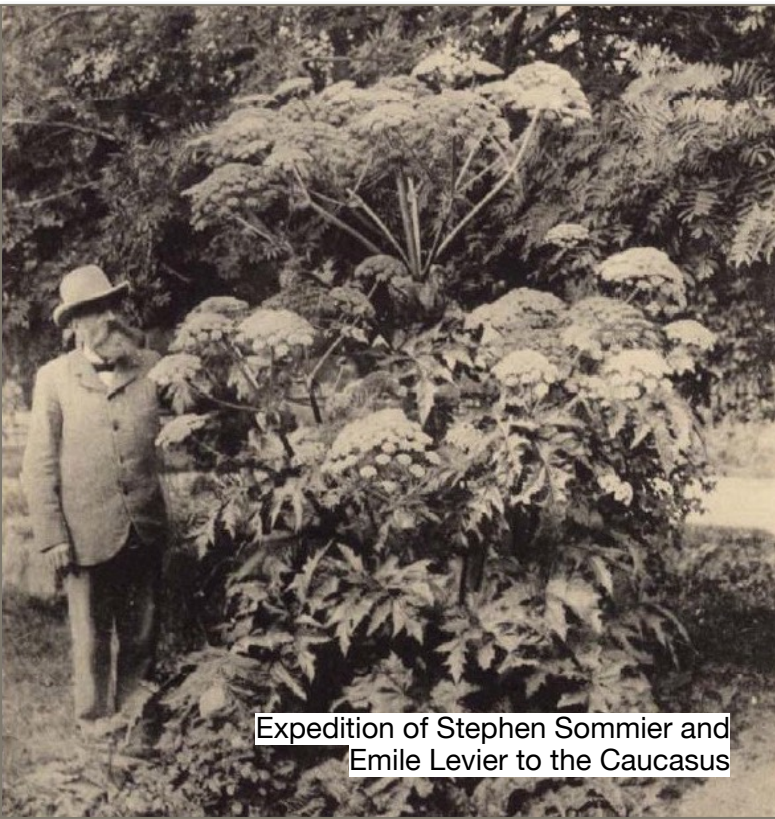






Chordaria flagelliformis
Anna Atkins, 1854



Expedition of Stephen Sommier and
Emile Levier to the Caucasus



Nursery Cryme
Genesis, 1971



Soviet fields of *Heracleum Sosnowskyi*
cultivated as livestock feed.

Высокоурожайная силосная культура борщевик Сосновского на
плантациях филиала.



Alexandra Lerman
Soldiers of the Sun or the Right to the Future Tense
Museum of Hygiene, Saint Petersburg, Russia
ProArte Foundation, Contemporary Art in Traditional Museum Festival
September 28 - November 3, 2019

Soldiers of the Sun or the Right to the Future Tense

By Alexandra Lerman

Alexandra Lerman presents a site-specific installation consisting of a music video and a series of cyanotypes, a camera-less image-making process created by exposing photo-sensitive paper directly to UV light. Historically this process is linked to the British botanist, the first female photographer Anna Atkins and her album of British Algae created at the height of "natural history mania" in 1843. In response, Lerman creates her own life-size album of the age of the Anthropocene.

The analog "sun prints" present an indexical image in silhouette of abstracted figures, plants, seeds, and latest image-making technological gadgets such as smart phones and drones, as well as the Giant Hogweed (*Heracleum sosnowskyi*) - a spectacularly anthropomorphic plant at the center of each composition. This viral, invasive, photo-toxic species rapidly infesting Post-Soviet territories was initially imported into the Soviet Union from the Caucasus as livestock feed in an innovative effort to restore agriculture after World War II. Each plant distributes 70,000 seeds into the local soil, often rendering the local site useless to any potential for future farming, which presents a potent metaphor for the spirit of the earth seeking revenge for the devastation wrought through human ecological distress. Both the process implicit in creating cyanotypes and the poison born of the Giant Hogweed's foliage are triggered by the sun - one resulting in a painful and potentially deadly wound, and the other an ethereal image of the human body once-removed from the world.

The video *The Return of the Return of the Giant Hogweed* takes as its starting point a song by the English rock band Genesis. Updated and translated into Russian the song tells the post-Soviet story of the plant from its own point of view.

