

LISA SPILLIAERT

EXHIBITION

Growth Record

SAT 12 MAR –
SUN 15 MAY

In the exhibition *Growth Record*, artist Lisa Spilliaert presents her video work of the same title in an intimate setting in de Brakke Grond's Witte zaal. Departing from her fascination with the question of how things could have been different, the Japanese-Flemish artist regularly travels from Flanders to her country of birth in order to document a young child.

The boy's identity is explained in *Growth Record #1*. In a voice-over, Spilliaert states that she had sexual relations with his father around the time the child was conceived. When she heard of his birth, she immediately knew that she wanted to document him. The child could have been hers, so to speak. By now, the video work comprises five parts in an expanding collection.

Spilliaert works in an intuitive and improvised manner. The ingredients are straightforward: Spilliaert and the boy, a small analogue photo camera, a fellow maker with a film camera to capture the encounter – without directions or script – and a location near the child's home, or indoors in case of rain. In the videos, Spilliaert assumes the role of a photographer looking for the right shot. She shows great determination and attentiveness while she playfully attempts to attract the child's eye towards the camera, engages in a tense telephone conversation with the father, or consults the person filming her. We see the boy growing up. A curious baby in a sunny garden; a year older, crying inconsolably in the wet snow; a toddler at play chased by Spilliaert and her camera. In the most recent chapter, which premieres at de Brakke Grond, he is eight years old and at the beach together with the artist.

Spilliaert's fascination with the hypothetical "what if..." also manifests itself in the formal presentation of the work. *Growth Record* depicts three stages: the videos in which the photographer herself is shown while at work, light boxes containing her diapositive slides, and one of the printed photographs she has worked on during filming – the final product. Together they form a story about making choices. Visitors as well are encouraged to make decisions, to operate the videos and put them in the order of their choice.

Growth Record does not only illustrate the decisions in the creation of an artistic work, but also those that apply to the artist's personal diary she hopes to continue working on throughout her life – or at least for as long as the the parents or the child agrees to it. The long-term project not only documents the boy's development, but can also be considered a portrait of Spilliaert herself. *Growth Record* slowly unfolds her perspective on life and human relationships: with great determination she continues to undertake the long journey in order to spend just a few hours with the child, approaching him gently and patiently, but we also witness her dedication to the photographic process.

The latent, uncanny tension that is smoldering throughout the series becomes tangible in the new episode *Growth Record #5*. Both in the video and in the diapositive, it seems the troubled relationship with her former lover no longer accept to be suppressed, and to manifest itself in the image.

