Galerie für Gegenwartskunst, E-WERK Freiburg

Regionale 19
Opening, 23.11.2018

Exhibition Sat. 24.11.2018 – Sun. 6.01.2019

Gallery 1 | one-person presentation

1. Anna Schütten, sono, 2018
In sono, the picture surface is simultaneously an interactive image and an exhibition architecture. 20 to 30 canvas strips hang from the ceiling's distinctive structure, working as vertical picturial planes in the middle of the space rather than on the wall. Part of the ceiling lighting has been removed, enabling changes in daylight to significantly contribute to the way light affects the work. The paintings are made on site and can be read as individual pieces or as an undetermined sequence. The viewer's own route through the work determines the sequence of picturial elements, their rhythm and their frequency. By hanging freely in the middle of the space, each strip of picture plane simultaneously becomes a partition and a screen to the rest of the work. The single extracts of paintings visible through gaps form a new picture on every movement.

Gallery 2 |Group Exhibition | Don't talk about the weather forecast
"I don't want to hear any news on the radio about the weather at the weekend."
This sentence is constantly repeated by a computer-generated avatar in the Warm, Warm, Warm Spring Months video by the English artist Ed Atkins. Creating a weather situation which feels real is still a challenge for computer game programmers. Huges efforts are made in this field because the success of weather effects like rain showers or snowstorms can decide whether users experience virtual spaces as real or not. Digital weather simulations confront the user with the "digital divide" and the question of what it means to feel and to sense in the digital. The video artist Ed Atkins proves to be a virtuoso of digital art, his wind simulations being particularly real. Atkin's perfection can be seen in the movements of his avatar's hair, which naturally changes according to every weather. The avatar, as the artist's alter ego, refuses to talk about the weather, as each new forecast demands a new look to his hair, involving intensive programming work. In fact none of us want to talk about the weather since the summer heatwave. Record daytime heat, tropical nights and the dry season are signs that rapidly advancing climate change is happening here and now and not just in the Antarctic, on a South Pacific island or in the distant future. According to a survey, the majority of people acknowledge climate change as a fact, yet prefer to ignore it. It is uncomfortable and has consequences for our own lifestyles. It is easier not to talk about the weather. The Regionale19 takes this refusal to talk about the weather as an opportunity to show works by 12 artists from the tri-border region who deal with weather, weather phenomenon or weather forecasts. They illustrate how important and relevant the theme of weather is today, even if talking about it is often considered banal.

Gallery 2 b
1.–2. Jacob Ott, Windy Image 1–20
In the Windy Image series, Ott makes collages from images of catastrophic hurricanes and other severe weather conditions. Images of destruction offer interesting collage material for the artist. Ott researches his imagery on the internet, before making a selection according to compositional tensions. He arranges his cut-outs on delicate picture surfaces before working over them. Picture

surface and image are antagonistic in various ways: from contrasts to content, fragility to destruction, storm to calm and chance to calculation. Ott uses kitschy colours, alluring to holiday advertising's paradisiacal perceptions of nature.

The images, however, show the power of natural forces and the consequences of environmental destruction caused by humans. Every collage includes a palm tree, battered by the gale-force gusts of a violent storm. With Windy Grid (2), Ott adds to his grid like-arrangement of collages a mural depicting an off-square lattice and in doing so reflects with self-irony on the strictness of the grid as a pictorial form in late modernism.

3. David Gobber, Glitcher, 2018

The word "Glitch" means a technical error in an electronic process and might be used to describe the type of picture interference which can occur during the reformatting of digital images such as JPGs. Gobber uses the randomness and unpredictability of these errors to create visual effects in his Glitcher series. For these visual experiments, he chooses black and white pictures of glaciers found on the internet. For Gobber, the uncontrollable effects of "glitch" are acutely comparable to the constantly reoccuring human impact on our ecosystem. Like the uncontrollable visual effects, they are made possible by technological progress, yet their use is, in the main, random and untargeted. Melting glaciers in the Alpine region have become an iconic sign of rapidly advancing climate change. Gobber's work might soon become historical documentation of glaciers that no longer exist.

