



# Essential Modernities

no. 3, spring 2018

price: \$0.00

## *iN THiS EDiTiON:*

- *Art*
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- *aRT*

**... AND MORE!**

contemporary magazine about everything



## introduction

I am proud to present the third edition of *Essential Modernities*. The previous edition was all about nothing. We extensively discussed the essence of nothing in various ways. This edition is about art too but a different kind of art. Art that is about nothing, featuring Jorn van den Berg's shapes and Unknown Filetype's *Untitled Document*.

This essential modernity encompasses interviews, reviews, poetry and a letter we received by Palpito. I hope you'll enjoy reading this as much as I did making it.

And remember; everything you see and read here is the truth, just not the only truth.

David Gebski, publisher



## interview with the artist David Gebski about his performance

by David Gebski

**D**avid Gebski is an artist currently living and working in Amsterdam. He's had multiple solo exhibitions already – the latest one also being reviewed in this edition. I've asked him a few questions about the performance he did this year at the Gerrit Rietveld Academy (Dutch academy for fine arts and design in Amsterdam, Netherlands) in order to better understand the work.

### **Can you describe how your performance went?**

I recorded the whole process on video. I signed up online for their selection rounds. This was the first part of my performance.

In the second part I went to the Rietveld building with nothing but 20 ideas and 2 works in progress – the works in progress being the at the time unfinished performance that I was performing there and a video recording of that very performance. I talked for about 10 minutes with the person asking me questions about my ideas but he kept insisting that he was very visually oriented so couldn't judge my ideas if there wasn't some sort of physical representation of those ideas and asked me to "draw an artwork"; which I did. I drew a triangle on a piece of paper with a ballpoint.

"And?" he said.

"What do you mean, 'and'?" I replied.

"Can you draw me another artwork?" he asked me.

So I drew another triangle.

After talking to him for about 25 minutes about my ideas and even visualizing them on paper he still wasn't convinced, he told me: "Ok, I can give you the paper for the zero year" which wasn't what I was applying for, I was applying for the first year, so I politely declined. Then we continued to talk about what I'm studying right now, my youth, about my high school I used to go to and a bit about how my parents brought me up. I apparently convinced him because gave me the paper for the first year anyway and I had passed the first round.

The third part was me at home filling out forms and uploading information about me to the Rietveld website.

The fourth part and also last part is me going to the Rietveld building signing my name on a form in the lobby which all applicants have to sign if they want to take part in the second round. I took the form to the room where the Rietveld people wanted me to do a performance and show work that they had assigned me to make. I put my form on a table in the room that was still empty and then left the Rietveld building just before the second round officially started. That's the end of my application to the Rietveld and also the end of my performance.

### **Can you describe the idea behind your performance?**

I had the idea for a performance – it's very simple – it would be me applying to an art academy. I had the idea for over a year to apply to an art academy without bringing a physical portfolio, so I wouldn't bring any work in the traditional sense to show them. It was a requirement however to bring at least 20 completed works with you.

There are some subjects this performance addresses.

Does something need to have a physical form to be art? Isn't the idea by itself art as well?

Is art art when no one can see it or knows about it except maybe the artist themselves? My performance is still a performance, is still art, when I was at home filling out forms even if no one saw me doing it.

Does art need to be explicable or have a meaning at all to be art? Isn't it enough if the artist knows what it is about? Isn't it enough if no one knows what it is about?

Also, is something art, before the concept is even invented? So when there's nothing yet – not even an idea. Is it art even if that concept may never come to existence? So when it will remain to be nothing forever? This is in line with my solo exhibition that was nowhere and nothing was to be seen. Nothing is no longer nothing once we think about nothing, once we think about it it becomes at the very least an idea. Ideas are art, but can nothing ever consciously be art? Is it possible for us to be unconscious about nothing?

There is a fifth, and even more, but I won't bother telling you that, I don't believe that art needs to be explained or have an explanation at all.

### **So you're basically asking the question "what is art?"**

Yes, but not only am I asking it, I'm also providing an answer since you're asking me. This answer is of course subjective, just as everything else in my and your reality. This

answer may only apply for me but maybe it'll also apply for you. The thing is, if even *nothing* is art, then everything is art because everything is just something plus nothing.

So, is an urinal turned upside down art? Yes, just as much as 20 ideas of non existing works are art. Just as much as this text is art. Is the question "*What is art?*" still a relevant question after it's been answered? Yes, because the answers are infinite.

### **Why did you apply to Rietveld and not another art academy?**

Two reasons really, Rietveld is in Amsterdam so that's close by. And I also don't believe it makes a difference to which academy I would have applied to since they're all the same in their essence anyway.

Art academies may differ in the way they present themselves to the outside world but at the end of a year the student has to convince someone else (their teacher perhaps) that in the past year they did something. They have to prove that they still want to be on that academy and even progress to the next year. This obligation results in a severe limitation in expressing yourself as an artist.

