



MATIUSH FIRST

## *Refraction: Are your eyes soaking?*

June 11, 2023 – July 20, 2023

[Voskhod Gallery](#), Post-Passage 9, Basel, Switzerland (entrance from the Peter-Merian Strasse). To be presented during Art Basel 2023

Tools that become extensions of our bodies inevitably reorganize the structure of our actions and thoughts. The ghostly line of contact with interfaces shifts into consciousness, blurring like a chromatic aberration. It is interesting to me to observe how this can reverse the work of imagination and feeling, shifting the focus of attention. We teach machines our experience, in return they fill us with their vision. A synthetic cast of virtual reality is constantly generated from the particles of human and non-human views in us as a simulation of liquid in "domaines" in three-dimensional softwares. Voskhod vitrines have become a great metaphor for such a "domain" for me.

– **Matiush First**

Voskhod is pleased to announce the new exhibition **"Refraction. Are your eyes soaking"** to be presented in the gallery vitrines. It is an installation consisting of several works by Matiush First, an artist and a visual thinker who explores visual perception as a specific mental activity and the way it changes under the influence of technology and culture. The idea of the project came up during her residency in Atelier Mondial, Basel, supported by Pro Helvetia in 2022. It illustrates the phenomenon of refraction which occurs when a wave, such as light or sound, passes through a medium with a different refractive index or speed, causing it to bend.

To resist this absorption, Matiush First engages in the reproduction of digital images using analogue instruments, such as drawing on paper. By appropriating the aesthetics of the digital medium, the artist seeks to retrieve a physical, embodied experience of seeing. The concept of a haptic gaze and visuality, as described by scholar Laura Marks, emphasizes a way of looking that merges with what is beheld rather than seeking to isolate or master it.

What we see is the sleeky, smoothed surface, spilled over the Voskhod Gallery vitrine. A zoomed gaze creates a new state of intimacy, allowing us to get closer to the image, to dive in, and to establish a new way of proximity. When we zoom in on a digital image, we may delve into a realm of fragments, pixels, and particles, and distortion as well as refractions that come together to form the entirety of the image. However, at the same moment it delusions us. As we embark on this path, created by Matiush, we are flashed into the surrounding space, where refracted images of Basel, dissolved and diluted, lose their distinctness within the fluidity of the environment.

As the vitrine of the gallery is situated within the constant flow of information and people, sharing the space of the post office and train station, it creates the complex image. The perpetual flow of particles and elements resembles the way water goes through the pipes of a city and mirrors the flow of data through digital networks, connecting us to a larger system of information. The city is pervaded by the rhizomatic system of water tubes, as we also navigate data flow. However, when the flow of data takes an unexpected turn, the image begins to disintegrate, leaving behind fragmented elements that fill the gaps in its composition.

Curated by **Yulia Fisch**, a curator and cultural worker.

Prepared with the generous support of **LAF (Limonov Art Foundation)**.

## **Notes to Editors:**

**Matiush First.** Matiush First (Valeria Kuznetsova), born 1994, is an artist, visual thinker from Yekaterinburg, currently living and working in St. Petersburg. In her practice, she explores visual perception as a specific mental activity and how it changes by the influence of technology and culture. She studied at the Repin State Academy of Arts (St. Petersburg), participated in a series of workshops on printmaking at Musashino University (Tokyo), and numerous group exhibitions. Her latest solo exhibition "Default settings" has taken place in ART4 Museum, Moscow (2022). The idea of the current project appeared during her residency in Atelier Mondial, Basel, supported by Pro Helvetia in 2022.

**Voskhod Gallery.** Founded in September 2021 as an online platform with an office in Basel, Switzerland, the gallery endeavors to act as a stage for experimentation on presentation, displaying and distribution of art, connecting people with the art they love. During two years of existence, the gallery has already implemented a series of ambitious projects: the online exhibition "Re-enchanted", the group exhibition "X-Nowness" during ArtBasel, the opening of a physical space-vitrine in downtown Basel as well as several solo exhibitions of the gallery artists. Events were covered by local and global media including The Art Newspaper, Vanity Fair, Kubaparis, O-Fluxo, and many others. Firmly believing that broader exposure to art can play a decisive role in the cultivation of creative thinking, Voskhod aims to bring together different art systems (both geographically and ideologically), and thereby discover the names of young and talented artists.

**LAF (Limonov Art Foundation).** LAF is a non-profit private foundation aimed at supporting the contemporary art scene. It collaborates with independent artists, curators, galleries and artist-run spaces, providing an opportunity to implement the most daring and aspiring ideas as well as mutual programs, exhibitions and site-specific projects of both iconic names and emerging artists.

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