PRESS RELEASE

Saemundur Thor Helgason
Solar Plexus Pressure Belt™
November 14 - December 3, 2018

Unit110 is pleased to present Saemundur Thor Helgason: Solar Plexus Pressure Belt™ (2018). The exhibition marks the launch of Solar Plexus Pressure Belt™, an anxiety reducing device engineered and designed by Saemundur Thor Helgason in collaboration with fashion designer Agata Mickiewicz. The exhibition also features a new written contribution from Sophie Hoyle and a graphic identity by Gabriel Markan. The work is a continuation of a larger project called ‘Félag Borgara', (eng. Fellowship of Citizens) an interest group founded by the artist in Reykjavik in October 2017 with the aim of lobbying for basic income in Iceland through apolitical means.

Financial insecurity can cause frustration and worries that affect the nervous system. The Solar Plexus is a dense cluster of nerve cells and supporting tissue located behind the stomach in the region of the celiac artery just below the diaphragm. It is also known as the celiac plexus and is a crucial connection to the brain. The Solar Plexus Pressure Belt™ is a Deep Touch Pressure (DTP) technology that stimulates the Solar Plexus and calms an anxious mind - a medicine-free treatment.

Solar Plexus Pressure Belt™ was inspired by Helgason's own experiences as a creative practitioner suffering from anxiety and panic attacks in the wake of the 2008 global financial crisis. A decade later, ‘crisis’ has been normalized where unpaid- and underpaid labor and flexible working hours are now integral to the functioning of the economy and its inherent logic. These structural changes are directly impacting the laborer's body and neural system. The design of the belt simulates a finger pressing into the solar plexus area, a motion and coping mechanism Helgason discovered would reduce feelings of stress and anxiety, leading him to further investigate the underlying neurological processes. Acknowledging his own entanglement within late capitalism, Helgason proposes a new product, the Solar Plexus Pressure Belt™, designed to temporarily reduce discomfort until an economic system is found that provides financial security to all inhabitants.

With the help of Karolina Fund, the exhibition also serves as a fundraising platform to finance the production of the BETA edition of the Solar Plexus Pressure Belt™ for testing and feedback purposes. Visitors can contribute to the project here: https://www.karolinafund.com/project/view/2261

Saemundur Thor Helgason (b. 1986, Reykjavik) is an Icelandic artist based between Amsterdam and London. He holds an MFA from Goldsmith University, London and a BA from Gerrit Rietveld Academie, Amsterdam. Helgason is the co-founder of HARD-CORE, an Amsterdam and London based Art Startup, developing algorithmic curatorial methods since 2011 and Cosmos Carl, a platform parasite that only hosts hyperlinks provided by artists and curators. His works have been shown most recently at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow, Russia, arebyte Gallery, London, UK, FUTURA, Prague, Czech Republic, Harbinger, Reykjavik, Iceland and at Goethe Institut, Beijing, China.

The exhibition was kindly supported by Myndlistarsjóður & Myndstef, Iceland.