

Hubert Czerepok *Lux Aeterna*

January 28 – April 21, 2012

Opening January 27, 2012, 6 – 9 pm*I, godhead's likeness, who had soared in mind**Close to the mirror of eternal verity; (...)**Must I now rue it so!*

[J. W. Goethe, Faust, translation Walter Arndt]

The exhibition *Lux Aeterna* by Hubert Czerepok focuses on humanity's dream of attaining omniscience. Czerepok is interested in the border between enlightenment and possession, between good and evil.

Lux Aeterna is the artist's second exhibition for the ŻAK | BRANICKA Gallery. His first, *Haunebu*, explored conspiracy theories in history, and his latest works are an analysis of the utopian dream of power and attaining omniscience.

Lux Aeterna is also the title of Czerepok's latest video, shot in Norway. His protagonist takes an inward journey and holds a complicated monologue with quotes from Romantic poetry and the writings of statesmen, madmen, and tyrants (Juliusz Słowacki, Thomas Jefferson, Anders Breivik, Adolf Hitler). The background to this monologue builds with breathtaking scenery of the country's nature: mighty northern woods, rocks, and lakes. Besides Romanticism, the artist alludes to totalitarian ideologies (such as the Nazi symbols of Valhalla). The film's style and expression also draw from Nazi German cinematography (e.g. Leni Riefenstahl), in which nature inspires a longing to conquer the world. As such, the film is a treatise on political utopias that are born from the desire to be all-powerful.

Unexpectedly for the artist, the work on the film coincided with events on the Norwegian island of Utøya, where in July 2011 the right-wing extremist Anders Behring Breivik, convinced that he was benefiting the world's future, murdered 77 people. It was later revealed that during the murder Breivik was listening to a loop of Clint Mansell's work *Lux Aeterna*.

The media are the main source of Czerepok's works. The artist examines daily news and scientific articles to catch the world in its contradictions, bluffs, or perplexities. He himself often bluffs. He is interested in the imperfection in reality and spares nothing along the way, whether history, religion, or science. He further demonstrates the frailty of the human mind: he investigates the limits of knowledge, the imagination and logic, and also enjoys exploring the spheres of the irrational. He addresses the failure of the enlightenment in the *Norm of Lost 50 Micrograms* sculpture, drawing from the research of scientists who declared that over the past hundred years 50 micrograms have inexplicably vanished from the model kilogram stored at the International Bureau of Weights and Measures in Sèvres.

Lux Aeterna is an exhibition about the dream of taking control of matter and life, where the vanity of enlightenment is also madness. Madness is, according to Czerepok, like vertigo: it imperceptibly and definitively seduces, it is irreversible, which is why one of his works quotes the Joker from *The Dark Knight*: "Madness is like gravity. All it takes is a little push."