

DAM GALLERY

ARAM BARTHOLL Hurt me plenty

Exhibition: 13 September – 1 November 2014

Preview : 12 September 2014, 7 – 9 PM

The artists is present

7:30: Introduction: Olia Lialina, Professor New Media, Merz Akademie Stuttgart

I'm too young to die.
Hey. Not too rough.
Hurt me plenty.
Ultra-Violence.
Nightmare!

Performance at the Preview on September 12, 2014 at DAM GALLERY:

DATALOVE

BYOD – Bring Your Own Drive, and crush it.

Disused hard drives of PCs, laptops and servers imply a high security risk. DATALOVE prevents that discarded hard drives with sensible data fall into wrong hands. During the Preview of the exhibition the visitors are invited to bring their old data storage media and get them destroyed with a hardware crusher as part of Bartholl's performance DATALOVE.

DAM GALLERY Neue Jakobstraße 6 10179 Berlin

Phone: +49 30 280 98 135 office@dam.org www.dam.org
Opening hours: Tue – Fri 12 – 6 pm · Sat 12 – 4 pm · and by appointment

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Hurt me plenty! No one could easily say such words, unless they were in a virtual world, where violence would cause no actual pain. The term comes from the first-person shooter game "Doom" (published in 1993) and indicates one of the skill levels from which players can choose. In his work **"Choose Skill Level"** (2014), Aram Bartholl transfers the sentences from the computer game onto a virtual sheet of paper with his analogue handwriting via a computer mouse. Afterwards he creates a physical artwork out of this large-format typeface to be presented within an exhibition space.

First-person shooter (FPS) games like "Doom" or "Duke Nukem" (1991) were the first to take place within a 3D environment. Therefore they form the basis for Aram Bartholl's involvement in merging reality and virtuality. FPS games usually reveal a hand in the middle of the lower edge of the screen. It serves as an extended arm of the real player reaching into the computer-generated space, unifying both characters. The artist addresses this relation in his series **"Come Get Some"** (2014) and his sculptural work **"What are you Waiting For?"** (2014) using found footage from "Duke Nukem 3D" (1996). In "What are you Waiting For?" the artist refers to the finger-creaking gesture of the hero Duke Nukem while waiting for the player's next move. In his large format silkscreen prints of "Come Get Some" the artist transforms Duke Nukem's hand holding a weapon ready to fire. In a large blow-up, the digital patterns of the pixels interfere with an analogue CMYK raster. With the usage of silkscreen, the artist refers to Pop Art and its absorption of mass culture elements. In Aram Bartholl's works, the items of a virtual mass culture become part of both the art and the real world. Bartholl refers to the aesthetic of pixels from the past; today's computer performance is able to create a visual appearance indiscernible from reality. This visual effect is made possible due to powerful graphics cards, not only utilizable for computer games but also harnessed by hackers to crack the passwords of billions of internet users.

With the installation **"TFLOPS"** (2014) Aram Bartholl deals with graphics cards, whose capacities are expressed in FLOPS (Floating Point Operations Per Second). The appearance of this hardware - usually just an invisible part within the computer case - the artist combines with a language of advertisement and glossy magazines: plain, coloured in black and silver, highlighting technical details talk the graphics card up to a male status symbol. Bartholl's work **"Datalove"** (2014) demonstrates with the usage of hardware crushers the absurdity of a system that needs a physical device to destroy virtual data. An action only reasonable, if the information to be destroyed didn't find its way through the Internet before. In **"123456"** (2014) Bartholl takes hacked user passwords like "robert79" or "23flowers" he found on the internet to convert them into fine pencil plotter drawings - a technique already used by Digital Art pioneers such as Vera Molnar or Manfred Mohr. The mentioned passwords are considered insecure today. The artist reminds us that the whole system of passwords is outdated anyway, because security in this case just describes a temporary lead regarding the development of computer's performance.

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With the three-part photographic work **"Dropping the Internet"** (2014) - reminiscent of Ai Weiwei's *Dropping a Han Dynasty Urn* (1995) - the artist critically and ironically states that the Internet has fundamentally and irretrievably changed since Edward Snowden's disclosures. Global surveillance and mass data storage by corporations, governments and intelligence agencies are on the top the agenda. Cyberpunk's dystopic visions from the early 1980's which transform the utopian science fiction dream into a gloomy, anarchistic and capitalist world, seem finally to have come true.

With his work, the artist Aram Bartholl addresses the bond between the virtual world and reality. He points out that the actions taken in the Internet - by oneself and others - have a huge impact on our own daily life. Insecure passwords and the usage of free apps as an exchange for private data illustrate the lack of awareness by the users for their situation. In this context the brutality of the FPS symbolizes the tremendous dangers lurking in today's virtual surroundings - with only a few Duke Nukems waging a struggle. For the most of us the school reading of George Orwell's "1984" (1949) dates far back. Movies like "Tron" (1982) or "Matrix" (1999) lead to believe that humans have to be linked to the virtual world via a neuronal interface to physically undergo its violations and injuries. This imagination prevents us from realizing that we are already right in the middle of it.

Text: Tina Sauerländer

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Saturday: 12 – 4 PM

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Additional event to the exhibition:

Workshop: 24 September 2014, 7 PM

KILLYOURPHONE.COM

Workshop with Aram Bartholl at DAM GALLERY Berlin

Together with the artist Aram Bartholl, each participant will have the chance to sew his own cell phone case to keep away any kind of radiation and location services. While sewing, it becomes clear that being shielded from the virtual world totally prohibits one's participation in real life, which is no longer possible without the Internet. We have to live with the disadvantages and consequences, right?

Participation is free of charge. Registration via email to office@dam.org is required.

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