

IKON

Ikon Gallery, 1 Oozells Square, Brindleyplace, Birmingham B1 2HS
0121 248 0708 / www.ikon-gallery.org
Open Tuesday-Sunday, 11am-5pm / free entry

Žilvinas Kempinas 23 September – 27 November 2016



Žilvinas Kempinas, *Bearings* (2015), steel, aluminium, mineral oil, motor, magnets and *Verticals* (2015), magnetic tape, magnets. Installation view Galleria Leme, Sao Paulo 2015. Courtesy of artist, Galleria Leme, Sao Paulo and Galerija Vartai, Vilnius.

Ikon, in collaboration with Galerija Vartai, presents a solo exhibition of work by New York based Lithuanian artist Žilvinas Kempinas (23 September – 27 November 2016).

Comprising a number of installations it is characteristically elemental, representing and embodying natural phenomena such as light and the circulation of air, with an emphasis on movement made by both visitors and kinetic works in the exhibition.

Kempinas' work involves unprecious everyday objects and materials, and he is most renowned for using unwound videotape. It appeals to him not only as an "abstraction" of moving imagery, but also because of its distinct physical qualities:

“[it is ...] super light, thin enough to visually disappear if looked at from one side, an easily recognisable material, flexible and durable. Videotape is also inexpensive. It’s a container of visual information, a data carrier, but you can perceive it like an abstract line. It is a mass-produced banal industrial material, but it can appear sensual and seductive at the same time.”

Videotape is both message and medium in Kempinas’ installation *White Noise* (2007). Involving countless lengths of tape stretched horizontally wall-to-wall, agitated by ventilator fans, it suggests static from a vast un-tuned television screen. The sound of the fans and fluttering tape heighten an illusion which is simultaneously undermined by closer inspection.

Such tension, between first impression and reality, and the dramatic changes that occur through a shifting viewpoint are not uncommon in Kempinas’ work. In other ways *White Noise* provides a key to understanding the exhibition. Literally tied into Ikon’s exhibition space with parallel lengths of tape, it exemplifies the importance of architectural context for the artist - sometimes inspiring the production of work, always affecting our reading of it – and his resistance to any idea of a self-contained, discreet artistic experience.

Shown alongside *White Noise* are seven works from Kempinas’ *Illuminator* series (2015). From a distance they resemble surfaces of a full moon – a bright sphere in a dark sky – but are in fact circles of flat rough wall, lit along their perimeters. *Bearings* (2015), on the other hand, is a floor based black box-like object with thousands of small steel bearings laid down in oil on its surface. At first they are perceived as being in a static radial formation, but on closer inspection there is an occasional movement – the bearings are slowly moving, one by one, rearranging and re-positioning themselves into an infinite “drawing in progress”.

The idea of drawing as a record of a physical movement through a three-dimensional space is studied in a new series on paper, employing traditional materials such as ink and acrylic paint on heavyweight watercolour paper, combined with a non-traditional way of drawing – using a street bicycle as the line-making device. Speed, gravity, space, equilibrium, painterly accidents, mechanical vehicle and artistic control come in to play on these vertical, large-scale and minimalistic drawings/monotypes.

Thus ideas of movement, in its pure kinetic state or as a trace of movement that has already happened, are developed through the artist’s work. His new installation at the beginning of the exhibition, made especially for Ikon, involves an upside-down video projection of a ride through forested landscape and a mass of metal rods (tripods) painted white and arranged on a high gloss black floor. It combines viewers’ movements through the space and formal density to result in a controlled environment that is immediately disorienting. However, as with the *Illuminator* works and *White Noise*, any

illusion is dispelled through careful scrutiny. Consistently Kempinas is playing a smart aesthetic game, sharing something that is as wonderful as it is real.

A catalogue, including an essay by New York based writer Jessica Holmes, accompanies the exhibition. Available from Ikon Shop or online at www.ikon-gallery.org

The exhibition is supported by the Lithuanian Council for Culture.