### **So you don't agree with art academies in general?**

No, I don't have a problem with art academies at all. It's just not for me. For me it's important to have unlimited freedom to work and I won't let an institution limit my freedom. However, it's completely fine by me if you as an artist want some kind of limitation and you voluntarily go to an art academy. I however think that art and artists should have the freedom to not signify anything.

People seem to have the false idea that you cannot be an artist when you haven't studied at an art academy or have the illusion that an art academy will turn you into an artist. I think you're an artist when you think you're an artist; also when you don't think you're an artist.

### **Why did you do your performance at an art academy and not somewhere else?**

It could've been done anywhere but by presenting nothing (part four of my performance) at art academy I put it in an art-context and had the certainty that my work would be observed by people in a context where it's expected to experience art. I showed the same work as I showed in part four before, in my first solo-exhibition but no-one noticed it. Now at Rietveld no-one noticed it either.

**You've recorded your performance on video. Is it possible to see the video anywhere?**

Not at the moment and I don't think it'll ever be released to the public. It's a different work than the performance but in a way reflects on the same questions. I like the idea of a work being invisible – it's almost as if it's in the depot of an important museum.

**Have you been accepted into the first year?**

I don't know yet and I don't care. That was not the point of the performance. I didn't want to see if I could get in or if I'd be rejected. The point was to explore and answer questions I had about art.

After finishing up the interview, David Gebski has received notice that he hasn't been accepted into Rietveld, the reason why can be read below:

**Subject:** RE: Rietveld toelating basisjaar  
**From:** Apply Mailbox <Apply@rietveldacademie.nl>  
**Date:** 19/04/18 17:49  
**To:** 'David Gebski'

Dear David,

It turns out that you did come to our academy for your entrance exam, but you left before being interviewed by our admissions committees. So, they did not see your work and home assignments and this is why you were not admitted for the Basicyear.

