

**PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Rosa Menkman: *Shadow Knowledge***

March 3, 2020 – May 15, 2020



Photo caption:

*Whiteout* (still), 2020

Video

Image courtesy of the artist

*San José, California – February 5, 2020* - The Natalie and James Thompson Art Gallery is pleased to present the work of digital media artist Rosa Menkman in a solo exhibition that will open on March 3, on display through May 20, 2020.

Born in 1983 in Arnhem, Netherlands, artist and researcher Rosa Menkman has worked extensively on pushing the boundaries of technology through the exploration of glitches, compressions, encoding, and other feedback artifacts that are accidentally produced in analogue and digital media.

*Shadow Knowledge* presents three recent bodies of work. In the video projection *Whiteout*, Menkman explores a personal anecdote, the true story of a mountain hike in a snowstorm. As Menkman made her way up the mountain, she noted not only her physical sensations: inability to see, hear, or orient herself, but also the oversaturation of the environment, the realization that spatial dimension was seemingly wiped out.

In *Pique Nique pour les Inconnues*, Menkman considers the ways in which the history of technology has been defined by standardization, in particular through the use of color test cards of image processing. The work presents *les Inconnues* - unknown women whose images are linked to the history of image processing. In this work, test card holders, bots, virtual assistants, stock photos and others find a voice, but fail to recover their

personhood. As Menkman states, “Engineers used these female objects to evaluate the quality of image processing, rendering and composition of architecture and to make these latent spaces more amicable. While these women seem to be able to prolong their existence for as long as the (digital) realms will copy and reuse them, most of them have lost their name and identity.” In this work, the viewer is haunted by the familiarity of these digital ghosts, while at the same time, privy to an uncanny experience when the historically mute images speak for the first time.

In *365 Perfect*, Menkman turns to mobile imaging softwares. *365 Perfect* is “the best FREE virtual makeup app, period. It’s like having a glam squad in your pocket” - or so states the software. In this humorous, yet discomfiting work, Menkman layers the standard features of beautifying software on her own image, enlarging her eyes, deleting blemishes and enhancing features, until the original face is nearly unrecognizable. Over and over, Menkman alters her likeness, seemingly to make herself appear more conventionally beautiful and more “perfect”. Saving her image at every new iteration, she arrives at a re-compressed pixelated JPEG, and a grotesque, if not almost unhuman self-portrait. Presented at the Natalie and James Thompson Gallery in the form of prints, *365 Perfect* is not only a powerful commentary on the relationship between mobile technology and the beauty industry, but a careful exploration of resolution loss, and the visual artifacts that are created as a result.

In conjunction with the opening of this group exhibition, Rosa Menkman will present an illustrated lecture 5:00pm - 6:00pm in the Department of Art & Art History Lecture Hall (room 133) the evening of March 3, 2020, just prior to the opening reception, 6:00pm-7:30pm in the Natalie and James Thompson Art Gallery. The exhibition and associated illustrated lecture are free and open to the public.

**LOCATION:** Natalie and James Thompson Art Gallery, Art Building, San José State University  
(Near 9th / San Carlos Streets)

**EXHIBITION DATES:** March 3, 2020 – May 15, 2020

**OPENING RECEPTION:** Tuesday, March 3, 2020, 6:00pm-7:30pm  
Natalie and James Thompson Art Gallery, Art Building, San José State University  
Free and open to the public

### **ILLUSTRATED PRESENTATION**

Rosa Menkman, *Beyond Resolution: From Shadow Knowledge to Impossible Images*  
Tuesday, March 3, 2020, 5:00pm - 6:00pm  
SJSU Campus, Art Building Lecture Hall, Room #133  
Free and open to the public

**GALLERY HOURS:** Monday – Friday, 10:00am-4:00pm and  
Tuesday evenings 6:00pm-7:30pm  
(and by appointment)

**FURTHER INFORMATION:** Alena Sauzade, Gallery Director  
Alena.sauzade@sjsu.edu

**ADDITIONAL IMAGES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST**

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