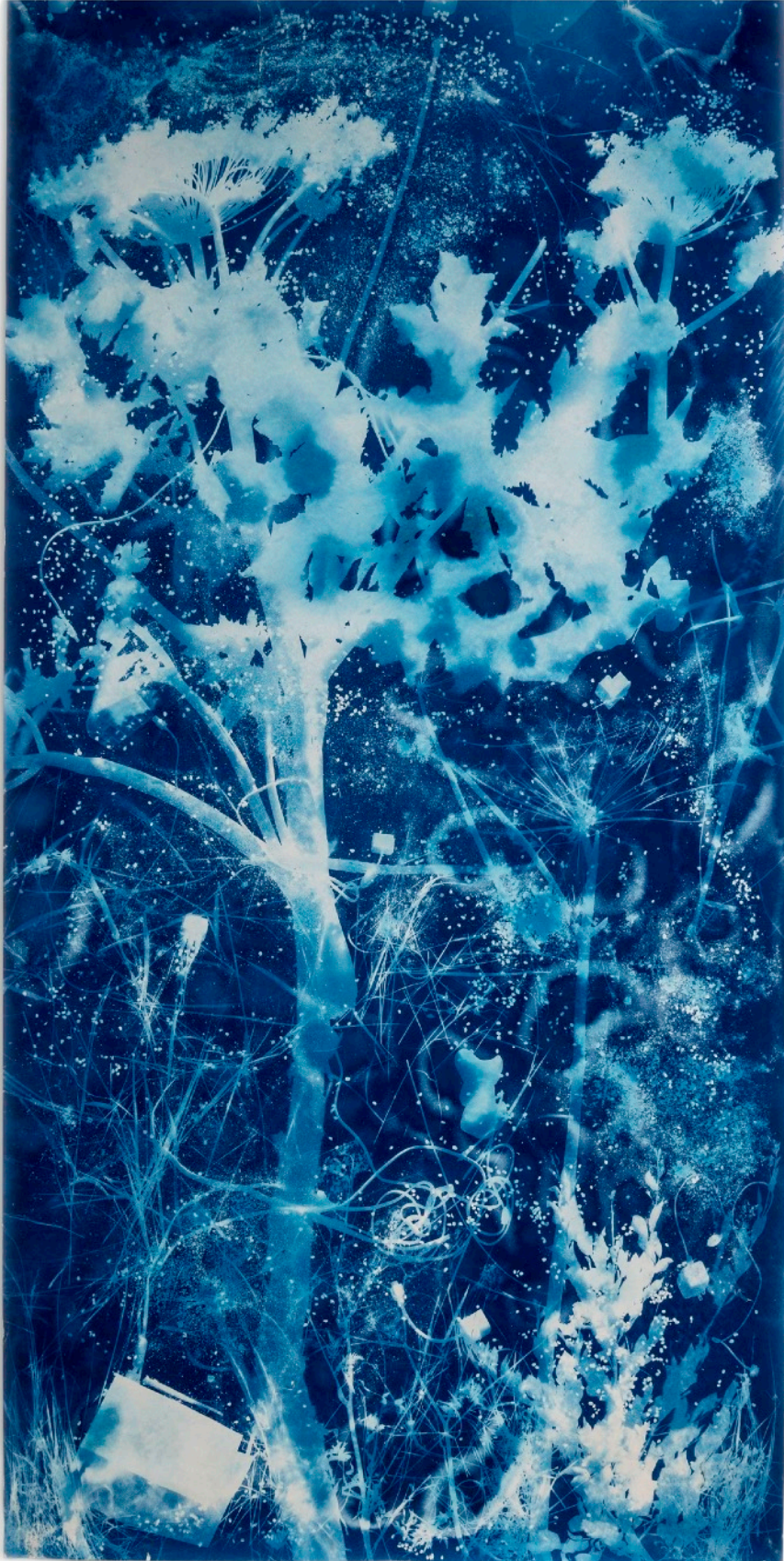
In an effort to dialogue with the site of The Museum of Hygiene, Lerman has also produced a series of cyanotypes inspired by the taxidermic Pavlov's dog on display in the museum's collection. Functioning as self-portraiture, Lerman assumes the role of the feral, feminine subject in Pavlov's classical conditioning experiments. By engaging with Pavlov's work in the era of the digital, Lerman recontextualizes the dog's presence in the museum as a timely, symbolic reminder of our newly developed algorithmically-conditioned addiction to social media and its dopamine-fueled discontents.