Met vriendelijke groet / Best regards,

Nanette Krijnen  
Bureau Toelatingen / Admissions Office

work by  
Jorn van den Berg  
on page viii, ix, x, xi, xii, xiv, xv, xvi

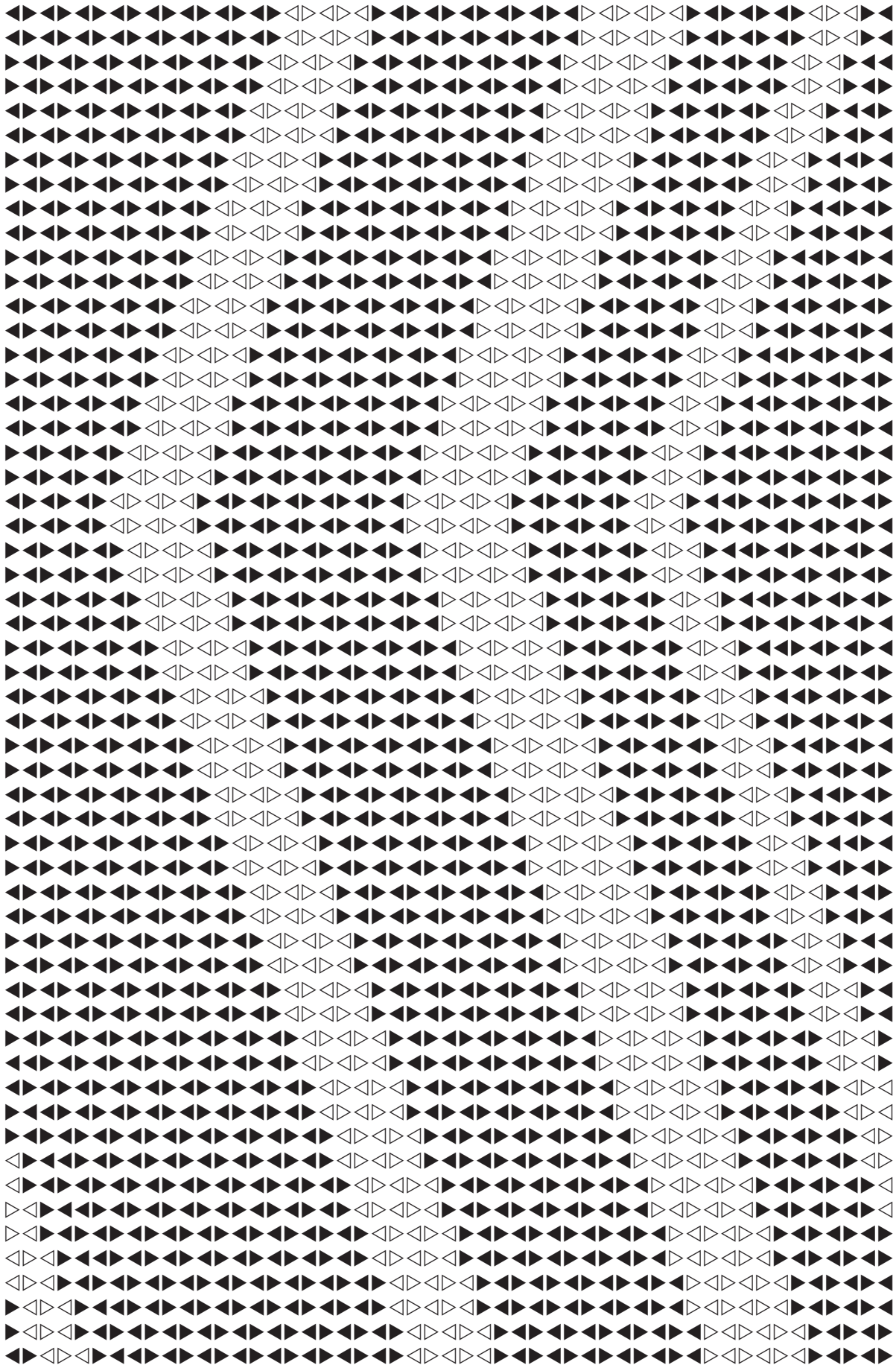








Unreliable and untrustworthy information, including false reports, rumors, and misinformation, has been spread widely on the Internet. This information has caused confusion and panic among the general public, and has severely damaged the reputation and credibility of the government. The government has a duty to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the information it disseminates, and to take effective measures to combat false information. In order to maintain social order and stability, the government should strengthen its supervision and management of the Internet, and take necessary measures to prevent and eliminate the spread of false information. At the same time, the government should also strengthen its communication and public relations work, and actively engage in dialogue and exchange with the public to enhance transparency and trust. Only in this way can the government effectively address the problem of false information on the Internet and maintain the stability and harmony of society.



