



# Estación de verano

Exhibition with Carlos Silva at Dynamo Zürich on 23 – 25 August 2018.

It is always summertime, be it in Zurich in July, in Valparaíso in January, or year-round in the Caribbean. Global mass tourism annihilates any sense of time of summer. Summer is no longer a season, but a constant. Carlos Silva's swimming pool pictures from the series piscinas show the detachedness of summer from time and place. Which pool did he take photos of? It doesn't matter, as the turquoise color doesn't depend on geography, it is universal, a world brand. Silva shows us the every day of the summer in his videos from the series temporada baja. The tourist locations in South America are ready for their visitors. Yet when they stay away, the emptiness of this social construct with its endless sun loungers and cascades of balconies reveals itself. What Silva films is the essence of summer as much as it is the absurdity of its infrastructure. The artificiality of summer also comes with a blue print, as Silva shows in his render series of planned hotels and pool landscapes. At the same time, ever new render images anticipate the future of the summer, just like the fashion of the next season, with minimal surprise moments.

With a background in architecture and design and a career in Viña del Mar's municipality, Silva has a substantial set of skills and tools besides art to look at the phenomenon of summer in detail. The urban infrastructure is completely adjusted to summer, and its surrounding landscape adheres to international standards. Coconut palm trees, originally imported from Southeast Asia to the Caribbean and for more than 200 years the symbol of the exotic, supersede the native, but less photogenic species jubea chilensis. This is how summer assumes the same aesthetic pleasure from San Francisco to Concepción. That the waves in Viña are too strong and the water too cold to actually enjoy it, does not matter on the postcard.

