

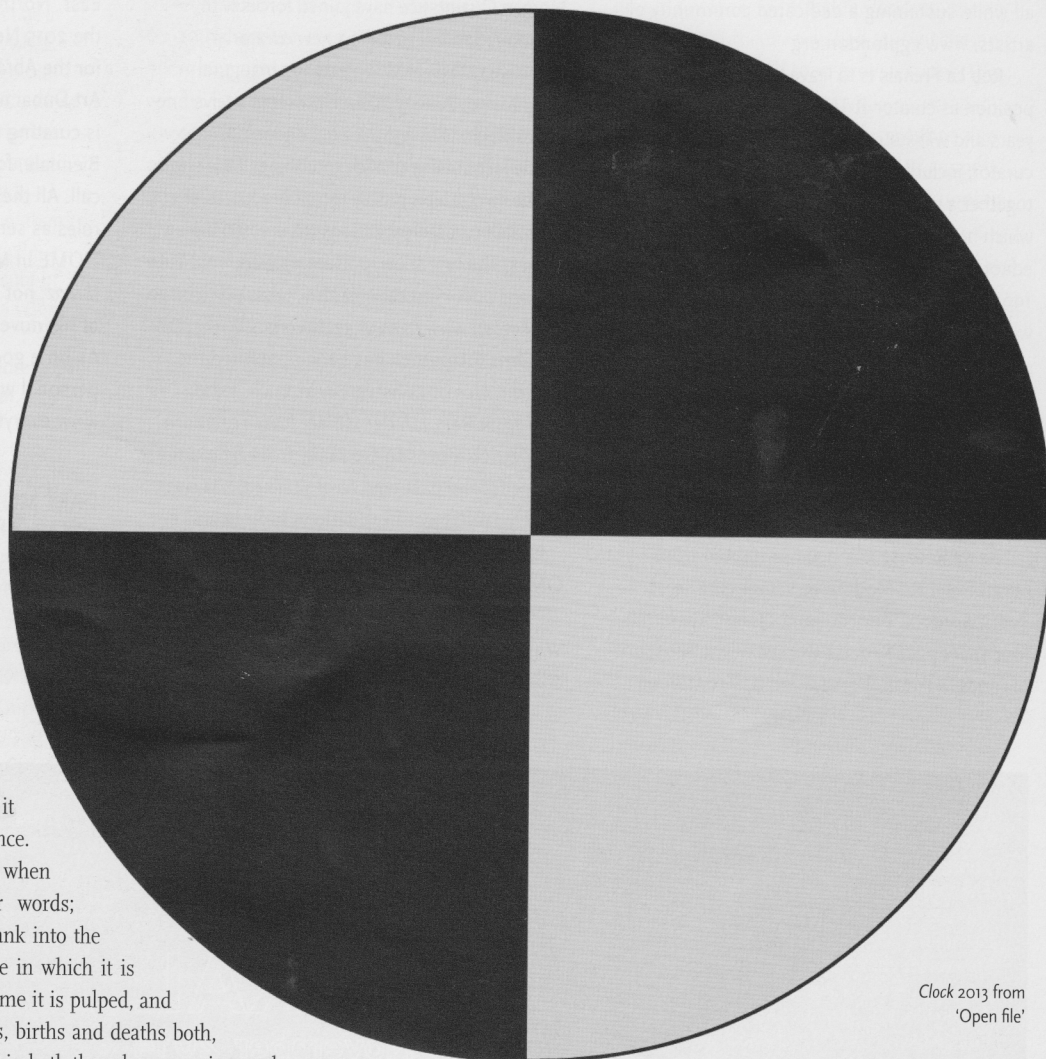
# Gintaras Didžiapetris

The page in front of you is a container for a particular text, for a fixed and determined semantic which points towards something else, more or less tangible. But the page is also a plane, a surface, an object with an edge. It is a history of all pages and all paper, yet it is at once also about this specific instance. It is about the time that unfolded when particular thoughts begat particular words; about the time in which the words sank into the substrate of the paper; about the time in which it is being read. And it will stand for the time it is pulped, and all the times in which all those things, births and deaths both, might happen again and again. It lives in both these known guises and those Rumsfeldian known unknowns that, for René Daumal's *Mount Analogue*, 'cannot not exist'.

A sense of the co-existence of divergent meanings, and, crucially, of the simultaneity of their existence, is what exercises the Lithuanian artist Gintaras Didžiapetris. In his work, which traverses an unfenced terrain in which video, print media and sculpture are in free exchange, it is not enough that there is a multiplicity of possibilities, but that they are all possible at once. This is bad news for representation, with its tendency – indeed its only goal – to arrest the dance of signs and terminate the undetermined, gunning down the we to guarantee the I.

While undeniably true, to suggest that Didžiapetris's new commission for Pavilion, *Audi Fantasy*, comprises three video pieces and an elusive sound piece within an unkempt bedsit above a hair salon, is to stop the work short at one instance of itself and, in doing so, cancel all other possible instances – all equally true. Viewed in this way, the videos, heterogeneous to the point of collapse, become a faulty narrative, a feedback loop; and as isolated, encapsulated, singular meanings fail to materialise, the desperate quest for a solution which pursues them gives way to panic.

Nevertheless, some of his work seems strikingly representational. At first glance, *Audi Fantasy* is conventional, staid even: a series of considered, not unattractive shots of the Tokyo Marathon. For Didžiapetris, the runners lining up to take part in the race – divested of the various social symbols and codes which conspire to make them look like people and instead stripped to sponsors' logo-strewn, immaterial avatars – are enacting a relationship between



Clock 2013 from  
'Open file'

artist and benefactor which in essence mirrors that of medieval art. Not that it resembles or replicates medievalism, but rather that it is medieval: a pageant of pure symbolism, an altarpiece of symbolic objects which are functions of another order, active not metaphorical.