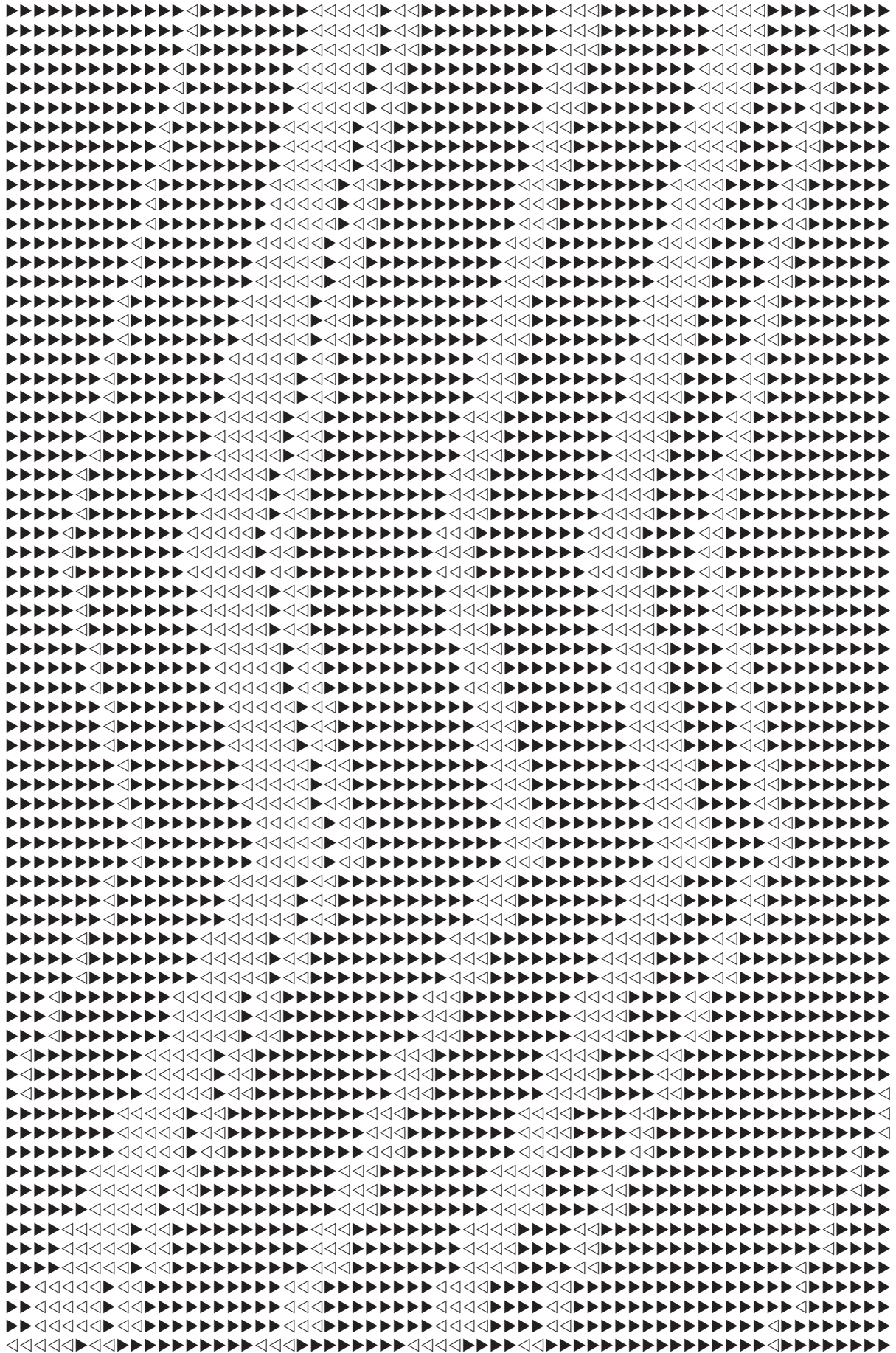
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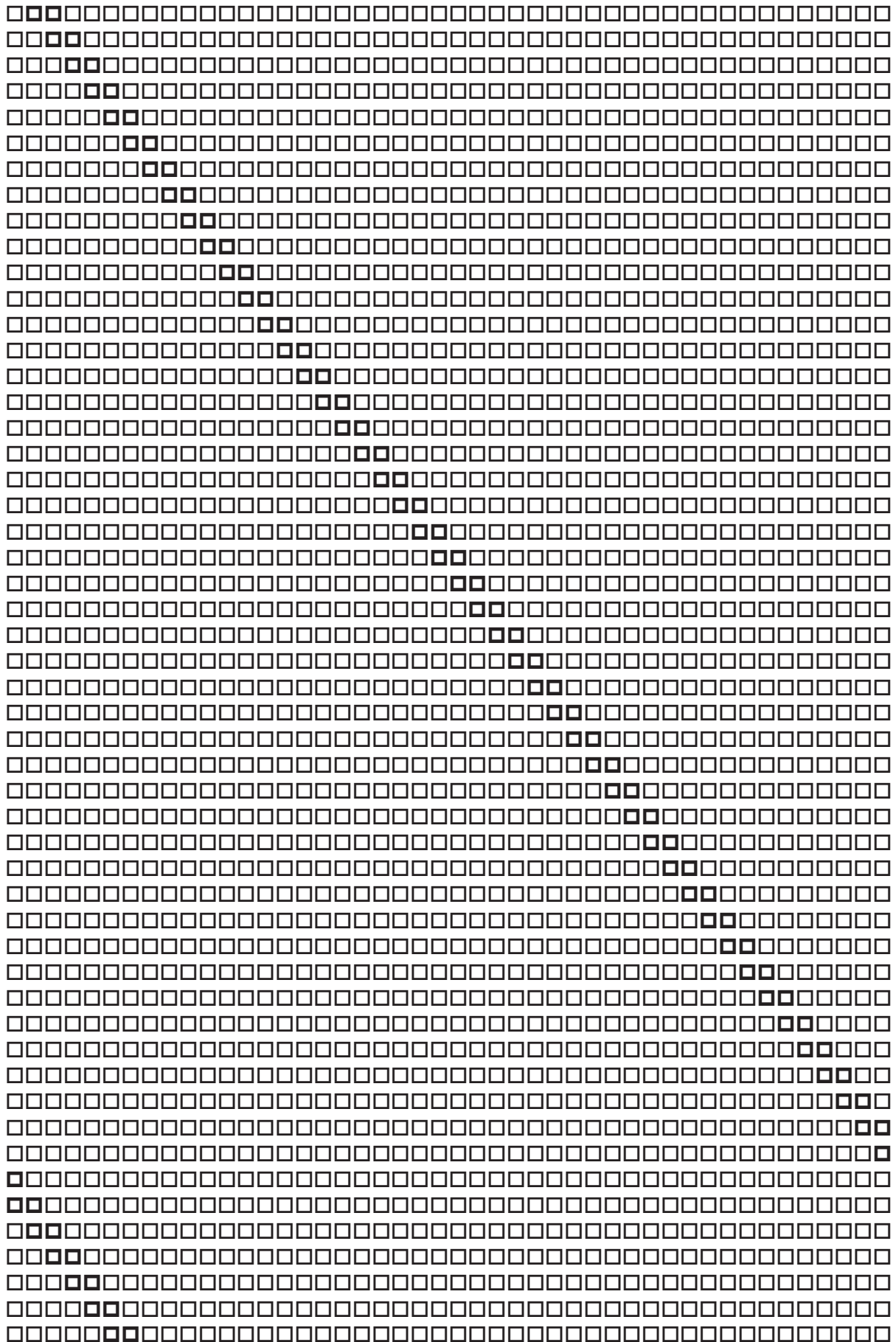


