

Vitalij Strigunkov (b. 1990) is an artist who lives and creates in Vilnius, Lithuania. He studied at the Vilnius Academy of Arts and the Willem de Kooning Academy in Rotterdam. While he studied painting, he now brings together a variety of media in his art. Strigunkov's works combine appropriated images and stories, actions, drawings, video, and installations. In his creations, the artist explores the economy of symbolic capital and the emergence and disappearance of cultural value, creating contrasts with broader cultural, social, and political problems.

Strigunkov takes part in group exhibitions and arranges individual exhibitions in Lithuania and abroad. Recent exhibitions include: *Incurabile*, Luogo_e, Bergamo, Italy (2024); *Lithuanian videospritz*, Trieste Contemporanea, Trieste, Italy (2022); *Head With Many Thoughts*, Contemporary Art Centre, Vilnius, Lithuania (2020); *Loose Ends*, National Gallery of Art, Vilnius, Lithuania (2019); *Meanwhile, what about Socialism? (Part Two)*, BALTIC 39, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK (2018); *XII Baltic Triennial*, Contemporary Art Centre, Vinius-Riga-Tallin, (2018) among others.

By applying to an exhibition program at Ujazdowski Castle artist seeks to bring his practice to a broader audience internationally and particularly in Poland.

Clowns in Search of Hidden Brains, 2023

Single channel video, 19 min., color, sound



Clowns in Search of Hidden Brains, single channel video, 2023

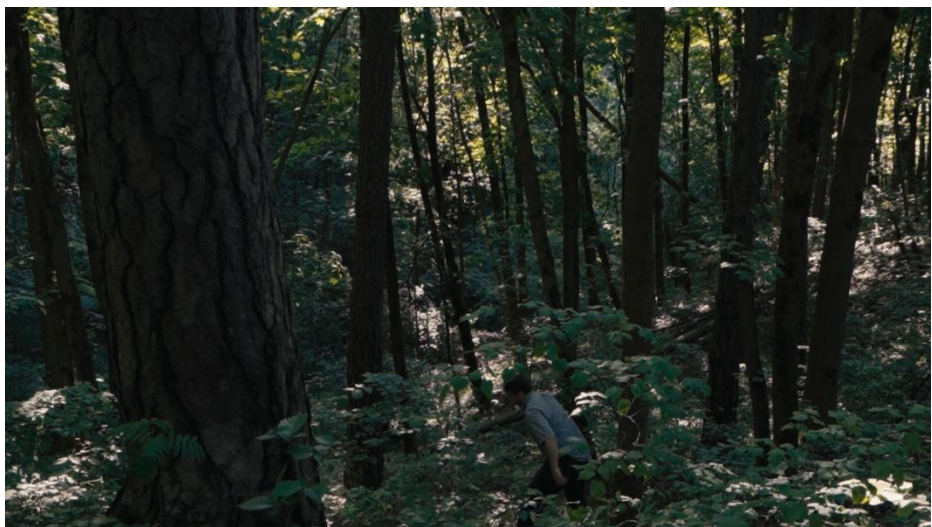
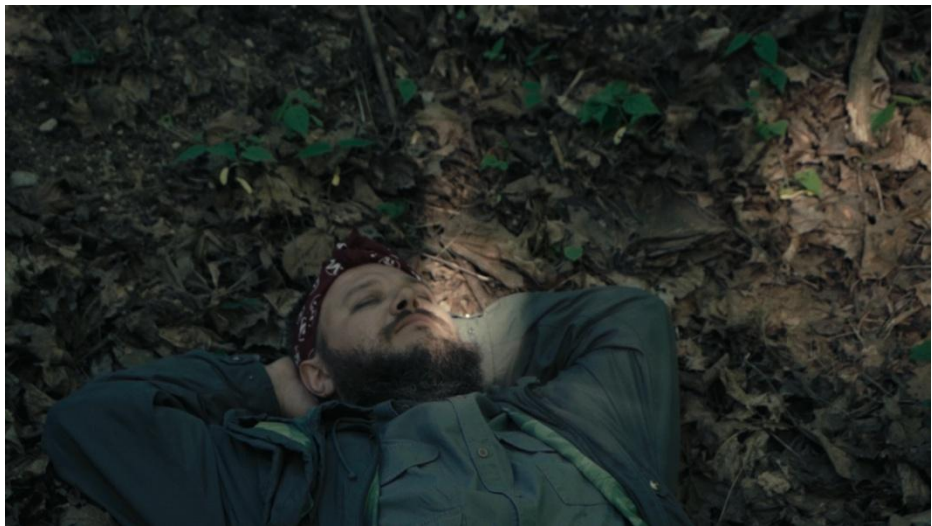
"We are looking for our inner fool."