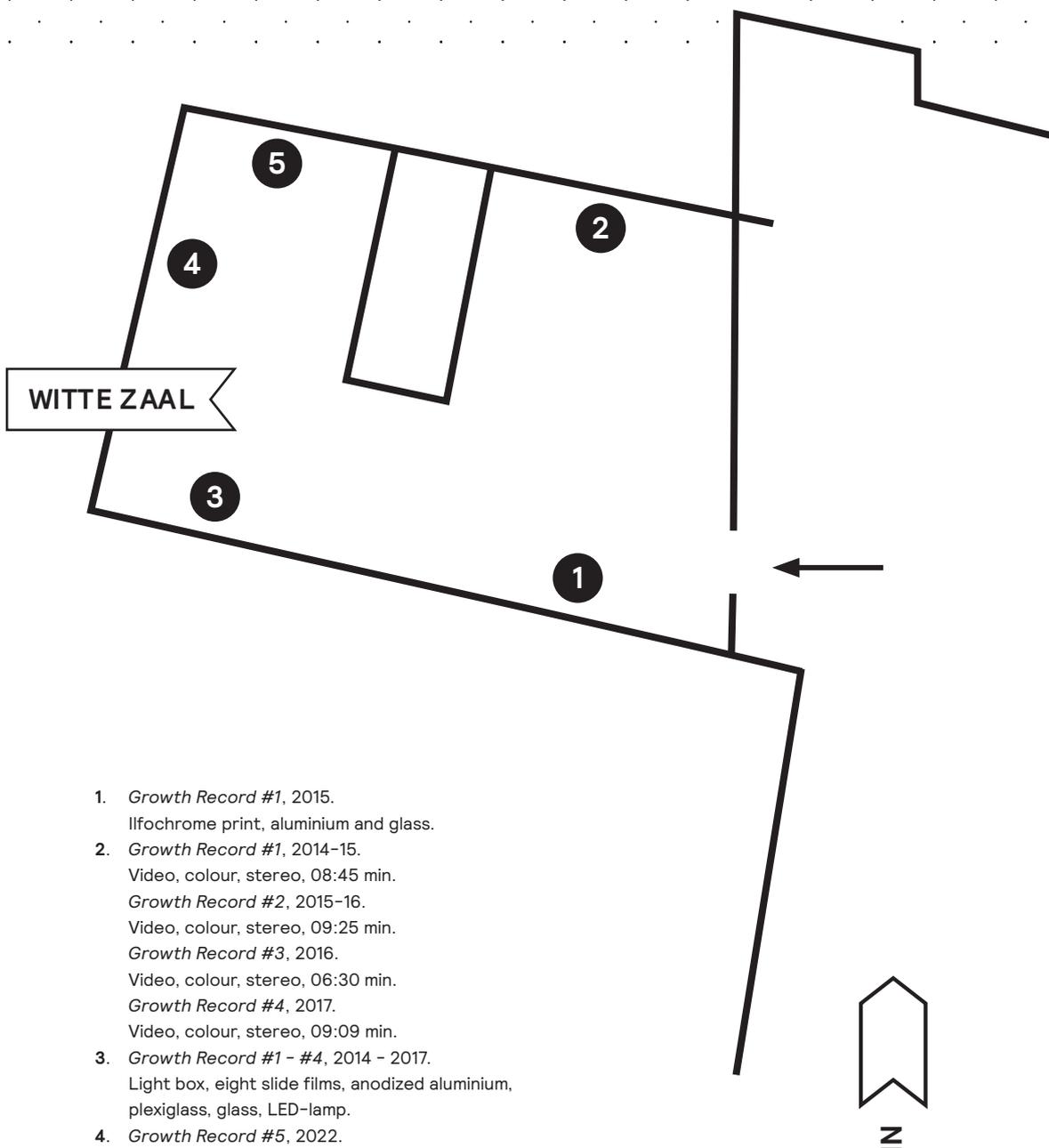
Spilliaert (1990) grew up in Japan and Belgium, and lives and works in Ghent. The artist was trained as a photographer at KASK (Royal Academy of Fine Arts), Ghent. Spilliaert's work has been shown at IFFR (International Film Festival Rotterdam), Art Cinema OFFoff (Ghent), Beursschouwburg (Brussels) and WORM (Rotterdam). Her first full-length feature film, N.P (2020), saw its world premiere at FID Marseille and was shown at festivals such as Berwick Film & Media Arts Festival, Underdox (Munich) and Courtisane Festival (Ghent). The film has won the Excellence Prize at Image Forum Festival (Tokyo).

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1. *Growth Record #1*, 2015.
Ilfochrome print, aluminium and glass.
2. *Growth Record #1*, 2014-15.
Video, colour, stereo, 08:45 min.
Growth Record #2, 2015-16.
Video, colour, stereo, 09:25 min.
Growth Record #3, 2016.
Video, colour, stereo, 06:30 min.
Growth Record #4, 2017.
Video, colour, stereo, 09:09 min.
3. *Growth Record #1 - #4*, 2014 - 2017.
Light box, eight slide films, anodized aluminium,
plexiglass, glass, LED-lamp.
4. *Growth Record #5*, 2022.
Video, colour, stereo, 08:53 min.
5. *Growth Record #5*, 2022.
Two light boxes, slide film, anodized aluminium,
plexiglass, glass, LED-lamp.