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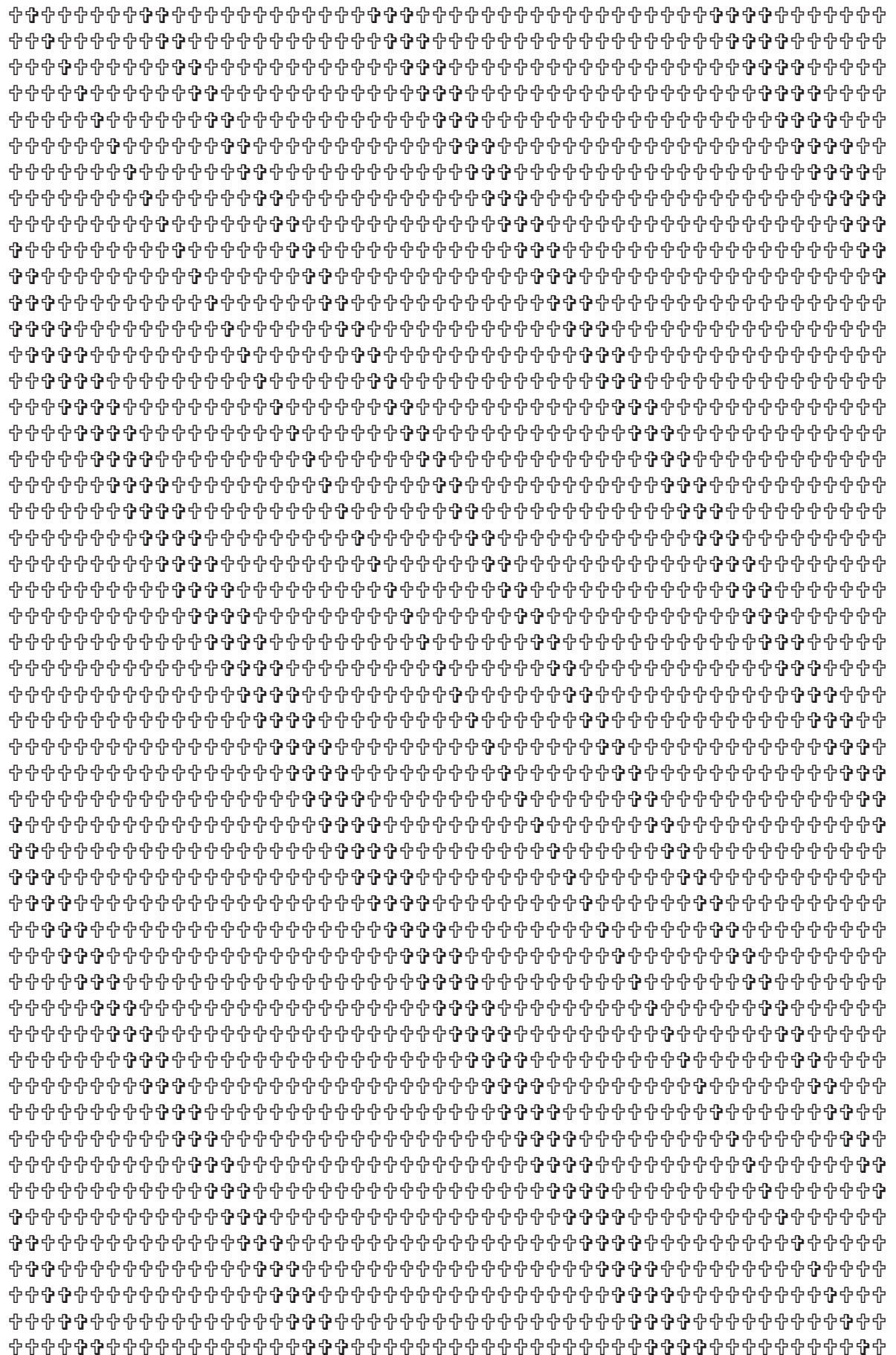
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**Y**ou're telling me that one should never care about what others think but I see in your eyes that you do care. You're telling me something you don't believe in, you only think you do. Your words are not lies, because you want them to be true. They're empty. Emptiness is a funny thing, it indicates the absence of something: something is missing. It implies there should be something which isn't there. Should there be something? You want there to be something.

As I said, your words are not lies. They're the expression of your striving to gain victory over your teenage (perhaps lifelong... ) insecurities. I would almost kiss your feet out of respect for the courageousness of the goal you have set for yourself. But your words miss truth.

How come I didn't believe what this girl was saying? Maybe it was intuition, maybe it was the xtc. Xtc is supposed to make you feel idiotically in love, but it hadn't struck me in this way. Well - maybe I did feel love, but it was more of an unanswered or unanswerable love. When I'm in love I cannot get rid of an agonizing question, always joyfully dancing inside my skull: can I trust you? Without trust, there's no love, because there's no truth. But trust IS not love. You can be in love while you distrust. And that distorts the feeling of truth. That's how I felt.