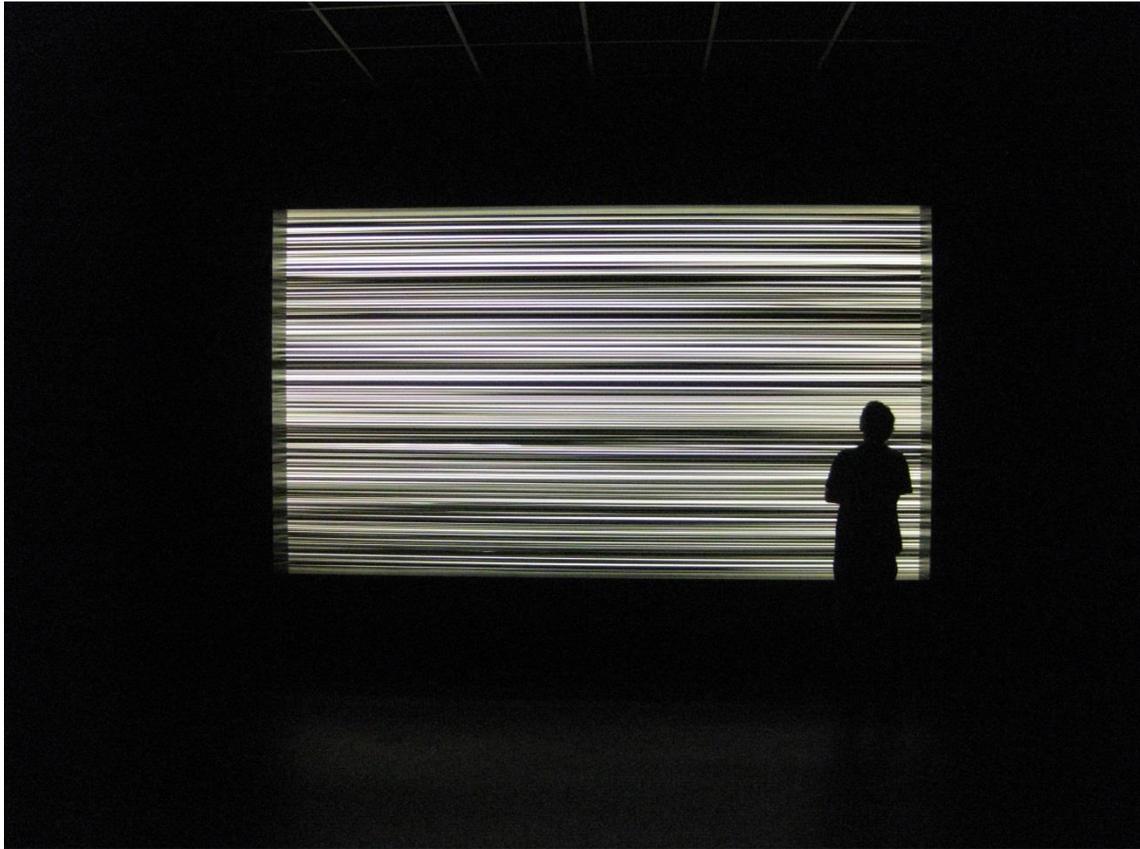
Social Media Handles:

Instagram, Twitter and Facebook: @ikongallery #IkonGallery #Žilvinas Kempinas

Note to Editors:

1. Ikon exhibition opening: Friday 23 September, 6-8pm.
2. Born in 1969 in Plunge, Lithuania, Kempinas has settled in New York since graduating from Hunter College, City University of New York, in 2002. Solo exhibitions include PS1 (2003), Kunsthalle Wien (2009) and the Tinguely Museum (Basel 2012). He is a recipient of the Calder Prize (2007) and represented the Lithuanian Pavilion at the Venice Biennale (2009).
3. Ikon is an internationally acclaimed contemporary art venue situated in central Birmingham. Established in 1964 by a group of artists, Ikon is an educational charity and works to encourage public engagement with contemporary art through exhibiting new work in a context of debate and participation. The gallery programme features artists from around the world and a variety of media is represented, including sound, film, mixed media, photography, painting, sculpture and installation. Ikon's off-site programme develops dynamic relationships between art, artists and audiences outside the gallery. Projects vary enormously in scale, duration and location, challenging expectations of where art can be seen and by whom. Education is at the heart of Ikon's activities, stimulating public interest in and understanding of contemporary visual art. Through a variety of talks, tours, workshops and seminars, Ikon's Learning Team aims to build dynamic relationships with audiences, enabling visitors to engage with, discuss and reflect on contemporary art. www.ikon-gallery.org
4. Ikon is open Tuesday – Sunday and Bank Holiday Mondays, 11am - 5pm. Admission is free. Ikon Gallery is supported using public funding from Arts Council England and Birmingham City Council. For the latest news and events follow @ikongallery on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).
5. For more information or high-res images please contact Rebecca Small or Emily Luxford at Ikon on 0121 248 0708 or email r.small@ikon-gallery.org or e.luxford@ikon-gallery.org

