

Adam Magyar



M a t t e r

Sometimes the seemingly most insignificant moments and disregarded details can describe our everyday life the best. Particular events, noteworthy happenings, and special occasions, of course, remain central points in our personal memory and thus identity too. However, the average flow of time, with its constant rhythm, defines us just as much as the exceptional moments and milestones of our life. This is particularly observable when this otherwise unnoticed – or often even annoying and frustrating – daily routine gets interrupted, especially if it happens for a longer period, which triggers us to think of what we have not thought of at all before.

Ádám Magyar has passionately investigated the contemporary urban reality in his various series that he created in dense metropolises all over the world. Being an avid observer, he has also become a collector of those moments and details that we usually do not care for, e.g., the passage between two points, the “lost” time spent on commuting traffic or walking through a square, taking the escalator, etc. He has developed the technological means for registering the visual data coming from these scenes in a way that is completely different than in our everyday perception. This unusuality is manifested in various forms, like seeing only the moving people but not their context, or, in other series, just the contrary, being able to identify only the fixed elements but not perceiving the moving persons, or the extreme slowing down of a few short seconds while a metro arrives at the station, or even creating an unnatural, engineer-like perspective and sterile rendering of a metro wagon.

In the artist’s words: “The works feel like depicting surreal memories of a world when these moments were negligible everyday moments of life that we never cared of.” In the light of our shared experience of lockdowns from the last months, Ádám Magyar’s artworks may not only serve as aesthetic reminders of our complex and ambiguous everyday reality but can help us in re-evaluating and understanding several further aspects, moments, and details of our lives better.

Zoltán Somhegyi
Art historian
Curator of the exhibition

We don't see out of our everyday moments. We live being trapped into the present. Yet, we cannot live in it.

I guess no one can understand time. My work as a photographer studies our relationship to it. We perceive our time as constant, definite, and descriptive. To show how much this is not the case, I have been developing different technics for realizing my series.

I attempt to present our interrelated movement and existence in the relative medium's constancy with my video and photo installation entitled MATTER.

In the series, I record urban locations for days, weeks, in precisely the same place, with the same settings. In the finished works, the days appear projected on top of each other, showing the time flowing, our fading memory, and our insignificance. Both living and moving visually dissolves and loses their face. Our boundaries are blurred so that time becomes a passage for us. Only the traffic lights remain there in their own clearly legible world.

In STAINLESS, I scanned rushing subway trains arriving at stations. The images record a number of tiny details of this moment. We see people staring towards their destinations, standing at the doors framed by the sliding door windows. Similar to all my images, their primary motivation is arrival. The tunnels' darkness below the city turns these chemically clean mock-ups into fossils of our time.

URBAN FLOW was a study of quantifying motions and analyzing the rhythm of our environment. The outcome is an abstract transformation of reality. The technique I used for it is identical to that of photo-finish cameras used in the Olympic Games. Making these images means constant data collection about life passing by in front of me. The photos taken this way are sections of infinite time flowing by relentlessly, like our own life spans.

Perspective and depth are missing from these photos. People are like beads on a string. As if predestinated, they follow the same track, heading to the same destination.

I hope to provide the viewers an experience through which they can feel insignificant and incomprehensible but very existing moments of everyday life in a form detached from their usual perception.

The pandemic has profoundly changed the way I see my works. They feel like surreal memories of a world when these moments were negligible everyday moments of life that we never cared of. Now, after reevaluation, we are eager to have them all back.

