

OBJECTS IN MIRROR MIGHT BE CLOSER THAN THEY APPEAR

Julian Charrière & Julius von Bismarck

Exhibition at the Villa Bernasconi | September 17 – November 13, 2016

Press kit

Julian Charrière and Julius von Bismarck share the same acute observation of nature and humanity and of the transformation of one by the other. Their approach is that of a researcher, explorer, and scientist: experimental. By mixing the technical with the organic, their works are surprisingly anticipatory. For their first joint exhibition in Switzerland, they gather pieces from their explorations and experimentations in exclusion zones, and, in doing so, interrogate new forms of representation.

Opening :

Friday, September 16 at 6 pm

Address :

Villa Bernasconi, route du Grand-Lancy 8,
1212 Lancy / Geneva, Switzerland

Opening times :

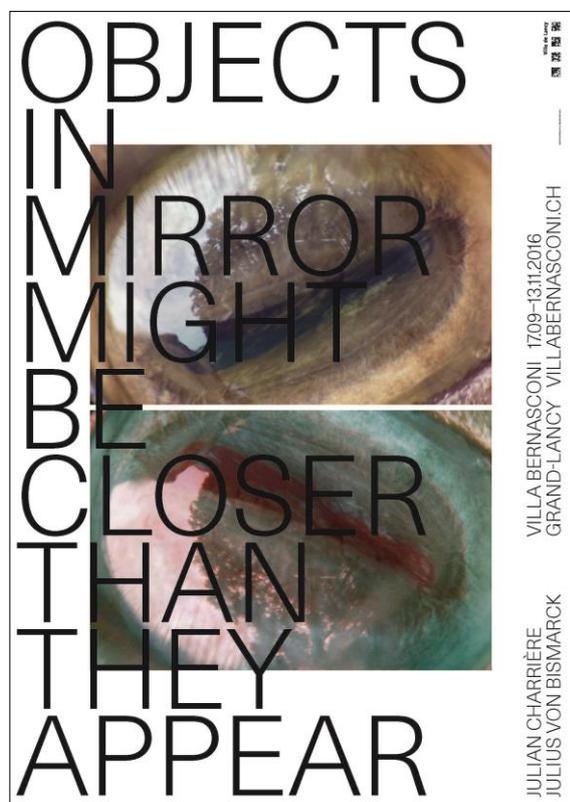
Tuesday to Sunday from 2 pm to 6 pm

Visits :

Guided tours for groups upon request
on Thursdays and Friday

Events :

For more information related to
the events please see
www.villabernasconi.ch
www.facebook.com/villa.bernasconi



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Ville de Lancy



THE EXHIBITION

Objects in mirror might be closer than they appear unites works by Julian Charrière and Julius von Bismarck. Known for their site-specific works in extreme territories (icebergs, deserts, nuclear zones), the two artists explore, experiment and give shape to the relationship between man and nature. From the observation of the time of the formation of lithium that feed our batteries, **Julian Charrière** imagined his *Future Fossil Spaces* (2014), columns of salt extracted from the Bolivian desert that reveal the space-time that separates the geological origin of this element from its contemporary use. On the locations of nuclear experimentations in Kazakhstan, he produced a series of photographs - *Polygon* (2015) – that bears as its title the first Soviet atomic experimentations from 1949. During the hour that he was given to him to spend in the no-fly zone, he created photographs in which the film was developed through contact with the stones that he found on the site. Their radiance, superimposed on the pictures like clouds, thus making visible what is in fact imperceptible to the naked eye.

Scientific approach, context-relatedness and physical experimentations characterise also the approach of **Julius von Bismarck**. His *Landscape Painting*, videos and photographs made in 2015 in Mexico, expose visions of man and nature. Through the act of inviting Mayan Indians and agricultural workers to cover with white paint segments of rocky grounds and then repainting them in their original colour from memory, he proposes the reconstruction of a landscape whilst questioning its representation and, at the same time, the links between nature and artifice. In the same manner *Boulder* (2014) plays with the expectations of our perception. The rock seems to be a ready-made that reveals to be completely empty as we bypass it, braced by the metallic framework fixed inside. It seems to be merely the skin of the rock that was delicately hollowed out by a laser drill: does the metonymy of a rock still remain a rock? Is the empty object just an empty word?



Julian Charrière, *Polygon*, 2015. Copyright Julian Charrière, VG Bild-kunst, Bonn, Courtesy DITTRICH & SCHLECHTRIEM, Berlin



Julius von Bismarck, *Landscape painting*, 2015
Courtesy the artist and alexander levy, Berlin.

