

**AES+F**



**AES+F, *Inverso Mundus* (2015), 4K single-channel video, color, sound, 38'20"**

**1-channel 4K – € 140,000 Euros + VAT**

**3-channel HD – € 180,000 Euros + VAT**

**7-channel HD – € 375,000 Euros + VAT**

With *Inverso Mundus*, AES+F resurrect the satirical imagination of sixteenth-century engravings, reimagining the medieval and Renaissance tradition of the “world upside down” — the carnivalesque inversion of hierarchies where servants become masters, beasts rule over men, and moral order collapses into grotesque parody. In these early prints, chaos served as a tool of critique: the carnival as an anarchic mirror through which power could be seen for what it was — absurd, fragile, and contingent. AES+F transpose this historical satire into the digital age, transforming the allegorical etchings of the sixteenth century into a sprawling, cinematic vision of our own inverted reality, where spectacle has replaced politics and irony has devoured dissent.

In *Inverso Mundus*, the familiar coordinates of contemporary life implode in a tableau of choreographed chaos – a tragicomic apocalypse where social conventions are inverted to highlight the underlying premises that we always take for granted. Metrosexual garbage

collectors douse the streets with sewage; corporate elites are usurped by their impoverished doubles; the poor give alms to the rich; Chimeras descend from the sky to be caressed like domestic pets; a pig eviscerates a butcher; women in cocktail dresses sensually torture men on IKEA-style torture devices in an ironic reversal of the Inquisition; youth wages battle with the elderly; an orgy of riot police and protesters merge in a delirious embrace; men and women carry donkeys on their backs; and virus-like Radiolaria from Haeckel's illustrations loom over and settle on oblivious people occupied with taking selfies. Every image glitters with impossible precision — a vision of a world where ethics and aesthetics have collapsed into pure spectacle. The apocalypse has never looked so exquisite.

Beneath this dazzling surface, *Inverso Mundus* exposes the obscene performance of geopolitics - a theatre of reversed moral gravity where power performs its own undoing in public view. Here, justice, compassion, and dignity are consumed by the same media machinery that broadcasts their demise. AES+F's digital pageantry stages a perverse transparency — a world where exposure replaces truth, where suffering is stylized, and where the apocalypse arrives not as tragedy but as entertainment. Yet AES+F's allegory is coming all too close to our daily reality, where power masquerades as empathy; cruelty as pleasure; violence becomes choreography, oppression becomes entertainment, and catastrophe becomes aesthetic. The digital sublime, once a promise of progress, here becomes a theatre of moral entropy.

Malta, at the intersection of continents and histories — both fortress and threshold, both participant and spectator in the incessant cycles of power and layers of history — becomes an apt setting for this grotesque carnival of inversion. Within the context of *Art from Elsewhere: DEEP THROAT*, AES+F's vision resonates as a baroque mirror to the global condition: an endless feedback loop of exposure and denial, confession and control. In this "world upside down," we no longer know whether we are watching or being watched, performing or being performed. In *Inverso Mundus*, AES+F confront us with a perverse moral geometry: the world as spectacle, the obscene as truth. Its beauty is damning; its satire, uncomfortably familiar. As the film unfolds, we recognize ourselves not as onlookers but as actors in the same theatre — endlessly rehearsing the absurd, complicit in our own undoing.

The work's title itself — fusing the Italian *inverso* ("reverse," "poem") and the Latin *mundus* ("world") — signals this paradoxical terrain. The artists' vision is both poetic and diagnostic: they reveal a civilization intoxicated by its own image, drowning in the luminous surfaces of consumption, surveillance, and spectacle. *Inverso Mundus* resonates uncannily with the contradictions that define our moment: compassion turned to spectacle, crisis aestheticized, and truth obscured by the glare of endless revelation. In AES+F's world, as in ours, the inversion is complete — the grotesque and the beautiful entwined in a seamless choreography of collapse.

The soundtrack of the video is an amalgamation of Léon Boëllmann's 1895 *Suite Gothique*, an original piece by contemporary composer and media-artist Dmitry Morozov (aka VTOL), along with excerpts from Ravel, Liszt, Mozart, and Tchaikovsky, with a particular emphasis on "Casta Diva" from Vincenzo Bellini's *Norma*.

