

noorderlicht

Open call:

Noorderlicht International Photo Festival 2021

The Makeable Mind

"I'm not crazy, my reality is just different than yours." (Cheshire Cat internet meme)

The Noorderlicht International Photo Festival 2021 will take place from 7 August till 3 October 2021 at various locations in the Dutch provinces of Groningen and Friesland. Departing from photography, the festival focuses on the entire spectrum of the image, both analogue and digital: from computer-generated imagery to virtual, mixed and augmented reality, installations, projections and mappings. The theme 'The Makeable Mind' will explore the relationship between visual culture and reality: How do visual technologies, communication media, and both mainstream and citizen journalism influence our thinking, and how do they disguise, describe, rewrite and expose our reality?

Flexible realities

The idea that reality is ambiguous is nothing new. There is always that small voice in the back of one's mind that urges caution when interpreting images that pretend to show reality. But something is fundamentally changing in the way we see the world and in the way it is shown to us. Society is increasingly struggling with the concepts of 'truth' and 'reality', and image-makers work in the context of this new ambiguity. It is both a game and a struggle at the same time.

New instruments

Firstly, in recent decades, digital and online technologies have changed the traditional view of the photographic, cinematic or visual medium as a 'window to reality'. In addition to time-honoured photographic processes – direct prints of observable reality – new(er) media are being used: three-dimensional LiDAR scanners, Mixed Reality systems, and GPS and motion capture techniques produce new forms of representation and/or reconstruction.

This is not limited to the domain of journalism, but also focuses on that of the imagination, science fiction or even 'science faction': here, art not only reflects society, but can also look at how we should or could interpret it. It shows us a version of who we

are or could become: art as a laboratory for the future, a driver of debate, an explorer of flexible realities.

Online world

Secondly, the internet has become a crucial source of information, with a major impact on our world view. In an endless stream of verified and unverified data, the influencer's quick opinion and the scientist's evidence-based view fight for our attention, and even our belief. Knowledge gives way to interpretation; in post-truth politics, emotion is more important than facts, and fake news has become an everyday concept, with often very real consequences.

As a result, the distinction between real and fake is rapidly disappearing, partly due to the advanced technology (machine learning) used to create deep fakes. The role of media techniques in general increases the vertigo: they are both a tool and a lens, and because of their impact on our lives, often also a subject. The 'mechanical eye' films itself and it is up to us to interpret. Understanding this world requires media literacy and resilience.

Parallel worlds

Perhaps it is the Cheshire Cat internet meme that comes closest to the truth: "I'm not crazy, my reality is just different than yours." Between fake and real lies a world of images and stories we must relate to, sometimes dystopian, sometimes utopian. With algorithms as our personal advisers, within our own bubble we all think we know objective reality, but if there's one thing about this truth we can be sure of, it is that it is not singular.

In his book 'Technic and Magic: The reconstruction of reality', Italian philosopher Federico Campagna reminds us that reality not only 'is' but also 'makes possible': 'We take for granted that only certain kind of things exist - electrons but not angels, passports but not nymphs. This is what we understand as reality'. His point is that reality changes with time and is thus changing what we can do or think. And in our times, it is technology that has the greatest impact on us, and our reality is beginning to crumble. If we want to change our world, we will first have to change the idea of the reality that underlies it.

This year's Noorderlicht festival focuses on these forms of reality and on the parallel worlds they can produce: How is our thinking guided by the manifestations of limitless communication, by a visual culture on steroids, by unprecedented technical possibilities and super-fast internet connections? What makes our mind?

SUBMISSIONS

Noorderlicht is serious about diversity and inclusion and welcomes proposals from photographers, lens-based artists and curators from all parts of the world, from all generations, individuals or collectives. Art forms relating to photography, such as digital media, video or VR, are also specifically requested, as is work in which photography enters into a dialogue with all other conceivable types of media. We therefore call upon everyone - even if this is the first time you wish to submit something to an Open Call, or if your practice goes beyond photography - to push your boundaries literally and figuratively.

Curation

'The Makeable Mind' will include a mix of own research and submissions and is compiled by festival curator Paulien Dresscher in close consultation with the team of Noorderlicht and junior curator George Knegtel.

Deadline

Proposals can be submitted **until March 1st, 2021**.

Guidelines for submissions

Submissions for the open call are free of charge. Selected artists will receive a fee in accordance with the Dutch guidelines for artists' fees for group exhibitions. Noorderlicht subscribes to the Fair Practice Code for work in art, culture and creative industries.

Submissions can be sent to pandora@noorderlicht.com. We request that you send large files via a file transfer service, such as WeTransfer. Submissions should contain visual material in the form of separate JPG image files at least 1500 pixels wide, a clear description of the project plus a synopsis of approximately 100-150 words, an explanation of why you think it fits the theme, a CV, a short bio, and any additional background information where required. Videos should be submitted in full length in a preview format, compressed and no more than HD resolution. If possible, please provide examples of previous exhibitions and installations of your proposal or similar presentations of your work.

Before submitting your entry, please read the [Exhibition FAQ](#) for information about the selection procedure and the terms and conditions regarding the production of your work. Entrants will first receive a confirmation of receipt followed by news of the selections at a later stage.

The Noorderlicht Festival

Noorderlicht is an international platform for artists who use photography and adjoining media in all its forms to portray their engagement with society. 'The Makeable Mind' will be the 28th edition of the Noorderlicht International Photo Festival and will take place from 7 August till 3 October 2021 in the provinces Groningen and Friesland.

Paulien Dresscher: festival curator

Paulien Dresscher (NL) is this year's guest curator of the Noorderlicht Festival. As an independent curator and researcher in the field of digital culture, she works for PublicSpaces, the Netherlands Film Festival, Into The Great Wide Open and Utrecht University. This year she will be compiling the festival in collaboration with the Noorderlicht team.

George Knegt: junior curator

George Knegt (NL) is a photographer and junior curator. She lives and works in The Hague and was one of the Young Curators of the Noorderlicht Photo Festival 2019.

If you have questions about your submission, please contact festival curator Paulien Dresscher: paulien@noorderlicht.com.

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