Adam Magyar



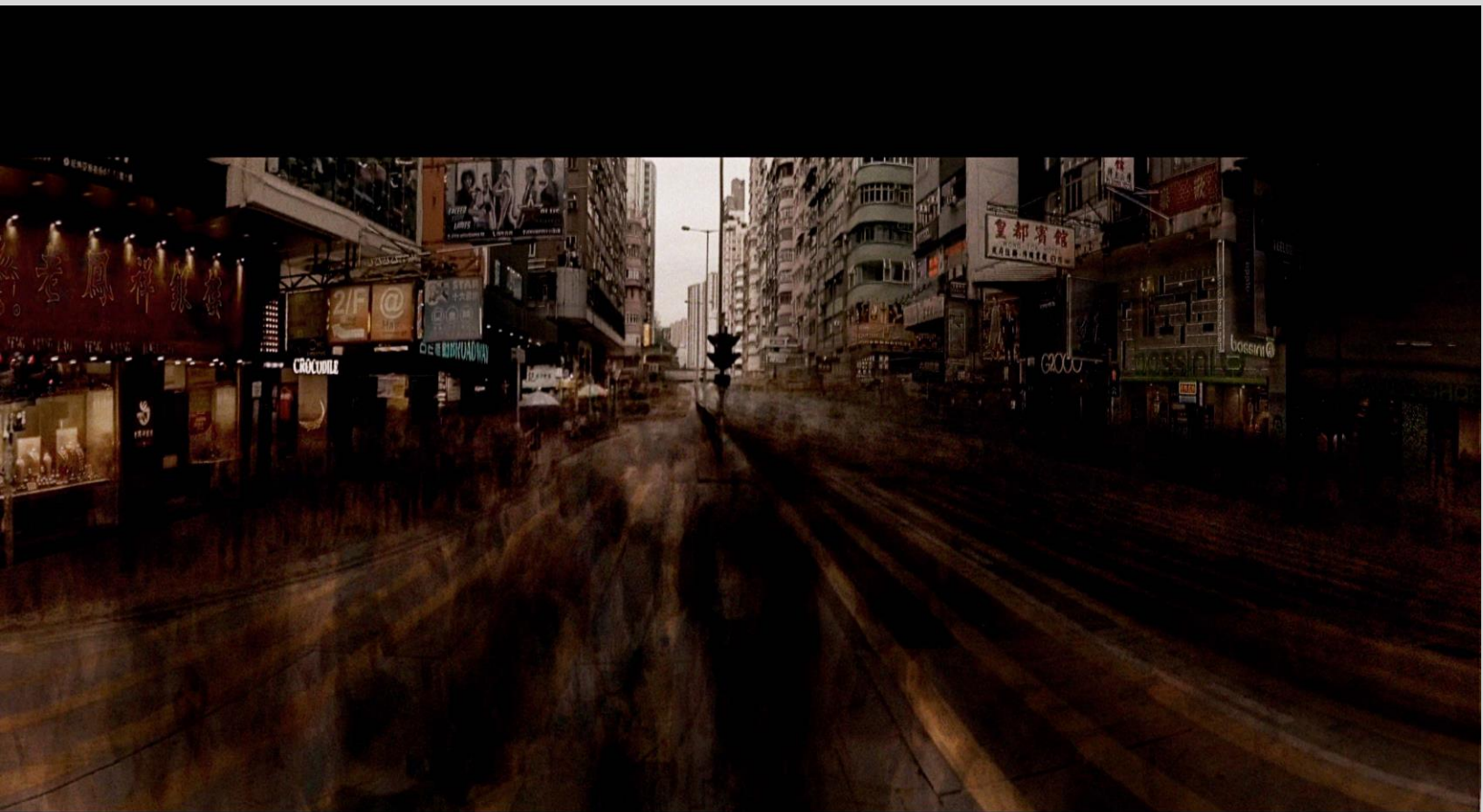
Matter, Varanasi, 2019, Video still



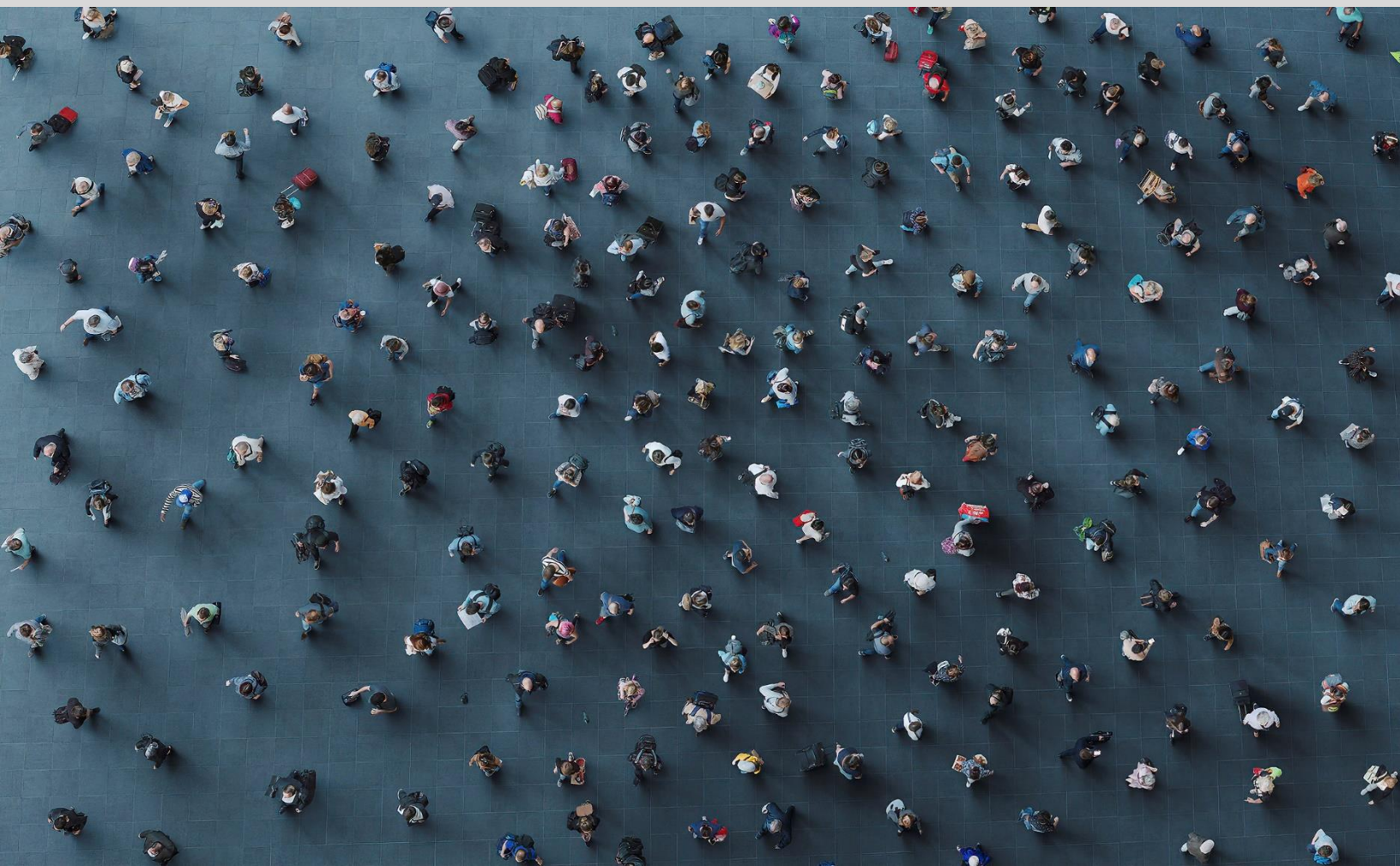
Matter, Tokyo, 2018, Video still



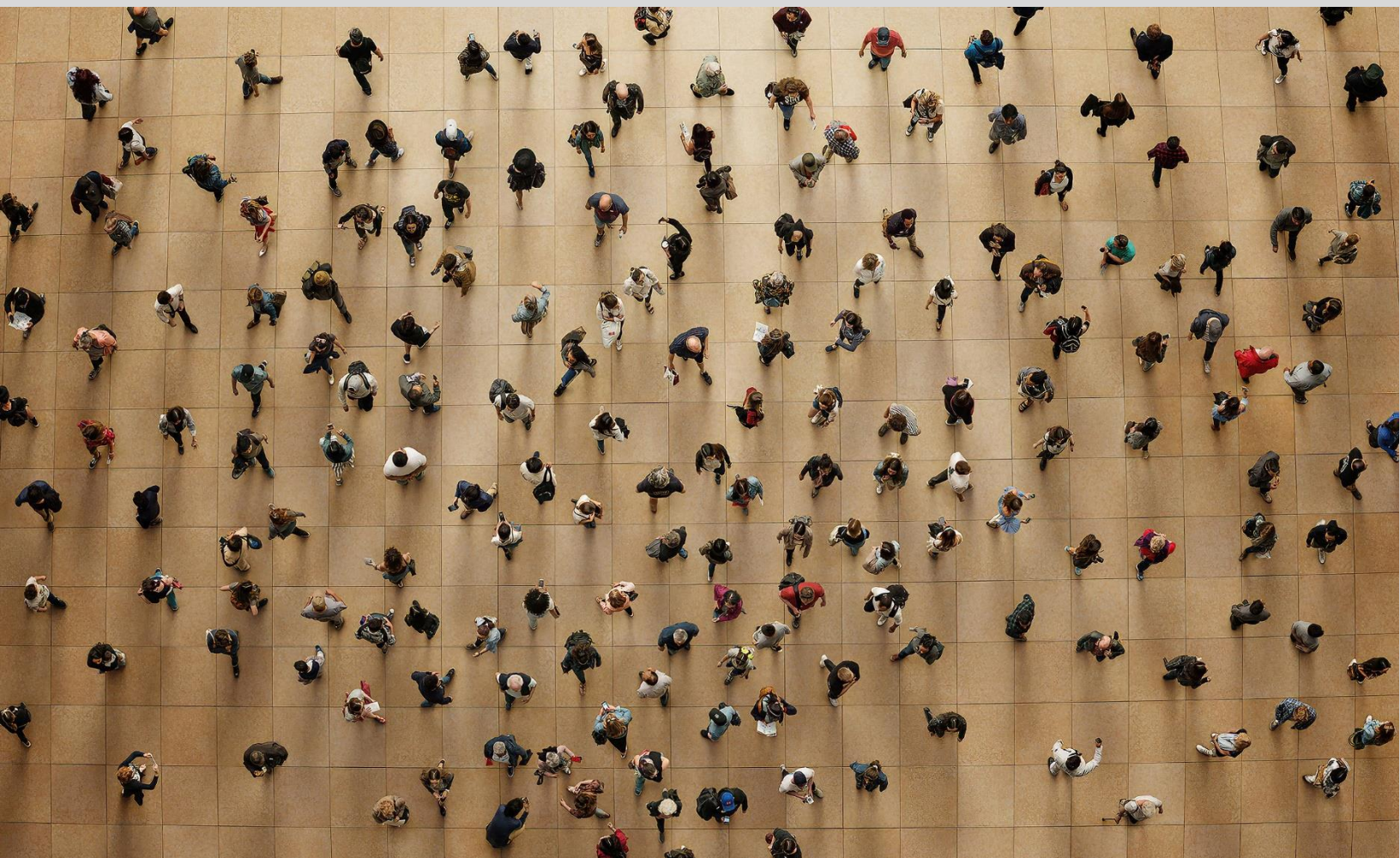
Matter, New York, 2019, Video still



Matter, Hong Kong, 2019, Video still



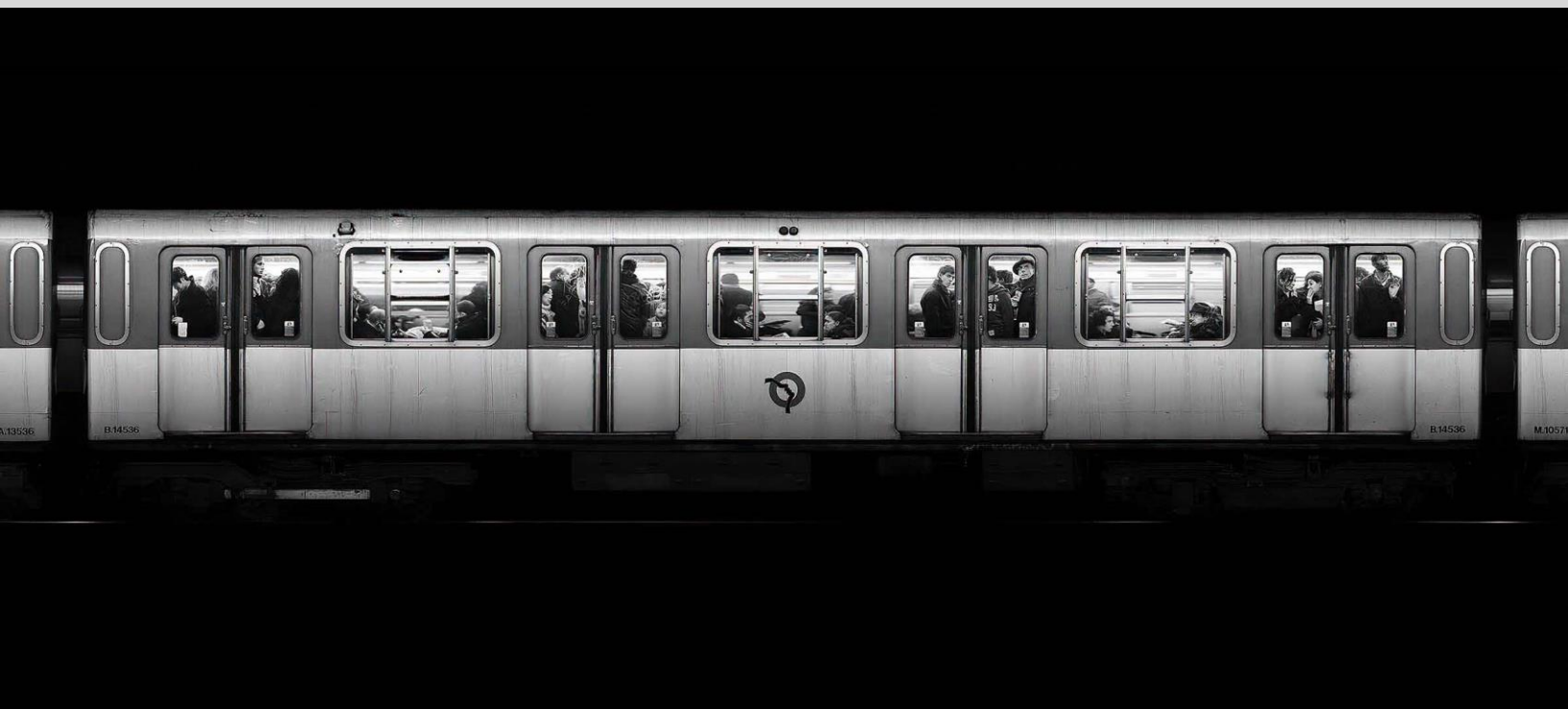
Squares, Berlin I, 2018, Archival inkjet print, 78x130 cm



Squares, New York II, 2018, Archival inkjet print, 78x130 cm



Squares, New York II, 2018, Archival inkjet print, 78x130 cm



Squares, New York II, 2018, Archival inkjet print, 78x130 cm



Urban Flow, Paris, 2019, Archival inkjet print, 26x240 cm



Urban Flow, London, 2010, Archival inkjet print, 26x240 cm



Urban Flow, New Delhi, 2018, Archival inkjet print, 26x240 cm



Urban Flow, Paris, 2019, Archival inkjet print, 26x240 cm

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In the artist's words: "The works feel like depicting surreal memories of a world when those moments were negligible everyday moments of life that we never cared of. In the light of our shared experience of lockdowns from the last months, Adam Magyar's artworks may not only serve as aesthetic reminders of our complex and ambiguous everyday reality but can help us in re-evaluating and understanding several further aspects, moments, and details of our lives better."

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