Soldiers of the Sun #14, 2018
10'x 5' (3M x1.5M)
Cyanotype on watercolor



Soldiers of the Sun #8, 2018
10'x 5' (3M x 1.5M)
Cyanotype on watercolor



Soldiers of the Sun #13, 2018
10'x 5' (3M x1.5M)
Cyanotype on watercolor



Soldiers of the Sun #3, 2018
10'x 5' (3m x1.5m)
Cyanotype on watercolor



Soldiers of the Sun or the Right to the Future Tense, 2019
Museum of Hygiene, Saint Petersburg, Russia



Pavlov's Dog 9, 2019
2019, 50" x 90", 127cm x 227cm
Cyanotype on watercolor paper



Pavlov's Dog 10, 2019
2019, 50" x 90", 127cm x 227cm
Cyanotype on watercolor paper



The Return of the Return of the Giant Hogweed
2019, HD Video, 4min

Watch video: <https://vimeo.com/271016312>
Soldiers of the Sun or the Right to the Future Tense
Museum of Hygiene, Saint Petersburg, Russia

Video ***Soldiers of the Sun*** is based on the song *The Return of the Giant Hogweed* by Genesis. It's been translated into Russian and rewritten from the point of view of the plants.

<https://vimeo.com/271016312/878e7fa88d>

Lyrics of Genesis "The Return of the Giant Hogweed", 1971

Turn and run
Nothing can stop them
Around every river and canal their power is growing
Stamp them out
We must destroy them
They infiltrate each city with their thick dark warning odor

They are invincible
They seem immune to all our herbicidal battering

Long ago in the Russian hills
A Victorian explorer found the regal Hogweed by a marsh
He captured it and brought it home
Botanical creature stirs, seeking revenge
Royal beast did not forget
He came home to London
And made a present of the Hogweed
To the Royal Gardens at Kew

Waste no time
They are approaching
Hurry now, we must protect ourselves and find some shelter
Strike by night
They are defenseless
They all need the sun to photosensitize their venom

Still they're invincible
Still they're immune to all our herbicidal battering

Fashionable country gentlemen
Had some cultivated wild gardens
In which they innocently planted the Giant Hogweed throughout the land

Botanical creature stirs, seeking revenge
Royal beast did not forget
Soon they escaped, spreading their seed
Preparing for an onslaught
Threatening the human race

Mighty Hogweed is avenged
Human bodies soon will know our anger
Kill them with your Hogweed hairs
Heracleum Mantegazziani
Giant Hogweed lives!



We are not afraid of your herbicides



Turn around and run

The Return of the Return of the Giant Hogweed, 2019
HD Video, 4min
Watch video: <https://vimeo.com/271016312>



The Return of the Return of the Giant Hogweed, 2019
HD Video, 4min
Watch video: <https://vimeo.com/271016312>



The UV light of the sun exposes the light sensitive paper.



The UV light of the sun exposes the light sensitive paper.



Due to the size of the print I had to fix the print with water at a carwash.



Sun drying the prints outside.



