

Exhibition 11 November 2015 – 21 March 2016
Sabatini Building. Floor 3

Hito Steyerl

Duty-Free Art



Duty-Free Art, 2015. © Hito Steyerl. VEGAP, Madrid, 2015



In the work of Hito Steyerl (Munich, 1966) the construction of the text and the editing of the image expand the condition of the film essay, reflecting on and intervening in the systems through which information circulates and the presentation and representation of the artwork. Her writings, lectures, films and audio-visual installations align philosophical and political reflection with a critical activism inserted in the sphere of the production and circulation of the image and the word.

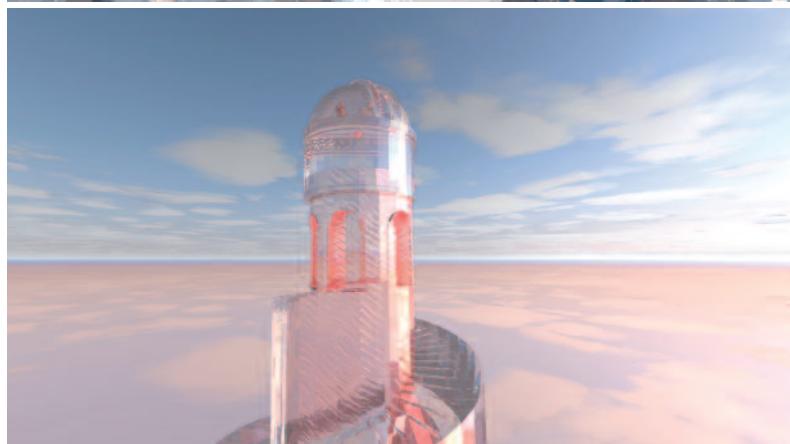
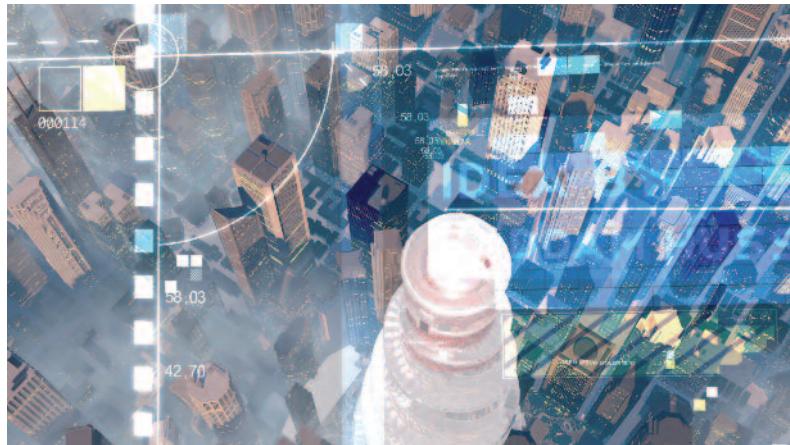
Steyerl responds in her work to what Noam Chomsky has called 'Orwell's problem': the paradox that, even with so much evidence and data at our disposal, our understanding of the norms and conventions that govern reality is so limited. The artist brings to light the dialectic of the visible and the invisible that structures—in a highly political way—the proliferation of images in the cultural industries. She uses references to popular culture (such as action movies, music, song videos or computer games) to give us back, in the form of a reflection, a far-reaching critique of contemporary phenomena such as migration, feminism, multiculturalism and globalization are explored and exposed within the framing realities of war and financial speculation that mark our present moment. Contemporary art and the transition to post-democracy, the occupation of time by the technologies and industries of culture (art among them), to precarity of work, control, surveillance and militarization are among the other key themes we find in her oeuvre.

Nor do the places of art escape her scrutiny: these are loci whose financial and security systems and working conditions conform to the realities of the dominant neo-liberal economy. In this light, the museum is revealed as a 'battlefield'. Embracing the

notion that art is a test site, Hito Steyerl critically reinvents the place of art. Intervening in reality as it does, her work instantiates the fact that this cannot be done any other way than politically: it's not a matter of making political films, but rather of making films politically. As the artist asks in one of her recent texts: 'If images can be shared and circulated, why can't everything else be too?'

Duty-Free Art brings together in retrospective form a selection of Hito Steyerl's work, including many pieces that can be seen here for the first time in Spain. These are joined by a new piece, *The Tower*, made specifically for this exhibition, as well as the premiere of a performative lecture (in collaboration with the musician Kassem Mosse) to be given on the day of the opening. Hito Steyerl's work has featured prominently in a number of major group exhibitions such as the 55th Venice Biennale (2013), the 13th Istanbul Biennial (2013) or documenta12 in Kassel (2007). She has exhibited individually at the Artist's Space gallery in New York, KOW Berlin (2015), the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven, the ICA - Institute of Contemporary Arts in London (2014) and The Art Institute of Chicago (2012), among others. This year she represented Germany at the Venice Biennale.

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The Tower, 2015.
© Hito Steyerl,
VEGAP, Madrid, 2015

Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía

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Opening hours

Monday to Saturday
and public holidays
from 10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Sundays

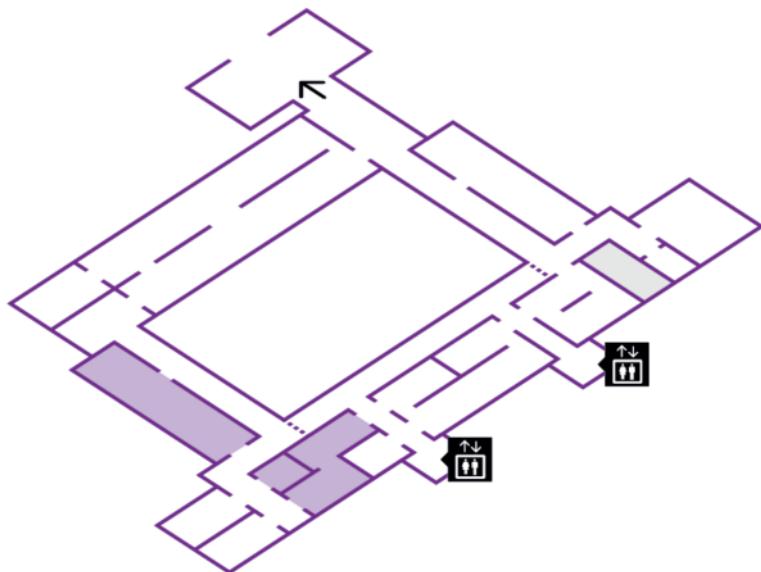
from 10:00 a.m. to 2:15 p.m.
opens the whole Museum,
from 2:15 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
visit to Collection 1
and one temporary exhibition
(check Website)

Closed on Tuesdays

Exhibition rooms in all venues
will be cleared 15 minutes before
closing time



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