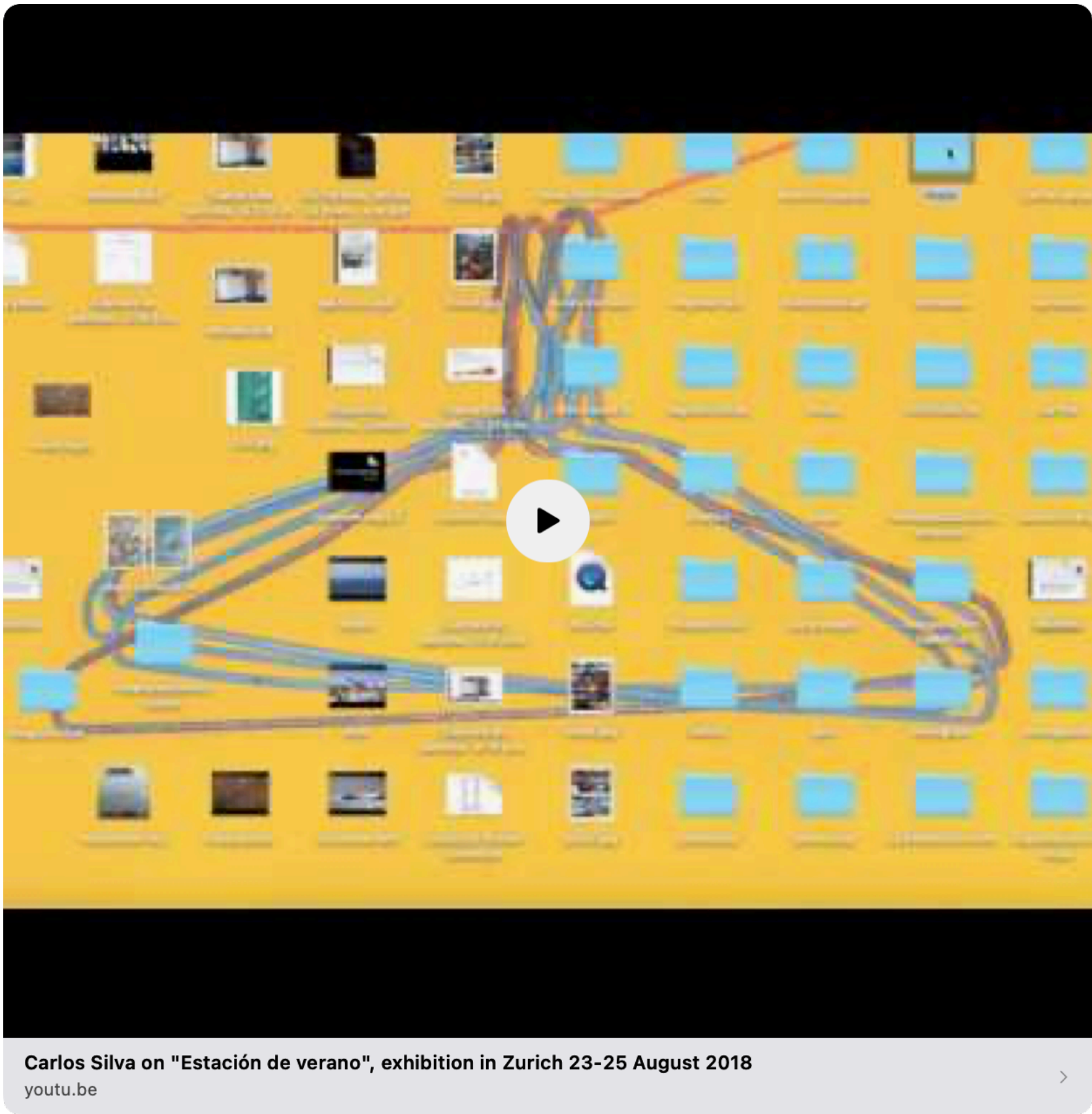
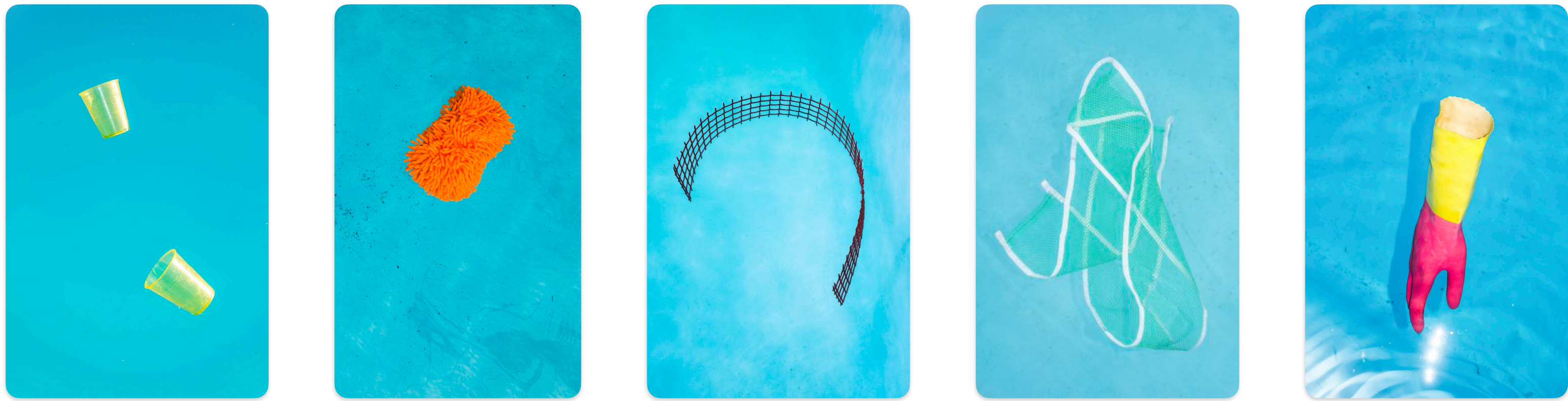
Estación de verano is a station in the two meanings of the word: a place of summer, and a phase in the global summer cycle. Half a year after Silva visited the beaches of Chile, the images are now travelling to Zurich and are part of our summer. However, it is also a "verano a destiempo", a mistimed summer, in which not only layers of time conflate, but cultural lifestyles as well.



