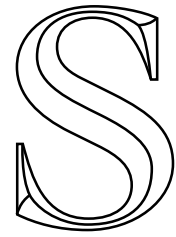


*A Fresh Burn like a Double Tree*  
 Mélodie Mousset  
 Curated by Samuel Leuenberger and Elise Lammer  
 23 April - 27 May 2017  
 Opening Reception: Saturday 22 April 2017, 5pm



SALTS  
 Hauptstrasse 12  
 CH-4127 Birsfelden  
 info@salts.ch  
 +41 61 311 73 75

Melodie Mousset's work is oscillating between virtual and physical realms, focussing her investigation on the physicality of the human body and the potential virtuality of the mind. For SALTS, she worked site-specifically and envisioned the outdoor space as a single large-scale sculpture.

Erected in the middle of the front yard, a mass of terracotta partially swallows the exhibition cubes, with earth spilling throughout the door and blocking the entrance. This mountain-like structure is embedded with a series of larger-than-life ceramic eyeballs, that the artist finished with *terra sigillata*, an ancient Greek glazing technique.

From the garden, one finally finds an access point through the window, only to realise that the terracotta has invaded the entire space. Inside, a 3D animation using motion capture technology features a character encompassing physical features from people the artist has often been compared to, including David Bowie and Tilda Swinton.

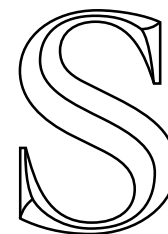
The design of the hill corresponds to one Mousset originally intended to program in virtual reality, but decided to physically build after failing to digitally render it. Calling on many aspects of her myriads of investigations, the structure simultaneously evokes the aftermath of a dramatic landslide, a prehistoric graveyard, a worn-off pyramid, or a clay sculpture waiting to be fired. Weird and uncanny, the ensemble also looks like a gigantic shrine, where each element is dedicated to a cult only known by the artist.

*A Fresh burn like a Double Tree* is conceived like a new chapter of a great narrative that embraces, contradicts and sometimes erases the recurring elements of Mousset's almost encyclopaedic research, with aspects taken from science, spirituality and her own biography.

Interested in the potential of virtual reality, whereby an emotionally powerful experience can spark any type of counterpart in the non-virtual world and vice versa, Mousset collides an irregular cone with a parallelepiped with the illusive ease of 3D modelling, schizophrenic vision or topological projection. Here the physical properties of both elements seem to be ignored, creating an illusion meant to challenge our senses. By burying the pristine white surface of a white cubes under a mass of red earth, the artist also makes an allusion to Robert Smithson's *Partially Buried Woodshed* (1970). In total, ten truckloads of twelve tons each were piled over the exhibition space.

Eyes are omnipresent in Mousset's new installation; from Magritte's 1928's *Faux Mirror* single eye, to George Bataille's "pineal eye", whose function is to allow man's inner impulses to be vertically discharged, they enrich the artist's symbolic and physical repertoire on many levels. Here, the blue glazed lash-less eyes are like holes in a volcano through which imaginary fluids can flow up and erupt. Large and hollow, these sockets also collect water when it rains, and provide an uncanny anthropomorphic quality to the pile. The volcano is another central figure of the artist's vocabulary, as a symbol of infinity that paradoxically can only happen in a closed cycle. From liquid to gas and solid, material changes state, and while nothing is ever lost, nothing is neither ever created. In virtual reality using 3D headsets, the eyes typically provide the only access to a fictitious infinity, yet they are the tools allowing the ultimate confinement.

In *Endless Woman (tearing is not allowed)* (2017) we encounter a virtual character incarnating three different archetypes; a vulcanologist, a topologist and a



schizophrenic. Through the prism of their specific field and vision, they discuss things that don't seem to be related, yet seem to melt into a universal truth that evokes the porous relationship between the conscious and subconscious mind. Interested in this relationship, the artist seeks to highlight moments when both overlap, creating a sort of slippage that allows true awareness to emerge. In the film, this slippage happens when the characters experience a temporary "rêverie", which translates with their skin falling off, ultimately revealing an empty 3D mesh structure.

SALTS  
Hauptstrasse 12  
CH-4127 Birsfelden  
info@salts.ch  
+41 61 311 73 75

Mélodie Mousset (\*1981 in About Dhabi, lives and works in Zurich) studied at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts de Rennes, EBAR, France, Ecole Cantonale d'Art de Lausanne, ECAL, Switzerland, the Royal College of Arts, London, and completed her Masters of Fine Arts at the California Institute of the Arts CALARTS in Valencia, California. Mousset's work extends through numerous mediums, including performance, video, installation, photography, sculpture and new media, including virtual reality. Following her long time interest in the body as a vehicle for physical, ritual, and historiographical interactions, Mousset's multidisciplinary investigations explore the possibilities of identity-formation in our hyper-mediated contemporary world. Her work features among international public and private collections, and has been exhibited at institutions and galleries worldwide, including MOCA (Museum Of Contemporary Arts), Los Angeles; Kunsthaus Aargau; MAC (Musée d'Art Contemporain) Lyon; The Metropolitan Art Society, Beirut; Susanne Vielmetter Project, Los Angeles, and most recently at Barbara Seiler Gallery, Zurich.

SALTS would like to thank Swisslos-Fonds Basel-Landschaft, Fondation Nestlé pour l'Art, Migros Kulturprozent, Roldenfund Stiftung and the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia for the generous support.