4. Jorim Huber, Vergangenes und Kommendes Wetter (eng. Past and Future Weather), 2014

Jorim Huber uses weather reports from the past 200 years as a substitute to talk about the frequency of changing values in art. Like the weather, fashions in art change quickly: they come and go, are current on the day and then forgotten soon after. The work was made at Cooper Union in New York, when Huber was confronted with contradictory opinions on art. Being used to a European critical approach to art, he was unsettled by a New York attitude which takes making art for granted, similar to eating and drinking. He asked himself why make art if it is just a "normality" and is stripped of any problematic status? A text by Huber with an exaggerated summary of this experience is the focal point of Vergangenes und Kommendes Wetter (eng. Past and Future Weather). The text stands on the ground, like a suspended memorial for an "anything goes" attitude to an art offering any potential viewer and buyer an interpretation to fit their wishes. A black book with weather reports in three tenses is placed on an oversized plinth: the weather defines the present with its everyday occurence, the future with its forecast and the past with its ephemerality.

5. Kathryn Vogt-Haefelfinger, oh honey b, 2018

The artist's attempt to fix honey with a varnish leads to a reaction in which the honey displaces the varnish. The honey flows out of the picture, leaving traces in the varnish as it drys. The honey's absence shapes the picture.

The work oh honey b deals with topics of upheaval, change and the forces of nature, especially hurricanes and melting ice. The circular format looks like a satellite photograph of the Earth showing its crust altered by climate change.

6. Michel Winterberg, Sunset on Demand, 2015

In Western art history, the portrayal of landscape is closely related to the portrayal of weather. Sunsets have been especially favoured since Romanticism because of how they reflect a state of mind.

Sunset on Demand makes it possible to experience sunsets in different weather types "on demand" – at the touch of a button, as an instant service, fast and immediate. On the press of a button in the antique picture frame, a new sea panorama is created generatively and virtually. The mathematical combinatorics of the 100 landscape topographies, each varying in colour, position and height, make each new landscape unique. The viewer can thus experience the sunset over a time lapse of two minutes, in a picturesque-style painting on textured watercolor paper.

Galerie 2 a

7. Linda Wunderlin, Find a place you trust, and then, try trusting it for a while, 2017

These 6 videos, originally 8, were recorded in Belfast. Strong wind is a constant weather factor in the Northern Irish capital close to the sea. The artist has filmed a number of situations in which a similar central image reoccurs: plastic accidentally caught and fluttering in the wind on formations of barbed wire on fences, barriers and metal bars. These moving, fleeting plastic sculptures were created by chance. They are constantly changing due to wind and weather. Each video has been made from a fixed camera position. In the main, the artist has chosen a seemingly sub-optimal position for the camera, so that the central image appears diagonally in the selected frame, each in front of rapidly changing weather scenes.

The recordings are accompanied by the noise of the city. We hear undulating traffic noise, the whistle of a fierce wind thumping the microphone, occasional church bells and human voices. The sounds are irritating because we hear them from behind us and do not see their sources. The work was made during Linda Wunderlin's study visit to Belfast. The title 10 Rules for students and teachers is borrowed from John Cage. He once distributed the rules once written by Sister Corita. The artist was given this rule book on the first day at Ulster University and it preoccupied her during the semester.

8. Haejeung Paik & Naz Naddaf, Weatherball, 2018

The interactive installation consists of five balloons onto which weather data is projected.
The largest of these "globes" contains a microphone into which viewers are asked to speak the names of cities from around the world. The computer searches for the corresponding weather data on the internet via voice recognition and projects it as a pattern onto the balloon.

The visualized data shows temperature, wind speed and direction as well as humidity. Live weather data from tax havens and from cities with political conflicts, rising sea levels or high migration rates are projected onto the four smaller balloons. The Russian Cosmist group are not the only ones to hold the sun responsible for the revolution! Using codes, the numerical values of the above-mentioned data are translated directly into a pictorial language of emotions. For example, a higher temperature results in a warmer colour, surrounding the viewer with the feeling of light.

The work emphasises that the weather remains a fundamental factor for contemporary life. Never before have so many weather data been available through apps or live cams and been so quick and easy to access. They allow us to mentally and physically prepare for the world that we daily encounter. Information about the weather not only affects us personally, it also has social and political implications. A safe passage across the Mediterranean Sea is very dependant on good weather.