I was walking through a dense concentration of people, not minding that I was lost in the feeling of not belonging. I was myself (not the image, but the unstoppable sublime stream of consciousness) more than I can recall at this moment. I don't believe this state of hyper-being I was experiencing should make me feel distant from others. I believe humans share an intrinsic value, called being human and are thus lost [*open to interpretation*]. I felt so lost and so human, that I didn't feel like a part of the others. It hit me that I didn't trust them and I started to wonder why. I started thinking of the girl and tried to put my finger on what it was that I recognized in both her and all those people I was observing.

Everyone was talking and dancing and looked happy, but I couldn't help noticing a certain fragility in each person. And it was as if everyone tried so hard to hide it. You know, I wouldn't have minded if the girl had told me that she actually did care about what others thought of her. I would have enjoyed it, because she would have shared a truth with me, she would have trusted me. And the same thing I thought of all these people, acting as if they had found their true selves and were constantly being found by others, never alone, never confused, never lost. Uttering word after word, as if to prove this to others and

themselves. I wanted to get close to them, but couldn't, seeing that they were living in a completely other world than I did. It was even worse: I had the feeling I could see the whole illusory picture they were living in. And I was alone on the outside.

I was explaining to this boy that I wasn't in love with him. He was excusing himself awkwardly for having confessed his feeling right at the moment that the relationship between me and my boyfriend had finished . I told him, I did not mind. I would never blame someone for being in love.

He approached me with this sense of a misunderstanding between us. In another situation I might have joined his vibe. Laughing softly and uncomfortably saying things like 'Nonono' and 'of course' and 'no problem, it's OK'. But that would have just felt like a facade, the act of going along with 'how we should react'. Because we see it in movies, because only words allow us to communicate. And I thought to myself : maybe we would both like to enjoy silence. But we think that we need words to prove to each other, that we enjoy silence.

The word 'silence' is much misused as a synonym for when nobody talks. It often has sense of emptiness, as if words are always missing. So we speak words in the hope we cure the silence, fill up the emptiness. But we speak words in order to speak words. We desperately hold onto their shape, their texture, but they mean nothing. In the end you see a bunch of fixed, stony gazes. Meant to focus really hard on sound they're making, afraid of letting their eyes wander, for they might discover they have not the slightest idea of who, what, where they are. They might realize they're lost, they might realize that most of the time they have nothing to say while they're talking. Somehow people are scared of this idea.

And somehow everyone seems contaminated by the thought that words fill up emptiness and thus generate truth. What we're actually searching for, is meaning. But meaning we can only find in truth. Only when we try to grasp truth, can we rely on ourselves and others. I say this, because people can't live with lies. I don't know why.

And so I watch everyone living in the absence of truth. I'm unable to love them because they cannot trust me, because they cannot trust themselves.

*Palpito*

## interview with Unknown Filetype, HTBBB and PoRTO

by David Gebski

**N**ot too long ago a contemporary artist that goes by the name of Unknown Filetype, released a new video titled *Untitled Document*. In an attempt to better comprehend and document this work I messaged the artist on his Instagram. It told me that it wasn't the only one I should interview, but also the artists it collaborated with. So I did.

This is an interview with Unknown Filetype, HTBBB and PoRTO, the artists behind *Untitled Document*. It documents the performance by Unknown Filetype, filmed by HTBBB and the soundtrack is made by PoRTO. You can download the video from our website or watch it on YouTube: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_nBl\\_9twib8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_nBl_9twib8).



*Unknown Filetype working*

**In the video we see a performance at the Stedelijk Museum and Moco Museum in Amsterdam, why specifically those two museums?**

*U:* One presents itself as the temple for modern and contemporary art in Amsterdam and the other is a commercial outlet of the Lionel gallery which presents itself as a museum. Both seemed fitting for my work.

**Why did you do the performance at night and not during the day?**

*U:* Me and HTBBB wanted to be sure that we wouldn't be interrupted while filming and during the performance. We were however shortly interrupted by a patrolling police car but they let us be when they saw we weren't damaging anything.

**Does HTBBB stand for anything?**

*H:* I'm not going to say that.

**It's a very expressive soundtrack and really sets the tone for the entire video.**

**What inspired you to make a soundtrack like this?**

*P:* Mostly childhood memories and my organic dad.

**Could you explain the works that you put on on the museums?**

*U:* No, the work speaks for itself and is included in this magazine. Also, you could have seen the work at the Stedelijk Museum and the Moco Museum so my job as an artist concerning this work is done. I don't believe it needs any more explaining.

**Why did you use such a low quality camera in the dark?**

*H:* It really had to be this way, the better camera died because of the cold so we were forced to use Unknown Filetype's phone which doesn't have the best camera in the world (0.3 megapixel). In the end it doesn't really matter and we're pretty happy about the way things turned out. The abstraction that resulted from the low quality is a nice unexpected touch.