Three maskless clowns wander the unkept edge of a forest in search of hidden brains. Watching the fools, who fail to find what they sought, are observers wearing clown masks.

A story tells of the genius brains of politicians, warriors, scientists and sceptics, objects of study at a brain research institute in Vilnius in the interwar years. When the centre closed at the start of World War II, the brains were hidden in a now forgotten place on the city's outskirts, in hopes they could one day be recovered and revived. Inspired by this urban legend, the artist sets out to revive the materiality of the disembodied union of utopian science and radical politics. With the help of three hospital clowns, practitioners of irrationality and foolishness, who say their work leads to a merging of body and psyche, the artist embarks on a search for the brains.

As it unfolds, the event's materiality gradually pulls away from its root ideas. Philosophical and political tensions playfully yield to re-actualising temporary relationships and states, with a reversal of the roles of observer and observed taking place. Balancing between documentary and fiction film, the artist undermines any certain reading of the situation, depriving what is portrayed of symbolic promise yet testifying to its physical authenticity.

[Video preview](#)



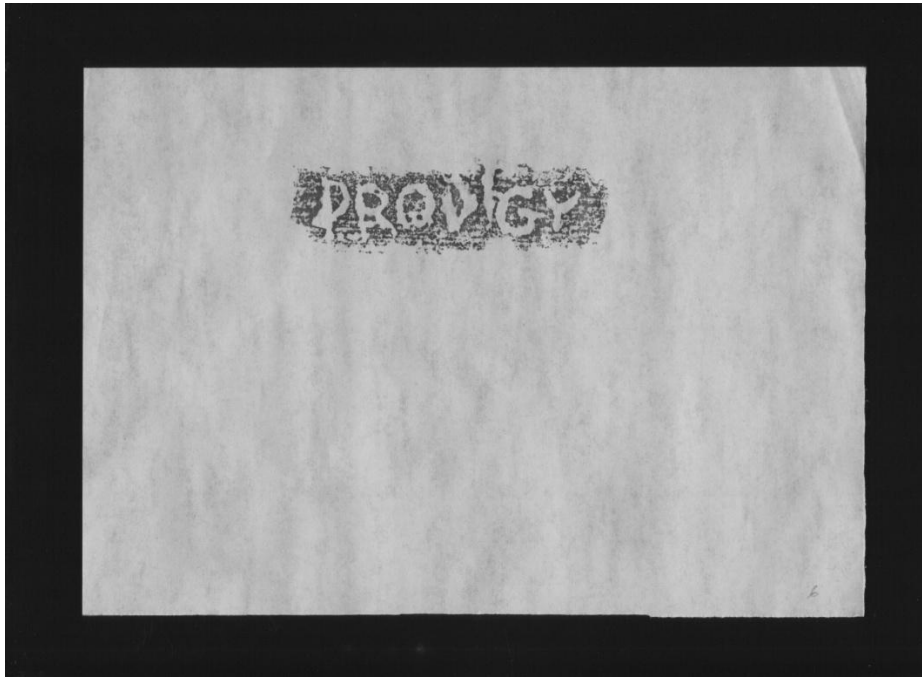
Clowns in Search of Hidden Brains, single channel video, 2023



The Clowns in Search of Hidden Brains, medium format photographic documentation, 2023

CCC, 2018

Frottage drawings, dimensions variable



CCC, notebook No. 6 inscription No. 16, frottage drawing, 17.5 x 25 cm, 2018

CCC is a series of more than a hundred frottage drawings evolved as a sort of visual record of engraved inscriptions on pews at churches in Toruń, a city in the north-central Poland. The collection of drawings marks the cultural strata of the city and materializes complex commentary on everyday events. Determined by boredom, these anonymous inscriptions shape the way, in which I understand the role of drawing as a documented intervention of uncertainties in everyday.