THE COLLABORATION

Since 2010 Julian Charrière and Julius von Bismarck share an atelier in Berlin and collaborate on projects. Their first production together dates back to 2011: *Some Pigeons Are More Equal Than Others*. Presented for the first time in Copenhagen, their proposal left a strong mark on the visitors of the 2012 Venice Biennial who found among the more ordinary specimen some other pigeons with extremely shimmering colours. By placing in the public space traps constructed to capture pigeons so as to spray them with natural colorants, the artists proposed to reconsider our relationship to this urban animal that is the most frequently considered as a plague carrying diseases. The interventions on nature in their series *Kunstwerk* (2014), where apparently tautological words are inscribed onto the landscape, produce the same reflections on language and objects; Is the *Kunstwerk*, the artwork found in nature or in its representation? Does the word "Dune" inscribed on the dune point to the sand or does it refer its own self? In the same way as they interrogate objects and knowledge through their representation or language, the investigations of Charrière and von Bismarck push them to question space and time. In their installation *Clockwork* (2015), twelve concrete mixers positioned in a circle grind stones of Viennese buildings, thus prefiguring the dissolution of the city in a compression of time and an amplification of sound and dust.

Paying close attention to the implications left by the hand of man on nature Julian Charrière and Julius von Bismarck follow the evolution of it and sometimes even predict it. Reality and fiction coexist in their work, they both come from scientific hypotheses and are pursued by theoretical and scientific approaches that testify to the absurd dimension of our beliefs. The scientific and philosophical amazement that prefigures their research interrogate the perceptions as much as the formatting of representations.

The undertaking of each work signifies, for both of the artists, taking risks and implicating themselves personally. A physical, as well as artistic, performance whose scope and temporality the exhibition at the Villa Bernasconi attempts to render by including new pieces.



Julian Charrière & Julius von Bismarck, *Kunstwerk*, 2014. Copyright Julian Charrière & Julius von Bismarck, VG Bild-kunst, Bonn, Courtesy DITTRICH & SCHLECHTRIEM, Berlin and alexander levy, Berlin



Julian Charrière & Julius von Bismarck, *Some Pigeons Are More Equal Than Others*, 2012. Copyright Julian Charrière & Julius von Bismarck, VG Bild-kunst, Bonn, Courtesy DITTRICH & SCHLECHTRIEM, Berlin and alexander levy, Berlin

THE PROJECT "OBJECTS IN MIRROR MIGHT BE CLOSER THAN THEY APPEAR"

On the occasion of the exhibition at the Villa Bernasconi, Julian Charrière et Julius von Bismarck make *Objects in Mirror might be closer than they appear*, a video leading them to explore a nuclear exclusion zone in Belarus, becoming "involuntary park", according to the neologism of the writer and ecologist Bruce Sterling.

The context

On April 26th, 1986, reactor number 4 at the Chernobyl nuclear power station, in the former USSR, melted down, followed by an explosion that released large quantities of radioactivity. The radioactive cloud spread over large swathes of the Soviet Union and parts of Western Europe, but affected mainly the immediate surroundings of the reactor, a region now straddling Belarus and Ukraine. In the nearby city of Pripyat, 31 people died on the day of the explosion, but the overall death toll due to long-term exposure is still being investigated.

As a result of the disaster, a large exclusion zone was created to prevent access to the most highly contaminated areas. A hundred thousand people were permanently evacuated and all large animals within the perimeter were rounded up and slaughtered in an attempt to limit contamination, leaving behind a sterile and dystopian post-nuclear wasteland.

However, this vast area did not remain empty for long. Soon, animals, plants, bacteria and fungi began to slowly creep back in, unaware of the almost infinite life-span of the lurking radioactivity, whose cold, invisible hand signified for them only the absence of human intervention and an opportunity for new life.

This forgotten landscape became, in the words of science-fiction writer Bruce Sterling, an "involuntary park" occupied by altered life forms.

Today, most of the radioactive isotopes have decayed to stable levels, while floods and rain have dispersed the contamination deep in the soil. The new parkland has been re-inhabited and re-colonised, creating a unique ecosystem with a radioactive substrate. A reactive ecological system that is a product of human interaction but prevents humans from interacting with it. This culturally generated landscape resembles that of the ancient past, like a projection of a primordial state of nature onto the ruins left by humankind's quest for its own future.

The project

A camera is attached to a deer's antlers and the lens directed towards its eye. The images projected onto the screen are reflections of the landscape in the deer's retina: a combination of invisible decay and a flourishing natural ecosystem, against a backdrop of nuclear buildings, which stand as witnesses to the past. Deformed by the curved surface of the animal's eye, the images offer a metaphor for an altered environment, now occupied by new animal life. The eye becomes the living interface through which we perceive this reality – a device that separates us from the animal as much as it separates the animal from its environment. A doorway for perception and a tool for projection, which functions both physically and psychologically.

Upcoming artist book *Objects in mirror might be closer than they appear*

Text by Violeta Burckhardt.

