

Digital-Virtual-Real. Theme 2019



Digital-Virtual-Real

(Form, aspect, material)

Living in the Information age, we are facing progressively developing digital technologies and their impact on us and the environment around us. It doesn't seem as something new, unexpected or something invincible. The remaining phenomena, even being harmful, usually are the consequences of the benefit that was gained or still is being gained. Understandably, all of that has been created and continues to be for economic, social, cultural or science development and human convenience: life (self)control, communication, globalization and so on. No doubt, digital and real cooperates in symbiosis: controlled by a human, it impacts nature and humanity. Humanity and nature, in return, impact technologies in one or another direction by supplementing or eliminating existing ones. So, everything seems legit.

By virtual access, the digitality penetrates to the most delicate environments – from politics and culture to invasions to the private space, from childish games to lobbying of gigantic corporates, from lifestyle to the crimes and violence. When attempting to apprehend the scale of the digital penetration, the question about the human capabilities of managing it emerges. If humans are able to keep control of

the situation, what are the limits? The digitality relates to the virtuality, while latter has gained unlimited access to reality. Consequently, it becomes difficult to distinguish, what is the real, what is possible and what is artificially constructed. Often the reality remains undetected through the attractive filters of the virtual worlds.

The theme “Digital-Virtual-Real” of this year “Kaunas Photo” festival invites to focus on processes, consequences of digitized lifestyle, data flow, communication, cyber-crime and -security, machine learning, surveillance, automation, dangers and fragile borders. Paradoxically, even documentary photography, the prevailing artistic approach in “Kaunas Photo” festival, the digitized reality itself, having a virtual aspect. It, therefore, becomes self-mirroring reflection and provokes each and everyone of us to explore our personal relationships with this topic and answer to ourselves. How am I broadcasting myself to the world? Which of my presences gets the priority – digital, virtual, or real? This year the artistic program of “Kaunas Photo” is an invitation “to get down to earth”, turn off our smartphones and take a closer look into the physical world.