

Group Show and Exhibition—“Vigil: Death and the Afterlife”, Opens at Loods6, 22nd of November 2024, Amsterdam. A Contemplation of Death, Liminality, and the Afterlife

Amsterdam based collective Semester 9 invites London-based gallery, Shipton and curator Isabella Greenwood - **Vigil: Death and the Afterlife**, brings together 27 contemporary artists to confront the most elusive of human experiences. Through immersive installations, sculpture, painting and multimedia works, *Vigil* navigates the liminal thresholds between life, death, and beyond, offering a space for speculative mourning and existential contemplation. Exploring the industrial space of Loods into an experiential site, the show weaves together visual, conceptual, and speculative works that challenge traditional narratives around mortality and invite viewers into a space of contemplation and aesthetic disruption.

Vigil unfolds in three thematic chapters each meticulously designed to guide viewers through different stages of mortality and existence where each chapter delves into distinct stages of existential transition, drawing from diverse perspectives from bodily-decay, transcendence to post-human speculative futures: **I. Towards the Afterlife: Corporeal Decay**— The exhibition begins with an exploration of death's immediacy through works that evoke decomposition and bodily transcendence **II. The Liminal Realm**—this section delves into the mythic suspension between life and death, where the corporeal body begins to transmute into the astral body **III. Beyond the Afterlife**—which looks beyond human mortality to a speculative, post-human future, considering the emergence of new ecologies, hybrid entities, and bioengineered organisms. These works gesture towards the possibility of a world continuing in the absence of humanity, urging viewers to consider what life—or death—might look like beyond the anthropocentric lens, guiding viewers through various metaphysical and cultural landscapes.

By navigating this curated sequence of states, visitors are invited to engage not only as passive observers but as active participants in the ritual of keeping vigil—a process of bearing witness to *embodied presence*. “This exhibition is not merely about death, but about the lived experience of being with death—an attempt to navigate the liminal states that underlie our existence,” states curator Isabella Greenwood. “By confronting these spaces, *Vigil* disrupts the Western tendency to relegate death to the periphery and reimagines it as an active, generative force. To keep vigil is a radical interruption—a refusal to let the symbolic order quietly assimilate death into the banal structures of modernity.”

Venue and Architectural Significance

Set in the historic Loods 6, a former shipping warehouse turned cultural hub, the exhibition's location serves as an architectural metaphor for the themes of liminality and transformation. Built in 1921 and once occupied by squatters and artists, Loods 6 has evolved into a dynamic space for contemporary art, echoing the exhibition's interrogation of presence, absence, and perpetual becoming.

Conceptual Overview

Drawing from the concept of a 'vigil'—a period of wakefulness between death and burial—the exhibition explores how individuals bear witness to mortality in a world increasingly detached from its rituals. At the core of *VIGIL* is the refusal to let death be relegated to the margins of contemporary consciousness. Inspired by philosophers such as Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Achille Mbembe, the exhibition invites audiences to participate in an embodied encounter with death, where the act of witnessing transforms into a visceral, active engagement with decay, metamorphosis, and the unknown.

Artists

Maksud Ali Mondal, Honey Baker, Doron Beuns, Ernest Bessems, Lily Bloom, Szilvia Bolla, Kate Burling, Šimon Chovan, Jamie John Davies, Folkert De Jong, Neckar Doll, Leon Scott Engels, Phoebe Evans, Ella Fleck, Allan Gardner, Max Otis King, KT Kobel, Anna-Lena Krause, Nataliya Zuban, Harry Hugo Little, Melle Nieling, Andrei Nițu, Tomasz Skibicki, Bregje Sliepenbeek, Salomé Wu, Daddy Bears.



Press Preview and Opening Reception

Members of the press are invited to a special preview on 22 November at 15:00, followed by the public opening reception at 17:00. For press inquiries or to RSVP, please contact pim@semester9.com.

About the Curator

Isabella Greenwood is an London-based writer and curator whose work explores intersections of hauntology, folkloric epistemologies, theology and aesthetic theory.

About Semester 9

Semester 9 is a contemporary project bureau dedicated to introducing new generations of contemporary artists to the Dutch and international art market.

About Shipton Gallery

Shipton is an east London-based contemporary art gallery fostering a community of artists and curators for a wider cultural audience.

About Doron Beuns

Doron Beuns (1994) is an artist and curator whose practice explores the internet as a public square where social surveillance, transgression, and distorted realities collide.

Opening exhibition

VIGIL: Death and the Afterlife

Loods 6, 22nd November- 17:00-21:00, 2024. KNSM-Laan 143, 1019 LB Amsterdam

Performance Piece & Curator's Panel Discussion

In conjunction with the exhibition, a series of performances, artist talks, and panel discussions will be held, featuring a diverse group of voices including undertakers, spiritual practitioners, and academics specialising in death and afterlife rituals. Including Anna De Waal, Alexandra Sive and performance by London based artist Charlie Jiminez.

November 30th 17:00-21:00, at Loods 6.

For more information, visit semester9.com or contact Pim Lamme via pim@semester9.com

For EU press inquiries contact pim@semester9.com

For UK press inquiries contact info@shipton.gallery

