation, documentary film, and video games. A recipient of the United States Artists Fellowship, Creative Capital Award, National Endowment for the Arts award, Franklin Furnace Performance Fund, Impact Award at Indiecade, and Jury Awards for Best Documentary at the American Film Festival, San Francisco Documentary Film Festival, and Buffalo International Film Festival. Her projects have been presented internationally at venues including Museum of the Moving Image, Centre Pompidou-Metz, Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art, the Milan Design Triennale, the Shenzhen Animation Biennial, and the Korean Film Archive. Her recently completed feature-length documentary film, *Workhorse Queen*, has won numerous awards at international film festivals and is currently being broadcast on STARZ, Amazon Prime, AppleTV, and more. Angela Washko is an Associate Professor of Art at Carnegie Mellon University.