



# Vault™

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Photography Special: Pedro Almodóvar, Hayley Millar-Baker, Svetlana Bailey, Sophie Calle, Destiny Deacon, Anne Ferran, Jorge Galindo, Dafy Hagai, Jonathan Jones, Nick Knight, Lindy Lee, Metahaven, Patrick Pound, Lisa Reihana, Johnathan Rice & more

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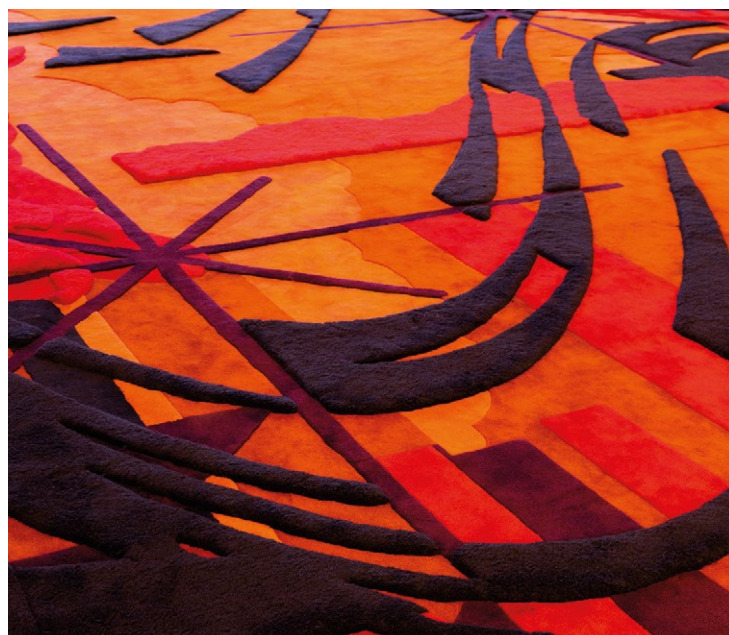
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# OBJECT METAHAVEN

Metahaven like to make public immaterial systems that exist around us, systems that might be thought of as currents. Metahaven are interested in the importance of narratives in forming ideological movements. As such, their practice is united conceptually by delving into the depths of poetry, fiction and digital structures, both historic and contemporary. They present allegories that analyse the relationship between the vectorialist and the hacker, exposing the follies, farces and fictions that draw us into geopolitical ideologies and shedding light on how power is fostered today.

WRITTEN *by* TESS MAUNDER



Metahaven's solo exhibition *Field Report* was presented at RMIT Design Hub, Melbourne, from March 7 to May 9, 2020, unfolding at the same time as COVID-19 impacted all levels of life globally. The exhibition, curated by Megan Patty (NGV) and Brad Haylock (RMIT), is the first time that Metahaven have shown their work in an Australian context, and launched just a week prior to governmental advice to all galleries to shut down for a presently undetermined time period.

At RMIT Design Hub, Melbourne audiences entered the tall and narrow exhibition space, which allows for an intimate viewing style with a centralised installation- and wider constellation-based approach to practice – Metahaven's 2018 film work *Eurasia* (*Questions on Happiness*) took centre stage.

*Eurasia* (*Questions on Happiness*) was originally commissioned by the Institute of Contemporary Arts (London), the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam and the Sharjah Art Foundation, with support from the Warsaw Museum of Modern Art and Creative Industries Fund NL. The RMIT Design Hub iteration was a newly staged version of the work. The film traverses through a dystopian and fictitious dialogue in the vein of extended filmic installation; with a nod towards the legacy of relational aesthetics, viewers are invited to sit upon a specifically designed carpet while viewing the work.

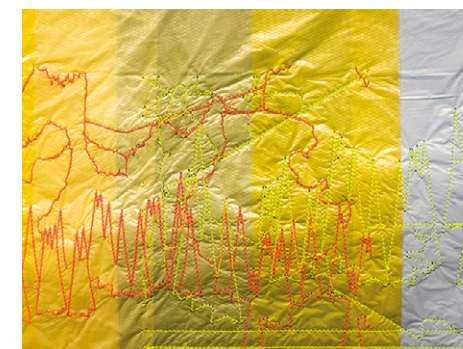
This work, and others in the exhibition, examine the fragmentation of Western Europe, and the various historical narratives that may or may not have happened over time. Today, a post-Brexit Europe sees reduced mobility and trade relationships, and the pre-existing global production circuits that we have relied on since the origin of the Silk Road have been stunted, or at least re-routed. Metahaven explore the genesis of the far-right phenomena that has caused such a shift towards populist and nativist ideologies.

Metahaven unearth these realities by exposing the prevalence of all powerful

stories centred around a compelling narrative. The artists utilise the materiality of their practice to demonstrate the absurdity of narratives, and through this seek to undermine the power generated by dominant popular right culture. For instance, their work deliberately undermines the historical use-value attributed to specific mediums asking: what does it mean to take a traditional textile medium and intentionally bastardise it through a naïve, child-like or even 'poor style' of application?

The pervasive nature of COVID-19 has, among many things, demonstrated how fragile, vulnerable and interdependent we all are – even in the context of our postmodern proximity to luxury markets, mobility and hyper-capitalist fandom. Although Metahaven's intention was not to respond to the crisis their work has, in many ways, presented the ideal context for exploring our new paradigm shift. In giving us the collective audacity to reflect on how we might move forward next, Metahaven have shown us the cracks in the narrative. **V**

metahaven.net



Top and bottom  
Installation views  
*Metahaven: Field Report*, 2020  
RMIT Design Hub  
Gallery, Melbourne  
Photos: Tobias Titz

Opposite  
Installation views  
*Metahaven: Field Report*, 2020  
RMIT Design Hub  
Gallery, Melbourne  
Photos: Tobias Titz