(...) if you should choose to take a mirror and carry it about everywhere. You will speedily produce the sun and all  the things in the sky, and speedily the earth and yourself and the other animals and implements and plants and all  the objects of which we just now spoke.”

Plato, Rep. 596d-e

In his search for the truth and within his systematical campaign against sophists Plato strictly refused the mimetic arts.  He declared the mirror to be the main instrument of its representatives. By discrediting the mirror as a kind of instrument  of purely phenomenal world the mimetic part of arts has been thrown away as something completely false and socially  subversive. Although he didn't succeed in his efforts, the shame of yain falsehood did cling on Plato's mirror perfectly.  It could be said that the whole history of art theories is either an effort to clean this instrument or a kind of search for its  substitute. Long time overlooked chapter from the 16th century can afford both.
Trying to communicate the spiritual beings, only few decades after the genocide furor in the New World, the neoplatonic  thinker John Dee and his spiritual medium Edward Kelley were laboring with an obsidian artifact brought from Mexico.  Fascinated by its alleged magical power they promoted the enochian experiments and boasted about the smoky, black  mirror. The transfere of its original cultic function amidst the setting of Christian hermetism opened up the way from the  surface to the depth. An ordinary mirroring was no more the sense of watching into the obsidian circle, rather the dis-  covery of the space behind it. The self-observation was replaced by the self-knowledge and the later one by belief in the  possibility to overcome the bounds of a simple perception. The seen one was replaced by the revealed one.  Dr. Dee's mirror material was spewed out of the Earth's depth. Its darkness belongs to the protoorigin. Through the  detour the Aztec instrument brought man back to the place from which Plato took him out. To the cave devoted to the  myth and mysteria. Black mirror became synonymous for the renaiss ance of Dionysian principle in the shape of private  practice. The cave was replaced by the studiolo - grotto and the group experience of the cult by the individual experience  of melancholic sentiment of the thinker - creator devoted to his soliloquy.
The works of artists connected with the Preparing for Darkness project contain a lot of mirror polemic. Those are not the  hyperrealistic images of the surface, rather a kind of the pictorial metaphysical analysis. They resign to the sharp light of  the imposed truth from outside and align with the opalescent reflections of the dark period mysteria caves. Because the  light spectrum can obtain its full power only on the background of such a darkness. Against the light of the reason they  stand „the light of the sensual view". They create the new mythological narratives promoting the tradition of Jena Romanticism poetology. They revive the classical iconography themes. Though not giving up the rationality as such they deliminate its space by raising the „poetical persistence" principles against it. Their works are not the subject of something seen,  but of something revealed. In some of them one can see the amorphous phantasms or simulacres of the black surface  or mannerist grotto walls. The other unveils the protooriginal structures on the basis of the microscopic insight. Some  are intimately self-investigative privatissima with the hint of melancholy, the others keep the heteronomical distance of  the object explanation. One is traditionally shaping the materia spewed out the earth, the other is balancing on the edge  of optical possibilities of the usual materials and techniques. But all of them are bound together by the principle of the  black mirror - mirror noir.
Lukas KOVAL