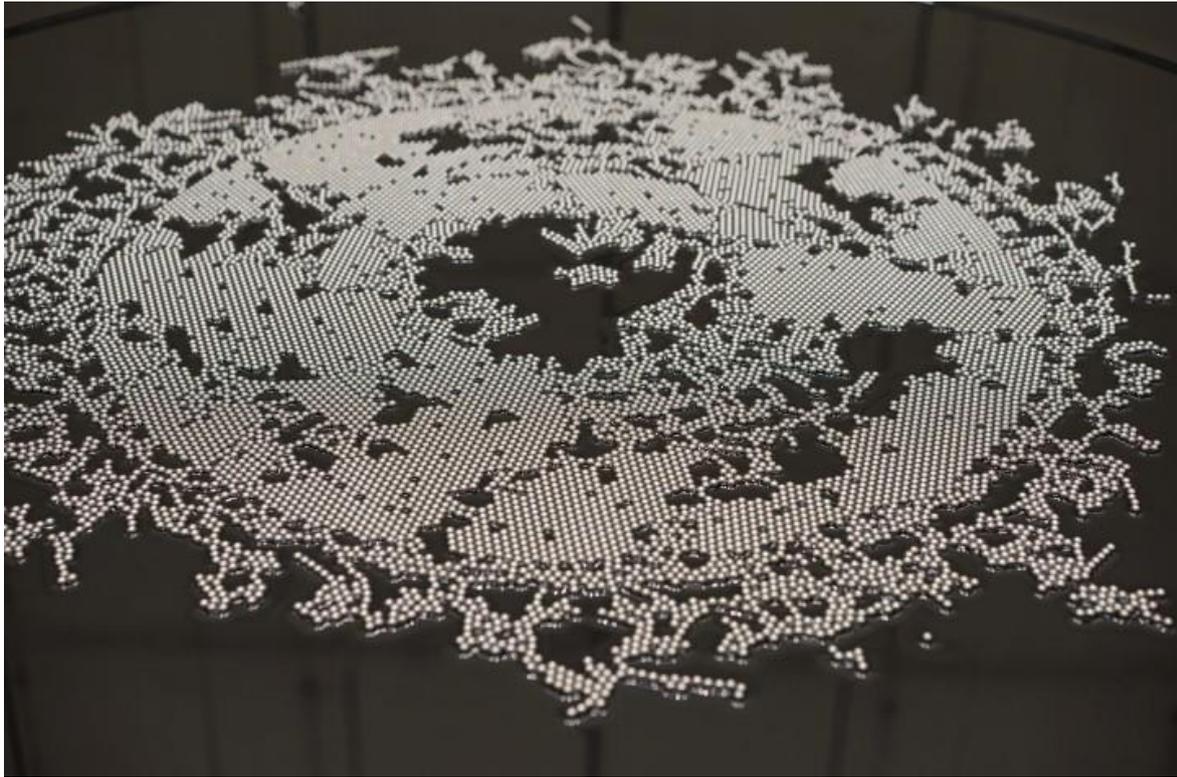
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Žilvinas Kempinas, *White Noise* (2007). Magnetic tape, plywood, fans, lights. Installation view Hause der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin. Courtesy of artist, Galeria Leme, Sao Paulo and Galerija Vartai, Vilnius.



Žilvinas Kempinas, *Illuminator VII* (2015). Aluminium, resin, lights. Courtesy of artist, Galeria Leme, Sao Paulo and Galerija Vartai, Vilnius.



Žilvinas Kempinas, *Bearings* (2015) (detail). Steel, aluminium, mineral oil, motor, magnets. Courtesy of artist, Galeria Leme, Sao Paulo and Galerija Vartai, Vilnius.