*Inverso Mundus* premiered as a 7-channel, 40-meter-long video installation in the former Venice salt warehouses as a collateral event of the 56th Venice Biennale in 2015. The video installation was subsequently shown in its single-channel, 3- or 7-channel versions at the 6th Moscow

Biennale (2015), the Kochi-Muziris Biennial (2016), the National Gallery of Australia (2017), and the 1st Bangkok Biennial (2018), among other venues. Other works in the project include a series of monumental digital collages, a series of oil paintings, colored pencil drawings, and the torture devices from the video as stand-alone sculptural objects. The objects, drawings, and paintings were first exhibited at Moscow's Triumph Gallery in 2015 as a special project of the 6th Moscow Biennale, and subsequently in AES+F's survey exhibition *Theatrum Mundi* at the Musée d'art et d'histoire in Geneva in 2018. *Inverso Mundus* was subsequently presented in various exhibitions around the world featuring selections and combinations of works from the project. *Inverso Mundus* is in the collections of the Blavatnik Family Foundation, London; the Multimedia Art Museum, Moscow (MAMM), as well as significant private collections in the USA and the Netherlands.

**ARTIST BIO:** <https://aesf.art/>

**AES+F (Artist Group founded in 1987 in Moscow, Russia. Live and work in Berlin, Germany; Rome, Italy; New York, USA.)**

First formed as AES Group in 1987 by Tatiana Arzamasova, Lev Evzovich, and Evgeny Svyatsky, the collective became AES+F when Vladimir Fridkes joined in 1995. AES+F work at the intersection of traditional media, photography, video and digital technologies. They define their practice as a kind of "social psychoanalysis" through which they reveal and explore the values, vices and conflicts of contemporary global culture.

AES+F achieved worldwide acclaim in the Russian Pavilion at the 52nd Biennale di Venezia in 2007, and since then have participated in many signature biennials around the world, including: Adelaide, Gwangju, Havana, Helsinki, Istanbul, Kiev, Kochi-Muziris, Lille, Lyon, Melbourne, Moscow, St. Moritz, Sydney, Taipei, Vancouver, and others. Festivals devoted to new media include: ARS Electronica (Linz), Mediacity Seoul and Video Zone (Tel Aviv); and photography: FotoFest (Houston), Les Rencontres d'Arles and Moscow's Photo Biennial.

AES+F had over 100 solo exhibitions at museums and galleries worldwide, including: ZKM (Karlsruhe), HAM (Helsinki), Moderna Museet (Stockholm), Tate Britain (London), MAXXI and MACRO Future (Rome), Centre Pompidou (Paris), Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza (Madrid), Today Art Museum (Beijing), Mori Art Museum (Tokyo), Leeum Samsung Museum of Art (Seoul), State Russian Museum (St. Petersburg), Garage Museum of Contemporary Art (Moscow), National Gallery of Australia (Canberra), Faena Art Center (Buenos Aires), and many others.

Notable solo exhibitions include: Galeria Senda in Barcelona in 2016, followed by the Claudine and Jean Marc Salomon Foundation in France the same year; the SCAD Museum of Art in Savannah, Georgia, in 2018; *Predictions and Revelations* at St. Petersburg's Central Exhibition Hall "Manege" in 2019, *What Came to Pass* at Tang Contemporary Art in Beijing in 2020, and *Lost, Hybrid, Inverted* at the Jeonnam Museum of Art in South Korea in 2021, *AES+F. Inverso Mundus: Chimeras* at Sargent's Daughters in New York in 2024.

Their works appear in some of the world's principal collections of contemporary art, such as Moderna Museet (Stockholm), MOCAK (Kraków), Sammlung Goetz (Munich), ZKM (Karlsruhe), National Gallery of Australia (Canberra), Art Gallery of South Australia (Adelaide), and the Museum of Old and New Art (Tasmania), Centre de Arte dos de Mayo (Madrid), Centre Pompidou (Paris), and the Louis Vuitton Foundation (Paris), the Vanhaerents Art Collection (Brussels), Taguchi Art Collection (Tokyo), The Carl & Marilyn Thoma Art Foundation (Dallas), 21C Museum Hotels (United States), The Museum of Fine Arts (Houston), and many others. Their work is also well represented in some of Russia's principal national museums, such as The State Tretyakov Gallery (Moscow), The State Russian Museum (St. Petersburg), the National Center for Contemporary Art, and the Multimedia Art Museum (Moscow).

AES+F received the Sergey Kuryokhin Contemporary Art Award 2011, the main award of the Kandinsky Prize 2012, the main award of the NordArt Festival 2014, and Pino Pascali Prize 2015 (18th Edition) – all for the project Allegoria Sacra. AES+F were also awarded a Bronze Medal (2005) and a Gold Medal (2013) by the Russian National Academy of Fine Arts.