

# Pilvi Takala

## *Close Watch*

June 10 to September 17 2023

Finnish artist Pilvi Takala's practice is based on social interactions and the structures of our daily lives. Most of her works begin in the form of subtle performative disruptions and social experiments in semi-public locations. On one occasion, for example, she worked undercover as a trainee in the international accounting and consulting firm Deloitte to shed light on workplace norms as part of the development of *The Trainee* (2008). For *Bag Lady* (2006), she visited a shopping mall while carrying a transparent plastic bag containing large amounts of cash, challenging the control mechanisms in place. In her installations and videos, Takala documents and processes her experiences in the social and ethical behavioural systems with which she has engaged, exposing the dichotomies of power and control.

*Close Watch* (2022) is a multi-channel video installation that questions the operative functions of the private security industry and its systems of control. In preparation for the work, Takala trained as a security guard with the company Securitas and then went on to work for them for six months as an employee in one of Finland's largest shopping malls. During the process, she observed the tasks and responsibilities relating to security work, and their inherent problematic structures. At the end of her employment period, she conducted interviews and held a workshop with co-workers to unpack and debate these issues.

In the filmed workshops, Takala and five of her former colleagues, as well as three actors, re-enact scenes from their workplace. Using the participatory technique of Forum Theatre devised by Brazilian playwright Augusto Boal, which focuses on power dynamics and social injustice, participants test out alternative strategies to intervene in situations that involved excessive use of force, racist language or intrusive behaviour. In this performative process, the guards reflect on their role and responsibility as security personnel who exercise power to maintain order.

The installation separates the gallery into two spaces connected by a one-way mirror, which enables a dialogue to take place in relation to security and observation. Visitors play the role of the watched or the watcher, depending on which side of the glass they are on. On the one hand, they are confronted by the fact that we are often closely monitored; on the other, they are placed in the position of observers watching the security guards talking about their role and their work culture in the workshops. Videos depicting transcribed text messages of conversations with various stakeholders who were in conversation with Takala are also on display. Revealing the internal mechanisms of the security industry to a wider public, it raises the question of if and how we wish to be monitored in the future.

Pilvi Takala was born in Helsinki, Finland, in 1981, and lives and works in Helsinki and Berlin. Her work has been shown at MoMA PS1, New Museum, Palais de Tokyo, Kunsthalle Basel and Manifesta 11, among others.

*Close Watch* was commissioned by Frame Contemporary Art Finland and co-produced by Saastamoinen Foundation and Frame for the 59th Venice Biennale.

Curator:

Dr. Michael Birchall

Curatorial Assistant:

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Editors:

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## Public Guided Tour (German/English)

Every first Saturday from 3 pm and every second and third Thursday from 6.30 pm each month, the museum offers public tours (1 hour) of the exhibitions *Acts of Friendship* and *Pilvi Takala – Close Watch*, which provide an in-depth look at the themes and backgrounds of both exhibitions.

The tours are free of charge and without registration.

Next dates on [migrosmuseum.ch/agenda](https://migrosmuseum.ch/agenda)

## Artist Conversation with Pilvi Takala

Saturday, 10 June 2023, 5 – 6 pm

Artist Pilvi Takala will join curator Dr. Michael Birchall and assistant editor of *frieze magazine* Chloe Stead to offer insights into her working practice and discuss issues that drive her work. The event will be held in person at the venue and streamed online and is in partnership between the Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst and *frieze magazine* as part of the Zurich Art Weekend.

Venue: schwarzescafé LUMA Westbau, first floor

## Close Watch – Debates on Security

As part of the exhibition, there will be two panel discussions in September with experts and representatives from the fields of art, activism, science, and politics on security, surveillance, and profiling in Switzerland.

The dates will be published on [www.migrosmuseum.ch/agenda](https://www.migrosmuseum.ch/agenda).

The events are free of charge and do not require registration.

## Art Detectives (German)

Our clever exhibition riddles on the theme of friendship in the exhibitions are once again available for little detectives to pick up at the reception!

- Available from Friday, June 23
- Free offer
- 12 backpacks with equipment at the frontdesk (can not be reserved)
- Ideal age: 8 – 12 years  
(with the help of adults also suitable for younger children)

More information: [www.migrosmuseum.ch](https://www.migrosmuseum.ch)

Info/Agenda:



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