Carlos Silva (\*1979) lives in Valparaíso, Chile. He studied architecture, design, and fine arts at Arcis University in Santiago and teaches at Camara Lucida school for photography. Furthermore, he works as a curator, mainly for his own art space Nekoe. Silva works mostly with photography, video, and site-specific installations. However, interventions and initiatives in his hometown are just as much part of his artistic practice, such as Servicio Estudio, for which he and two fellow artists offered design and photography services to small local business to support them in their competition against international corporations. Silva's work has been shown nationally, amongst others, at the Museum of Visual Arts MAVI, the Museum of Contemporary Art MAC, and Gabriela Mistral Gallery. Internationally, his works have been part in group shows in Cuba, Brazil, Germany, and the US. This is the first exhibition for Silva in Switzerland, and the first time Piscinas is exhibited.

csilva.cl

Watch a long interview with the artist on YouTube:  
<https://youtu.be/eJnzvQcsmck>



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## IN THE ARTIST'S WORDS

Switzerland is returning from their summer vacation, and family albums and Instagram accounts are filled with pictures from Ibiza, Morocco, or Phuket. Meanwhile at Dynamo, Carlos Silva and MAPA are installing Estación de verano, a summer station epitomizing the universalism of summer. As an introduction to the show, Silva tells us about his different work series on view in Zurich, and how they relate to his life and artistic practice in his hometown Valparaíso.

On his initial motivation to set up an exhibition that works both as a temporal as much as spatial entity of summer, Silva says: In Chile, "we've been experiencing a very cold winter, but summer is always present. I live at the coast, and the idea of the show has been to trace the ways in which we use the objects and images of summer year-round."

Looking at the thousands of postcards, advertisements, and even beach towel designs, it quickly becomes clear that the image of summer is a homogeneous one, and motifs are repeated in a standardized and ostentatiously recognizable manner. They have become common goods, part of general educational in geography and foreign cultures. However, Silva points out: "Very few of these images are vernacular photographs, photos that we took ourselves."

This is also the paradox behind the "flood of images" we are experiencing in all media. Professional stock photos illustrate every aspect of commercial and private life, teaching us the ways in which we see the world and in which we in turn take pictures. Hence Silva describes his video work Temporada Baja thus: "It is a take on the burlesque touristic habit to document over and over our holidays, without realizing the absurdity of this activity, and I love to document this in turn." Interestingly, Silva recorded these videos, as their title says, during low season, and therefore present another period in the summer cycle.

Besides the almost sociological approach to our concept of summer, Silva also takes recourse to aesthetics in his series Piscinas. "The swimming pool has been an excuse to take photographs, to work on the colors, shapes, and play with everyday objects and their intensely chromatic surfaces." These still lives, as Silva categorizes them, are abstractions of the otherwise complex web of stylistic references of summer imagery, detaching our viewpoint and giving us a focus amid the touristic hustle and bustle. Silva's videos work in a similar way, delineating their emphasis on specific, yet fleeting moments. At the same time, they are less rigid in their formal setup, and equally fluid in their content: "There are not many connections between the videos, they are pure fragments, autonomous images, too short... they cannot achieve a link between each other, other than being remainders of narratives that belong to other movies, other images."

Another, much more technical abstraction is his appropriated series Renders. In many ways, the computer images are the blueprint to the infrastructure of summer and the purest visualization of our (potential) experience. "The render images are commercial advertisements of architectonic spaces of the most neoliberal and consumerist order. It is a virtual architecture populated with photographic snippets of reality, creating absurd, idealized fictions with young, beautiful people in idyllic places. Yet they do not offer anything new, bordering on kitch, working with the codes of consumption trying to nourish and satisfy our material desires. These images fascinate me with their pop, kitsch, and banality, but also high level of technical skill. They are semi-poetic, contemplative, with people looking at the horizon, almost like a painting by Hopper."

The distant perspective, the narrow frames, and the inherent tranquility of Silva's moving and still images are characteristic for his work in general. His artworks are inspired by a close look at his immediate surroundings and the human traces of their environment. In sum, "it's about everyday situations, but where something is subtly happening, breaking, falling, or coming to an end. They are not spectacular... but there is always a fissure of the normal, which is an aspect of the image which reasserts ourselves and connects us with our own identity, a factor which utterly interests me." And whatever clichés these images might follow, "they images of our life, our history, and this gives them their value and dignity."