*U:* I agree with HTBBB.

**The pieces of paper featuring in the video and published here in the magazine share a resemblance with the work by Jorn van den Berg, also published in this magazine. Is there a reason for that?**

*U:* I used his idea and now it's my work.

**Will there be a collaboration again?**

*P:* I don't know, I prefer to work alone, because only then I can really make the music I want to make. In this project however, I felt like I had te complete freedom to do whatever I felt like. This depends on who you work with, I guess, but with Unknown Filetype and HTBBB I really felt like we were sharing a mind in some ways.

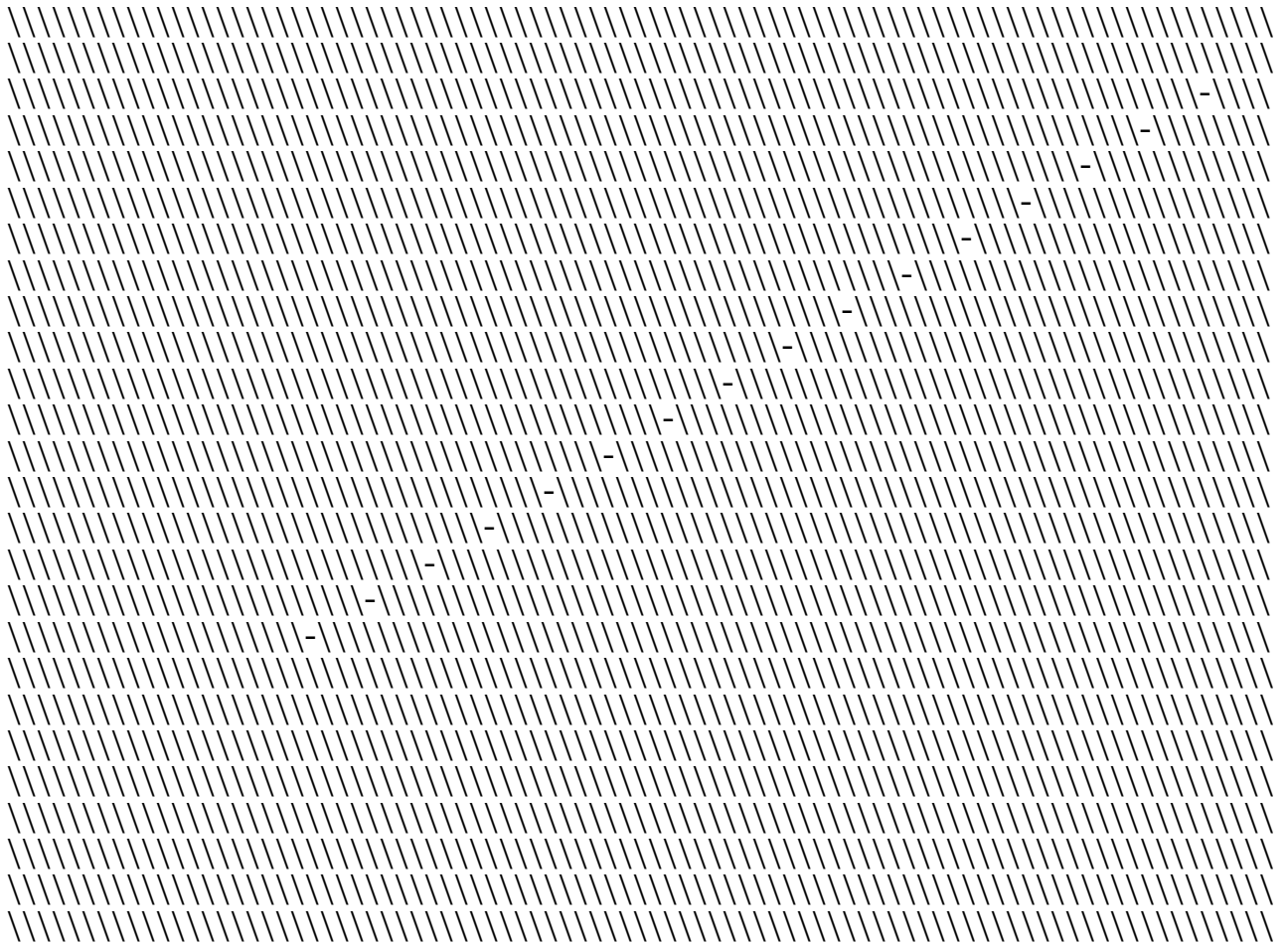
*U:* I agree with some points PoRTo made.

*H:* Same.

Longing for more? Follow Unknown Filetype on Instagram to stay up to date on all it's projects: [instagram.com/unknownfiletype](https://www.instagram.com/unknownfiletype)

work by  
Unknown Filetype  
on page xxii, xxiii, xxiv, xxv, xxvi

△



I stole this idea.