9. Stefan Karrer, Concrete Platform

Stefan Karrer's web-based video installation investigates telecommunication cables in deep sea. They are laid on the ocean floor and transmit more than 90% of all communication data.
The starting point of the work is a photo and caption which the artist found on Google's photo sharing service "panoramio.com". The photo shows a concrete platform on a beach. The caption explains that this is the place where a submarine fiber optic cable comes ashore.
The image inspired Karrer to fantasise that waves reached the concrete platform for the first time in the year when the cable was completed. This led to various objects being deposited on the platform over the summer, including a portable audio device from that period, playing a song can be heard on headphones.
Karrer has programmed a website with an index of names of deep sea cables which can be filtered alphabetically, chronologically or geographically. The website repeats his above-mentioned fantasy for every submarine cable-charging station on the Mediterranean Sea. A text framework accompanies each cable, with nine blocks of text continuously fed by data from the submarine cables in question. These web-based combinations create all kinds of lines of lyrical text. In the screen capture video in the exhibition, the artist can be seen clicking through the website texts. The viewer is taken on a journey along the Mediterranean coast and through the history of technology from the 1990s into the near future.

10. Dirk Koy, Salvage, 2018

The source material for Dirk Koy's animation consists of city and landscape photos from his own private archive. He works on them experimentally with graphic programmes, fragmenting and placing them together like collages in three-dimensional virtual space. He uses the programme's "viewport" as the output source, so that the programme's tools, for example grid lines and borders, remain clearly visible in the video.
In order to extract the painterly moment from the individual fragments, Dirk Koy layers the scenes in the computer very close to one another and condenses them into a whole. He also uses programme errors as a visual language to break with the often "clean" aesthetics of computer programmes. This creates a randomness which he uses to generate variants in the design process, from which he then selects and develops a chosen image – in an interplay of chance and control. The dramaturgy of the image composition and image sequence is adapted to the tension within the music. The music is a composition made by the artist years ago using one of the first IBM home computers (Amstrad PC1512). Like the photos, the music is taken from his archive and given new life through the artwork – hence the title "Salvage".

11. Emma Haeck, La pluie et le beau temps, 2018

Haeck's video is based on a collection of holiday postcards which she has collected at flea markets. The postcard was once a popular medium for communicating landscape views and expressing a holiday feeling. It is today being made obsolete by social media and text messaging.
The picture postcards are presented individually in front of a pink surface and stacked. We see classic views of resorts in the Alps such as Zermatt and beaches in the Provence.
The stereotypical subject matter and perspective repeat themselves regularly, for example in aerial photographs, panoramas and views of mountains and beaches. They testified to a bygone era and to partially vanished landscapes and landmarks.

Nature is represented without people here. It is a retreat from the cities and towns for those in need of rest. The fear of the mountains which prevailed in the Middle Ages was replaced in the Enlightenment by an enthusiasm for the Alps and by a devotion to alpine harmony. This led to the development of alpine tourism in the 19th century and still fuels it today.

Parallel to the postcard views, the texts on their reverse sides are read out by a synthetic voice. We hear stereotypical weather reports, standard greetings and courtesies. The saying in French "parler de la pluie et du beau temps" refers to a superficial conversation about trivial matters of little interest to anyone. Most of the postcards' senders claim to need a rest and seek the peace of the mountains or of nature. The holiday experience is repeatedly summed up with "très bonnes vacances, il fait beau" (eng. "great holiday, lovely weather"). Thunderstorms, extreme heat and storms spoil everything: "gross chaleur; ourage terrible" (eng. "awful heat, terrible storm"). Climate change is bringing more extreme weather, with storms, rising sea levels, vanishing snow and melting glaciers. This is changing the landscape and changing mass tourism. Haeck's work recalls that the climate is not a constant, but variable in space and time.

12. Nastassja Ramassamy, Triple 7, 2017

Weather forecasts play a central role for air traffic. Wind forces, thunderstorms, lightning or hail increase risks when flying. Flight meteorology is a specific subfield. Triple 7 is a minimalist choreography for four performers. The performers are in a white box with taped-off areas on the floor, surrounded by the deafening noise of the wind. The box looks like an abstract airfield within which flight attendents and aircraft controllers move around autistically. They walk up and down the floor markers mechanically, mimicking the safety briefing with its oxygen mask and life jacket gestures. Or they pantomime the way to escape routes or docking stations. The artist has translated the safety briefing into a minimal choreography based on "Kaze no Bon", the traditional Japanese dance. "Kaze no Bon" serves traditionally to appease the winds.

Conclusion: Even if we dislike talking about the weather, it will continue to occupy us and contemporary art in the future.

Heidi Brunnschweiler, November 2018