'One of the biggest fears I have is to represent something,' Didžiapetris offers. 'Representation is itself a representation. I'm interested in presence.' Where the Tokyo Marathon piece introduces itself as innocuous, on repeated viewing it is clear that it does not represent the race in any straightforward way, becoming diffident just as it might resolve and define itself; yet neither does it appear to have any clear relationship to the other two works. Rather, all three together are one work, three layers of a whole, each behind and beyond the others concurrently.

'Don't give me "about",' ran a running joke Didžiapetris shared with an artist friend, 'Give me the thing!' His series of graphic symbols, 'Open file', delivers this promise: when printed on the page, the incorporeal vectors are the thing; what

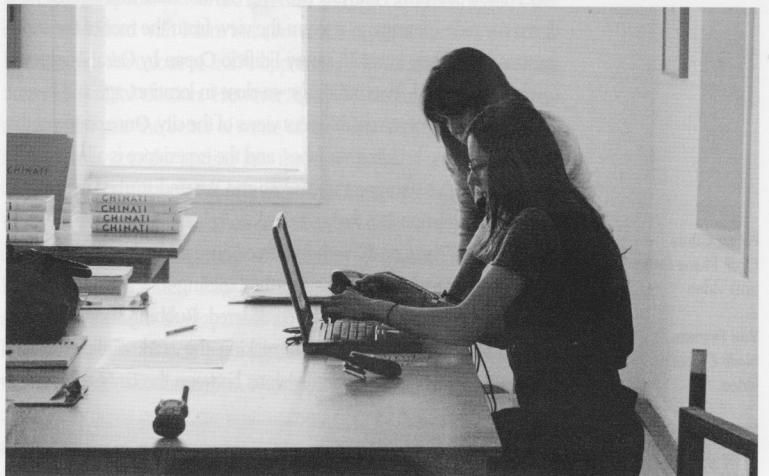
seems a representation is the thing itself because each iteration is an original. This is in effect an inversion of the expected explanation in which every instance would be a copy because there is no original: for Didžiapetris, there is a multitude of originals, no copies, each existing at the same time as the others.

Drawing on heterodox sources and paradigms and working in a context in which claims to inter- or multidisciplinary might be taken as authentic markers of postmodern practice, Didžiapetris's position might be best described as non-disciplinary. But this is not to establish it as oppositional – as anti-disciplinarity – nor to assert a nihilistic rejection. His position is an active one, proposing alternatives and additions, not negations. The thrust of post-Enlightenment thinking, as he sees it, is to militate against fuzziness, uncertainty, syncretism or synthesis in favour of disciplinary borders and the bounded syntax of 'or' rather than 'and'. The exemplar of an open, generic knowledge-container, he suggests, is software, which is mutable and modifiable yet functions as an invisible architecture on which might be attached many instances of a people's consciousness. Wikipedia is of infinitely more interest, therefore, than the Oxford English Dictionary, because it offers a fallible yet eternally modulating vision of all that is conscious at any one time, as opposed to a fixed and limited set of truths which can stand only for a specific time.

As his work undermines representation, so it establishes an epistemological enquiry; a route towards a state of equivalence in which knowing and not-knowing share the stage. The in-between, for Didžiapetris, is not so much a state of indeterminacy, in which poles to either side might be negated, but that of simultaneity, in which both are affirmed, and in a state of lucidity. Rather than a critique of the construction of meaning, his work is more about the meaning of everything. If we do not allow signs to claim us but remain aware that they are motive functions which exist alongside others, we might try to embrace all possible instances, roaming the wild moor of incidence and signification without falling into step on the path towards a single particular instant.

In this way, an almost abstruse eschewal of fixity accompanies all aspects of Didžiapetris's practice, which seems universally precise and thoughtful, even where it takes the form of caesurae. Though his own writing in Tulips and Roses' occasional reader *The Federal* is clear and demonstrative, any exhibition texts which might describe the work they court, or even allude to the fact that they share the same arena, if they exist at all, are rejected in favour of associative, open-ended, metastases of pieces which plough leeward waters. For Pavilion, this takes the form of an almost-allusive yet altogether evasive contribution by writer Sarah Demeuse, who also contributed brilliantly to the publication which accompanied Didžiapetris's 2013 solo show at CAC Vilnius, 'Color and Device'. Produced as a miniature fold-out leaflet, even the act of reading it is onerous, and the relationship of the text to the commission is unfathomable, until Didžiapetris points out that it exists because the films exist: it shares a space of attention, of presence with his own work, and, after all, why should it – why would it – describe or even circle the work at a distance?

Despite this precision, unexpected flourishes that surface here and there signal a deep interest in actors and objects, and place Didžiapetris apart from any purist-ascetic cohort within which he might otherwise have been mistakenly imprisoned. By sidestepping 'art', he meets art, unmolested by quotation marks, unadorned by frame or contained by vessel; art which is voiceless, bodiless, weightless. According to the artist – in an outwardly surprising display of descriptiveness, specificity, of romance, even – one-third of



the video triptych of *Audi Fantasy* contains within it the requirements for photosynthesis: electric light, itself born of the earth, gives back to the trees that which they need to furnish the invisible process on whose existence they depend. Invisible, but there all the same. ■

Gintaras Didžiapetris: 'Audi Fantasy' runs at Pavilion, Leeds until 19 December.

ADAM PUGH is a curator and writer based in Norwich.

*Audi Fantasy* 2014 video

*Untitled (Chinati empl.)* 2012

*Untitled (Xerox)* 2011