## review of the album *play me on shuffle and repeat* by PORTO

by Jorn van den Berg

★★★

The conceptual album *play me on shuffle and repeat* by PORTO consists of 26 songs each with a duration of 1 second. The album, like the title tells us, is recommended to be played on shuffle and repeat to get the best listening experience. An interesting concept because this way the all of one note consisting songs continue to form different melodies.

The way your music player handles the shuffle and repeat function has a big influence on the whole album. In the music player I used the shuffle function was only activated after the entire album had been played once. This way the variation in the album was a bit limited since the first 26 seconds would be the same every time you put it on. The variation was limited too since a song couldn't be played twice in a row, but it seems that PORTO thought of that because every tone is featured twice on the album. Different music players will handle the shuffle function differently, using different algorithms, resulting in different melodies.

I think a truly random shuffle function would do this album the most justice since then the melodic possibilities seem to be endless. An infinite album with endless variations would make for a very interesting listening experience indeed. I even see possibilities for musicians to use it as a tool to discover new melodies.

However, the album as it is now is still a bit faint but would start to appeal more to my imagination if PORTO would expand on the idea more. By differentiating the length of some songs or adding songs that are completely silent it would be possible to create, besides random melodies, random rhythms.

PORTO's concept is unique but I think it's still far from complete. Now we can only hope for a continuation because with *play me on shuffle and repeat* PORTO really shows the potential to create a very interesting listening experience.

You can download and listen to the album at:

<https://porto.bandcamp.com/album/play-me-on-shuffle-and-repeat>

**STOP**

**ART**

THE  
FUTURE  
IS  
SOON

# review of the solo exhibition by David Gebski

by David Gebski

★★★

Last winter I visited the second solo exhibition by David Gebski. They had decided to organize a new one because of the success of the first one (10 attendees), the only difference was that this one would last two weeks more than the previous one.

I missed the opening but because the exposition lasted for two weeks I had plenty of time to get a good look at all the work which was the same work as was shown at his first solo exhibition.

The way it was set up and combined with the location (nowhere) the works worked really well together and made it possible for me to experience the essence of their being. It was an interesting expressive mix by what I consider the artist's most universal and timeless work. What added to this was that there was no background information present at the exhibition about either the artist or the work, this really left everything open to my own interpretation but I think that's a good thing, especially when the work is so expressive.

The only point of critique is that the exposition had a Facebook event which distracted the visitor from experiencing the art, this is something the first exhibition did better because it had no event. However, I still think this second exhibition can be considered as a worthy addition to the whole Neo Nihilistic Expressionism movement we are witnessing right now and it's three star rating is well deserved.

The screenshot shows a Facebook event page for 'David Gebski Solotentoonstelling #2 - Opening'. The event is public and hosted by David Gebski. It is scheduled for Saturday, February 24, from 9:00 PM to 3:00 AM UTC+01. The location is 'Nergens'. The event has 19 attendees and 8 people interested. The details section contains the following text:

[English below]

Wegens het grote succes van de eerste solotentoonstelling van David Gebski is er besloten een tweede te organiseren. Deze zal twee weken langer duren dan de vorige maar de kunst en de locatie zijn hetzelfde. Vanaf komende zaterdag krijgt iedereen gedurende twee weken de kans om kennis te maken met werk van David Gebski. Iedereen is uitgenodigd om bij de opening te zijn en de dagen daarna de tentoonstelling te bezoeken!

**DAVID GEBSKI**  
David Gebski een autonoom hedendaags kunstenaar wonend en werkend in Amsterdam.

**DE TENTOONSTELLING**  
De tentoonstelling staat, net als het tentoongestelde werk van David Gebski, in het teken van niets. Binnenkort is nergens een selectie van niets van van hem te bewonderen.

**PRAKTISCHE INFORMATIE**  
Opening: 24 februari  
Tentoonstellingsduur: 24 februari - 11 maart  
Locatie: nergens  
Toegangspreis: € 0,-

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Because of the great success of the first solo exhibition of David Gebski it has been decided to organize a second one. This one will last two more weeks than the previous one but the art and the location are the same. Starting next Saturday everyone will get the chance to become more familiar with the work of David Gebski. Everyone is invited to attend the opening and visit the exhibition the weeks after!

**DAVID GEBSKI**  
Living and working in Amsterdam, David Gebski is an autonomous contemporary artist.

**THE EXHIBITION**  
The exhibition, just like the exhibited work by David Gebski, is in the light of nothing. Soon a selection of nothing by him will be exhibited nowhere.

**PRACTICAL INFORMATION**  
Opening: February 24  
Exhibition: February 24 - March 11  
Location: nowhere  
Admission: € 0,-

Kid Friendly

David Gebski, *untitled*, 2018  
Facebook event on the internet  
private collection





## last words

*a warm “thank you” to everyone who assisted in the creation of this magazine*

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essentialmodernities.com

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mail@davidgebski.nl

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