

# Photopia

Ema Lančaričová

Curated by: Patrik Krajčovič

*“This project is about the thin line between visibility and invisibility, existence and non-existence, places and non-places, physical presence and dematerialization, the blending of time as well as its halting and negation, about the impossibility of defining the future, and about idealization through the most widely used medium today. About photography and utopia – about photopia.”*

– Ema Lančaričová

The exhibition project Photopia presents the ongoing work Utopia by visual artist Ema Lančaričová. The current show features new works created using Polaroid instant film, as well as lenticular prints made with a stereo camera. The conceptual foundation continues to revolve around the notion of utopia – a term applied to the philosophically elusive medium of photography, and is generally understood as a non-existent place devoid of time.

Visually, this line of thought is represented by a recurring element: a column or colonnade on an abandoned industrial site. The exhibition also includes photographs of now-demolished buildings, interiors, and structures of found, decaying objects. Over time, these reveal layers that the artist likens to the light-sensitive layers of photographic material, into which a slice of time and space is imprinted. Photography has the ability to freeze these physical dimensions into a single moment, concentrating past, present, and future – becoming a utopia itself: a non-place and non-time.

The light-sensitive material also holds visual properties such as color saturation and the slow degradation of the image, evoking a sense of nostalgia for an unattainable past or a yet-to-be-experienced future. The artist views these layers as the creation of an archive and the reanimation of fading memories tied to the place, as well as their idealization. By repeating motifs, she draws attention to the technical nature of photography and its potential for infinite reproduction. This technological principle is countered by random errors in the photographic material, making each result a unique original.

The layered utopian atmosphere is further shaped by an experimental ambient soundtrack by musician Morgien, who uses asynchronous looping of identical musical motifs. The resulting sense of being frozen in time, yet simultaneously flowing through it, becomes a sonic response to the core idea behind the artist’s work.

**Ema Lančaričová** (1993, Trnava) earned her doctoral degree in 2024 at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava, where she currently works as an assistant professor in the Department of Photography and New Media. Her work focuses thematically on exploring the very nature of photographic imagery, engaging with philosophical questions and tendencies that open new pathways for interpretation. She has returned to the Utopia series consistently, presenting it in several solo exhibitions, such as *Noplace / Notime* at the Nitra Gallery (2019), *Flatgallery* in Bratislava (2020), and *Phototogether* Gallery in Zlín (2024), as well as in group exhibitions like *Entrotopia 0.1* at Galleria Rantakasarmi in Helsinki (2019), *Concrete Dreams* at Photon Gallery in Ljubljana (2020), and *The Search for Utopia* at Culture Lab LIC in New York (2024).