

AES+I

**ART GALLERY OF
SOUTH AUSTRALIA**



SPECTACULAR NEW VIDEO WORK MAKES ITS AUSTRALIAN PREMIERE AT ART GALLERY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Allegoria Sacra, the monumental new video work by celebrated international collective AES+F, will screen for the first time in Australia as part of the Adelaide Fringe, on Friday 24 February 2012.

Art Gallery of South Australia Director, Nick Mitzevich says '*Allegoria Sacra*' is the third work by Russian collective AES+F in a broadly conceived trilogy that also includes *Last Riot 2* and *The feast of Trimalchio*, whose visual splendour and magnificence captivated more than 82,000 visitors to the Gallery in 2010.'

'This digitally animated collage, comprised of thousands of photographs, bombards the senses and offers a potent allegory of contemporary culture', says Mr Mitzevich.

Set in an international airport; the protagonists are suspended in time and place – purgatory. Here they wait, united by their desire to move from one world to another, yet remain detached and self-absorbed, like the figures in the iconic Giovanni Bellini painting of the same name.

Futuristic scenarios, images of idealised beauty, youth, style, progress and wealth, and the fusion of historical with the contemporary seduce the viewer. Painterly compositional devices, particularly those of the Italian Renaissance and Baroque traditions, provide the structural basis and visual splendour of individual frames.

AES+F draw on varied references, from religious symbolism to Delacroix's orientalism and 1960s sci-fi cinema, but the social issues that sustain the work are drawn from the present. The viewer is ultimately left to question whether humanity can return to something more pure.

Allegoria Sacra will make its Australian premiere at a free outdoor event on North Terrace on Friday 24 February 2012 as part of the Adelaide Fringe. Following the opening, it will be exhibited in Gallery 15 until 3 June 2012.

This spectacular video work has been acquired for the permanent collection of the Art Gallery of South Australia through the Director's Project – a fund initiated through Contemporary Collectors, and supported by a visionary group of benefactors, to secure extraordinary art projects and works of art.

OPENING EVENT 24 February 2012

EXHIBITION DATES 25 February until 3 June 2012

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Images are now available for media download from:

www.artgallery.sa.gov.au/agsa/home/Media_Centre/2011/AES_F/index.html



FACT SHEET

- The world premiere of the five-channel version of *Allegoria Sacra* took place at Multimedia Art Museum Moscow in September 2011 as part of the 4th Moscow Biennale.
- Giovanni Bellini's *Allegoria Sacra (Sacred Allegory)*, c.1485–1488, hangs in the Uffizi in Florence. The subject of this painting is a mystery to art historians. One interpretation is that it showed Purgatory, where the souls of the righteous, of virtuous pagans and of unchristened children await their fate – heaven or hell.
- AES+F have always been intrigued by this painting. When they started to think of a third project after *Last Riot* and *The Feast of Trimalchio* the artists decided that a work entitled *Allegoria Sacra* would form the final part of a trilogy about the modern world (Hell, Heaven, Purgatory). They see Bellini's heroes in those passengers who meet accidentally while awaiting their flights at international airports.

detail: AES+F, *Allegoria Sacra*, 2011, video still images; Acquired through the Contemporary Collectors' Director's Project © AES+F Courtesy Triumph Gallery, Moscow





AES+F

- AES+F is a Moscow-based artist collective that produces large-scale video installations, digital 'paintings', photography and sculpture.
- The collective comprises of four artists: Tatiana Arzamasova, Lev Evzovich and Evgeny Syatskiy who have collaborated as AES since 1987 and have worked with photographer Vladimir Fridkes since 1995 (AES+F).
- Tatiana Arzamasova and Lev Evzovitch are graduates of Moscow Architectural Institute, Evgeny Syatskiy is a graduate of Moscow University of Printing Arts, and Vladimir Fridkes has been a fashion photographer for Russian editions of *Vogue*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *ELLE*, *Marie Claire*, *Cosmopolitan* and others.
- AES+F is often described as a post-Soviet artist collective. While all four artists were born following the death of Joseph Stalin in 1953, their work recalls the heroic imagery of official Soviet art, known as Socialist Realism. By the time the group formed in 1987, the possibilities for Russian artists were broadening and, for the first time in decades, Russian art was starting to be seen abroad.
- Works by AES and AES+F have been widely exhibited at numerous Biennial's including Venice, Lyon, Sydney, Gwangju, Moscow, Gothenburg, Havana, Tirana, Istanbul, Bratislava and Seoul.
- Their works are also in the collections of museums across Europe such as The State Tretyakov Gallery (Moscow), The State Russian Museum (St Petersburg), Multimedia Art Center (Moscow), Moderna Museet (Stockholm), MEP (Paris), les Abattoirs (Toulouse), FNAC (Paris), Center Pompidou (Paris), Museum of Contemporary Art (Belgrade) and Goetz Collection (Munich).

ART GALLERY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

- The Art Gallery of South Australia is the state's premier cultural institution with some 38,000 works of art.
- The selection of AES+F's *Allegoria Sacra* as the first work to enter the collection through the Director's Project highlights the Gallery's commitment to bringing the best and most current international contemporary art to Adelaide.