Conception and design: Schaffter Sahli

Photos credits: Julian Charrière et Julius von Bismarck

Translation : Viviane Lowe

Print : Noir sur Noir

96 pages

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THE ARTISTS

JULIAN CHARRIÈRE

Born 1987 in Switzerland, based in Berlin

2011 Institut für Raumexperimente, Prof. Olafur Eliasson in collaboration with Berlin University of Arts (UDK)

2007 Berlin University of Arts, Prof. Christiane Möbus

2006 ECAV, Ecole cantonale d'art du Valais, Switzerland

Prof. Valentin Carron, Gilles Porret, Kotcha Reist

EXHIBITIONS (SELECTION)

2016

"For They That Sow the Wind", Parasol unit, London, UK

"Die Kräfte hinter den Formen", Kunstmuseen Krefeld, Krefeld, Germany

"No One Belongs Here More Than You", Despacio, San José, Costa Rica

"Desert Now", Steve Turner Gallery, Los Angeles, USA

"Not Really Really", Frédéric de Goldschmidt collection, Art Brussels

2015

"30 Years. Artists of the Gallery", Galerie Tschudi, Zuoz, Switzerland

"Die Kräfte Hinter Den Formen", Galerie im Taxispalais, Innsbruck, Austria

"Stranger than Paradise", Sies + Höke, Düsseldorf, Germany

"Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog", Bugada & Cargnel, Paris, France

"Unter 30. Junge Schweizer Kunst XI. Kiefer Hablitzel Preis 2015", Kunsthhaus Glarus, Glarus, Switzerland

"INVENTO | As Revoluções que nos Inventaram", Oca – Parque Ibirapuera, São Paulo, Brazil

"Art Môtiers 2015", Môtiers, Switzerland

"Waterbound - Vom Leben mit dem Wasser", Neue Galerie Dachau, Dachau, Germany, Kallmann Museum Ismaning, Ismaning, Germany

"Fathoms", KIK FIVE, Berlin, Germany

"Playing Future", Kunsthalle zu Kiel, Kiel, Germany

"Destination Vienna 2015", Kunsthalle Wien (Museumsquartier), Vienna, Austria

"Polygon", Bugada & Cargnel, Paris, France

"Système", CEAAC - Centre européen d'actions artistiques contemporaines, Strasbourg, France

"Rare Earth", Thyssen Bornemisza Art Contemporary, Vienna, Austria

"Métamorphisme II", Musée des Beaux- Arts du Valais, Sion, Switzerland

"The Future of Memory", Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, Austria

www.julian-charriere.net

OBJECTS IN MIRROR MIGHT BE CLOSER THAN THEY APPEAR

JULIUS VON BISMARCK

1983 born in Breisach am Rhein. Grew up in Riad (Saudi Arabia), Freiburg and Berlin

2005 student Visual Communication at UdK Berlin

2006 member of "Digital Class" (Prof. Joachim Sauter) at UdK Berlin

2007 student MFA at Hunter Collage, New York, NY

2009 student at Institute for Spatial Experiments (Prof. Olafur Eliasson) at UdK Berlin

2012 three months study visit at CERN, European Organization for Nuclear Research

2013 graduation (Meisterschüler), Institute for Spatial Experiments (Prof. Olafur Eliasson)

SOLO SHOWS (SELECTION)

2016

Approximately Three Dimensions, alexander levy, Berlin, Germany

2015

Tiere sind dumm und Pflanzen noch viel dummer, Kunstverein Gottingen, Germany (upcoming)

Landscape Painting, Marlborough Chelsea, New York, USA

GROUP SHOWS (SELECTION)

2016

Desert Now, with Julian Charriere and Felix Kiessling, Steve Turner, Los Angeles, US

Über die Unmöglichkeit des Seins, Kunsthalle Exnergasse, Vienna, Austria

In Space No One Can Hear Your Laugh, Galleria Giovanni Bonelli, Milano, Italy

Kunstpreis der Böttcherstraße, Kunsthalle Bremen, Germany

From Science to Fiction, Florian Christopher, Zurich, Switzerland Art Cologne, New Contemporaries with alexander levy, Berlin

2015

Artissima, Turin, Italy, alexander levy, Berlin, Germany

Art Basel Unlimited, Basel, Switzerland, Marlborough Chelsea, New York, US

Welcome to the Jungle, KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin, Germany

Stranger than Paradise, Sies + Höke, Düsseldorf, Germany

Group Show V, alexander levy, Berlin, Germany

INVENTO / AS REVOLUCOES QUE NOS INVENTARAM, OCA Parque Ibirapuera, São Paulo, Brazil

In the Land of the Blind The One Eyed Man Loses Sight, Dittrich & Schlechtriem, Berlin, Germany

Galerie Knust Kunz, Munich, Germany

Fire and Forget, KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin, Germany

8th Momentum Nordic Biennial of Contemporary Art, Moss, Norway

OPENING ON THE FOAM, Schloss Sacrow, Potsdam, Germany

The Future of Memory, Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, Austria

ZONA MACO, with Julian Charrière, Mexico City, Mexico

Beuys ohne Hut - Karin Székessy fotografiert Künstler, Horst-Janssen-Museum, Oldenburg, Germany

www.juliusvonbismarck.com

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Address & Access

Villa Bernasconi

8, route du Grand-Lancy
CH-1212 Grand-Lancy

Tram 15 | stop Lancy Mairie

Train | stop Pont-Rouge

Parking | parking de l'Etoile



Opening times

Tuesday to Sunday 2 – 6 pm

Next exhibition

February 3 – March 19 2017

**Group show in the Antigél festival
1024 architecture, Rudy Decelière,
François Moncarey**

www.antigel.ch

www.villabernasconi.ch

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