Soldiers of the Sun #2,
10'x5', Cyanotype on
watercolor paper



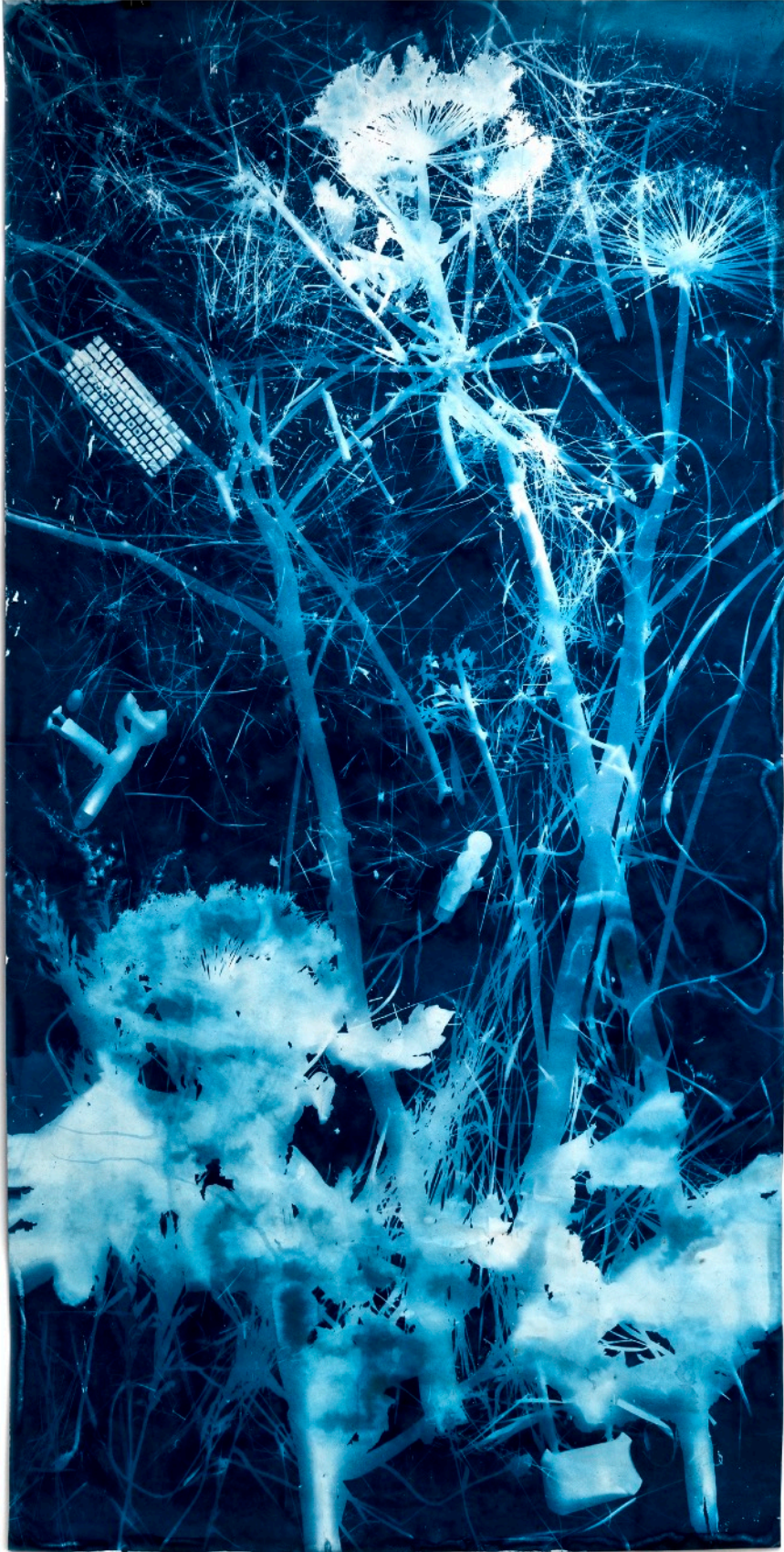
Soldiers of the Sun #1
10'x5', Cyanotype on
watercolor paper



