

Speculation

Nikhil Vettukattil

22 March – 18 April 2026

Gallery opening hours every Saturday from 13.00 - 16.00

Speculation today exceeds financial, historical and artistic modes; no longer a defined activity, it has expanded into a general social logic. Life becomes a series of reversible moves; the fear of closing off a potentially better future leads to a chronic state of low-level anxiety. Personal identity is increasingly managed like a portfolio of assets, there is no real commitment to anything. Through constantly reading and interpreting signals, time feels accelerated, anticipation is dominant over presence and experience then is always future-oriented. Irreversible choices are now threats to optionality and boredom, repair, and compromises are avoided. In this intense and vacuous mode of subjectivity, everything substantial is deferred for as long as possible.

Speculation stages a set of references around the afterlife of bohemianism, artistic precarity, and the conversion of images into assets. Van Gogh's bedroom has become both an image of artistic life and an object of speculation. The 'Yellow House' at Arles (shown here in a sparse monochrome) was a failed attempt to create a communal living situation for artists de-centered from the Parisian sphere of influence. Strindberg's *The Red Room*, canonised as a foundational text in Scandinavian modernism, satirises the hypocrisy of Stockholm society from a bohemian perspective. As the protagonist moves through the social strata of Stockholm he finds himself outside the gallery in Vita Bergen, then housing a destitute family on the outskirts of Stockholm. For reasons at once geographical, political, racial and historical, Stockholm is one of the most segregated cities in the Nordic region. Södermalm, no longer at the edges of the city, but a center for the new creative middle class and entrepreneurs, remnants of its history are used to flavour menus, boutiques, and rental prices. Together with an image of the building in 1910, the works point to the way signs of modest life and artistic marginality are reproduced long after the material conditions they refer to have been incorporated into property, social and cultural capital. The work *Burn Rate* consists of a number of détourned paintings found in second hand stores in the vicinity of the gallery, presented as a 19th century salon hang, where the pictorial horizon, now ominously orange, is used to center the visual field. In today's Södermalm, *Speculation* reflects on how these images continue to circulate as atmospheres, narratives and assets. Materials treated not as singular artworks than as elements in a situation. They move between painting, photography, literature, display, to an expanded concept of site.

Works List

Burn Rate, 2024–Present

Installation

Score, Oil Stick and Oil on canvas

Dimensions variable; each time the work is shown, it incorporates readymades from the immediate vicinity of its site.

Röda Rummet, 2026

Installation

50x40cm (4:5 scale imitation of *Bedroom in Arles (1888/9) in Red*), 1963 edition of August Strindberg *The Red Room* open to chapter 16: Vita Bergen, 8x12 framed image of Skånegatan 108 cirka 1900 (A.Malmström)

Nikhil Vettukattil (b. 1990, Bengaluru, IN) is an artist living and working in Oslo. Using a range of media such as sound, installation, performance, text, sculpture and video, their practice questions modes of representation and image-making processes in their relation to lived experiences. Recent exhibitions include *Four Dilations*, MoMA PS1, New York (2025), DECADE, AGIT, Berlin, DE (2025); *designofthetimes*, 3236rls/Le Bourgeois, London, UK (2025); *Defund the Police*, Arcadia Missa, London, UK (2024); and *Stipendutstilling*, Oslo Kunstforening, Oslo, NO (2024), among more.