***Waiting*, 2015**

Single channel video, 22:40, color, sound



Waiting, single channel video, 2015

In the spring of 2014, eager for U.S. Vice President Joe Biden's visit to Lithuania, the country's public broadcaster announced his arrival at Vilnius Airport. But a delay by the Vice President in exiting the plane caused problems for the broadcaster's live coverage plans. The minutes pass, and as the script that was prepared for the coverage runs out, increasingly complex commentary focuses on the visit's political dimension. Unexpectedly, the wait itself comes to be more significant than the actual visit. In the film a Lithuanian voice-over is added to the broadcast that was originally shown in Lithuanian.

[Video preview](#)



Waiting, single channel video, 2015

Substitution, 2015

Single channel HD video, 7:19 min, color, sound

Postcard, 10 x 15 cm



Substitution, single channel HD video, 2015

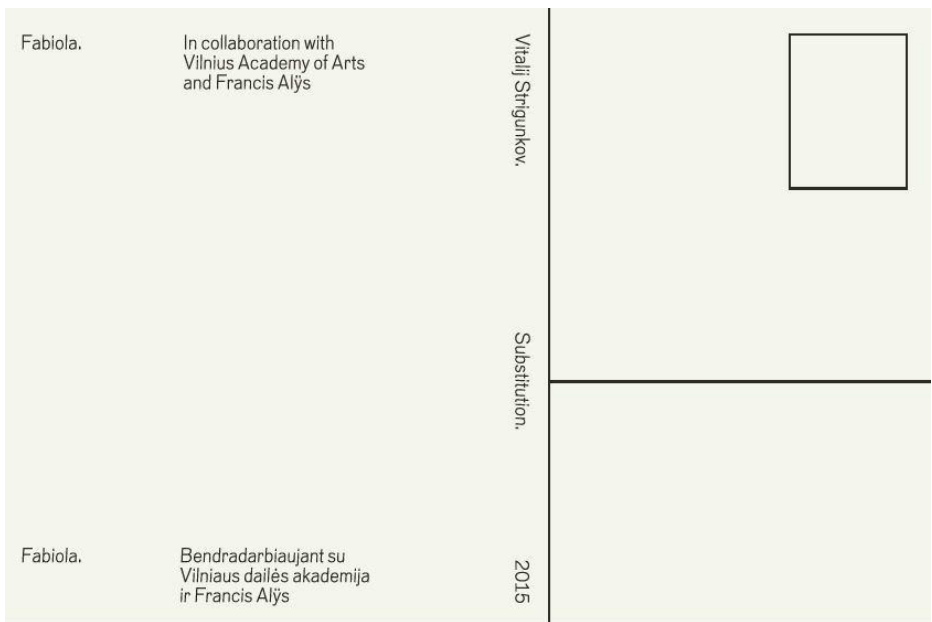
The project started when, as a student at the Vilnius Academy of Arts, I decided to contribute to the 'Fabiola' collection of the Belgian artist living in Mexico Francis Alÿs. Over the past two decades, the artist has gathered a large number of low value paintings from secondary art market and put them back in the spotlight under his own collection. Seeing the similarities between anonymous authors of the collected works by Alÿs and myself, as an art student, I painted another 'Fabiola' and sent it to be included in his collection, then trying to trace the changing symbolic value of the painting I made.

The main body of work consists of two parts – a video reenactment (docu-fiction) of correspondence as a direct conversation and a postcard of a painting.

[Video preview](#)



Substitution, single channel HD video, 7:19 min, 2015



Substitution, postcard, 10 x 15 cm, first edition, 2015