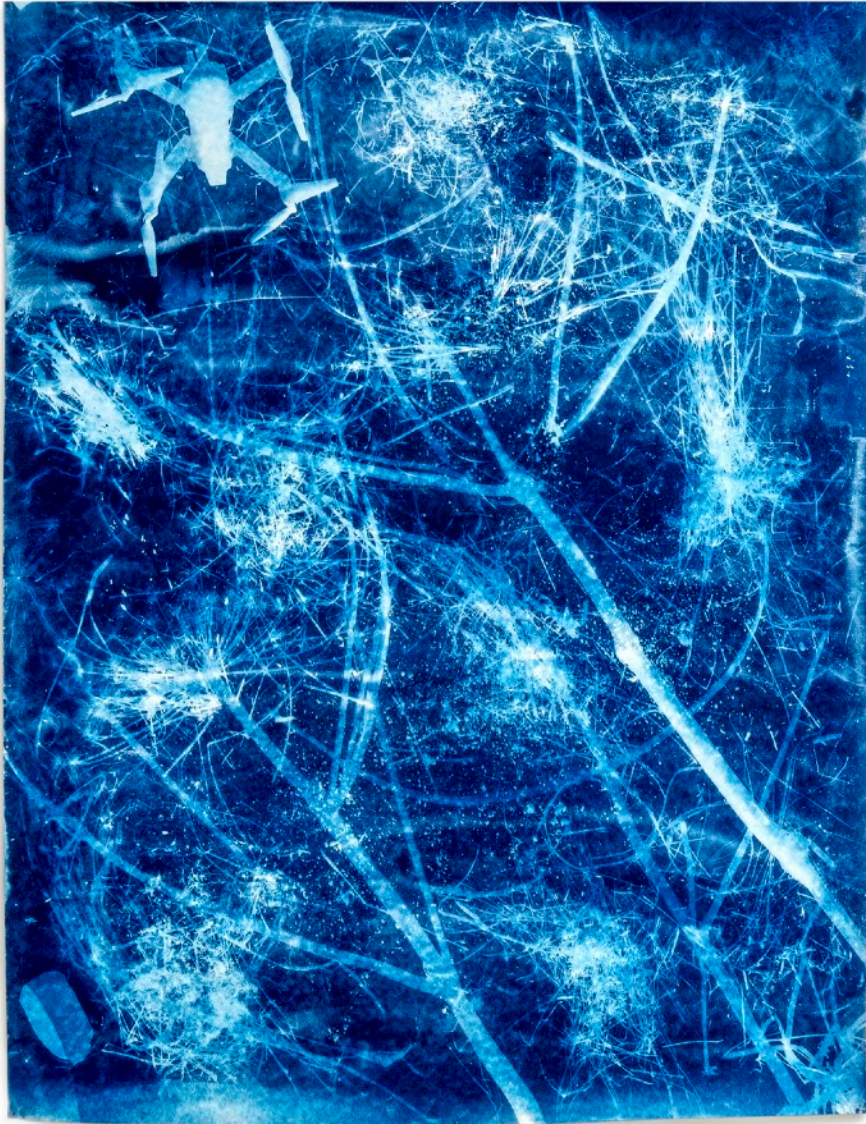
Soldiers of the Sun #3
10'x5'
Cyanotype on
watercolor paper



Soldiers of the Sun
#7
10'x5'
Cyanotype on
watercolor paper



Soldiers of the Sun #11
Side A
10'x5'
Cyanotype on
watercolor paper



Soldiers of the Sun #9,
6'x5'
Cyanotype on watercolor paper



Soldiers of the Sun #10,
10'x5'
Cyanotype
on watercolor paper



Soldiers of the Sun #12,
10'x5', Cyanotype on
watercolor paper

Alexandra Lerman

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Brooklyn, NY

Education

2012 MFA, Columbia University School of the Arts, NY, USA

2004 BFA, The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art, NY, USA

Residencies, grants, awards

2024 CEC ArtsLink Art Prospect Residency, Museum of Silk, Tbilisi, Georgia

2023 BUILD your studio practice

2020 Cultural Capital Introspection Program & Sorry No Rooms Available, Ukraine

2019 Foundation for Contemporary Arts Emergency Grant, New York

2018 LabVERDE, Art Immersion Program in the Amazon, Manaus, Brazil

2018 Essay Filmmaking Workshop with Sky Hopinka, UnionDocs, New York

2016 Open Sessions, The Drawing Center, New York

2015 The Art & Law Program, in collaboration with Fordham Law School, New York

2014 Assets for Artists program by MASS MoCA, ArtHome, and the Midas Collaborative

2013 LMCC Workspace Residency Program, New York

2012 The Banff Centre Visual Arts Program: 01 The Retreat: A Position of dOCUMENTA (13)
Banff Research in Culture 2012, Banff, Alberta, Canada

Selected Exhibitions and Screenings

2023 *Social Photography*, organized by Peter Scott, Carriage Trade, NY

2022 *Emerge: A Festival of Futures*, Cyfest 14 - Ferment, ASU MIX Center, Arizona, US
Digital Fermentation of the Moving Image, Curated by Victoria Ilyushkina
Armenian Center for contemporary experimental art (NPAK), Yerevan, Armenia

2021 *Digital Perspective #3*, Luna Cinema, Warsaw, Poland
ART+ECOLOGY, Hoxton 254 Project Space, London, UK

2020 *Dream Documentary*, Cultural Capital Introspection Program, Uzhhorod, Ukraine
Across the Universe, organized by Zach Nader, Microscope Gallery, NY

2019 *Soldiers of the Sun or the Right to Future Tense*, Museum of Hygiene, Saint Petersburg, Russia, PRO ARTE Foundation for Culture and Arts
ID. CYFEST-12, curated by Elena Gubanova, Stieglitz Academy Museum, Saint Petersburg, Russia

2018 *FRONT INTERNATIONAL: Cleveland Triennial for Contemporary Art*, Cleveland, OH

2017 *Dreamlands: Immersive Cinema and Art, 1905–2016*, Screening Program Dreams and Nightmares, organized by Chrissie Iles, Whitney Museum of American Art, NY

- Digital Distress - Consumed by Infinity*, curated by Elena Tsotsi, Signal-Center for Contemporary Art, Malmö, Sweden
- 2016 *Codes for Conduct*, curated by Lindsey Berfond and Jocelyn Edens, NURTUREart, NY
- 2015 *Open Sessions 6*, organized by Nova Benway and Lisa Sigal, The Drawing Center, NY
- In Practice: Under Foundations*, curated by Jess Wilcox, SculptureCenter, NY
- Irregular Rendition*, curated by Lucy Hunter, in conjunction with The Legal Medium.
- New Encounters of Law and Art conference at the Yale Law School, Fred Giampietro Gallery, New Haven, CT
- Drawing in Context/Field*, organized by Onyedika Chuke, Queens Museum, NY
- 2014 *Immediate Release*, organized by Ceren Erdem, Tina Kim Gallery, NY
- It Narratives*, curated by Brian Droitcour and Zanna Gilbert, Franklin Street Works, Stamford, CT
- 2013 *Groundstroke*, organized by Sebastian Black, Malraux's Place, NY
- 2012 *Crosstime Stories: Global Subjectivities After 1989*, curated by Ceren Erdem, The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Art Gallery, NY
- Columbia University School of the Arts MFA Thesis Show*, curated by Fionn Meade, Fisher Landau Center For Art, NY
- 2011 *Strategies for Public Occupation*, curated by Eva Franch i Gilabert, Storefront for Art and Architecture, NY
- 2006 *When Artists Say We*, curated by Andrea Geyer, Artists Space, New York, NY

Teaching

- 2023 Cooper Union School of Art, guest artist
- 2021 Admissions Committee, Cooper Union School of Art, Saturday Program
- 2019 Hunter College Integrated Media Arts, guest artist
- 2018 The City College of New York, guest artist
- 2016 Dartmouth College, Studio Art Program, guest artist, an outside evaluator
- 2015 Columbia University School of the Arts, guest artist
- School of Visual Arts, guest artist
- 2013 Sculpture/New Genre Admissions Committee, Columbia University
- 2011 Smolny Institute, St.-Petersburg, Russia, guest artist
- 2010-2011 Columbia University School of the Arts, New York, NY, USA
- TA for Video Art with Shelly Silver and Sculpture with Sanford Biggers
- Columbia University, Coordinator Visiting Artist Lecture Series
- 2000-2003 Cooper Union School of Art, Saturday Program for High School Students
- Sculpture, Drawing, and Portfolio Preparation. New York, NY, USA

Bibliography

- Russian Art in the New Millennium, Edward Lucie-Smith, Sergei Reviakin, Aug 2022
New East Archive, 2021
Fontanka.ru, The Werewolf of Pavlov and the Half-breed Tree, Alina Tsiopa, September 28, 2019
Sydsvenskan, I den lilla skärmens sken, February 2018
Shift Journal, On Curating "Irregular Rendition:" Exhibition Making as Public Address, Lucy Hunter, November 2015
Artforum, Barely Legal by Colby Chamberlain, March 4, 2015
Brooklyn Rail, In Practice: Under Foundations by Simone Krug, March 5, 2015
Where 1, catalog edited by R. Lyon, Lucy Hunter with essays by Brian Arthur and Carlos Castellanos (downloadable PDF), 2013
Superposition: Observing Realities, 2013
It's the Political Economy, Stupid. The Global Financial Crisis in Art and Theory, edited by Gregory Sholette, Oliver Ressler, 2013
Hyperallergic, Some Where's Rainbow: Pink Floyd and Dorothy Land in Bushwick by Billie Neith, December 14, 2013
Blouin. Artinfo. The Enigmatic Debut of "Where 1" in Brooklyn, October 24, 2013
Crosstime Stories catalog by Ceren Erdem, 2012
Columbia University MFA Thesis Show, catalog by Fionn Meade, 2012
Art in America, It's the Political Economy, Stupid by David Markus, March 28, 2012
Artforum, Weekend Report by Domenick Ammirat, December 24, 2011