



Julian Charrière Towards No Earthly Pole

September 6, 2020 – January 3, 2021
Aargauer Kunsthaus, Aarau

The Aargauer Kunsthaus is presenting the work of the young Swiss artist Julian Charrière (b. 1987). Like the early explorers, the artist is drawn to the most inhospitable regions of the world, such as the North Pole or a nuclear weapons test site. In his latest film projection he takes the audience along on his artistic expeditions into the most impressive icy landscapes on the planet. The film is echoed in selected photographs and sculptures.

The exhibition *Towards No Earthly Pole* by Julian Charrière invites the viewer on a unique journey through the galleries in the museum. His latest film installation, *Towards No Earthly Pole* (2019) shows shimmering icebergs, gaping cracks in glaciers and surging polar seas. They appear abruptly out of the darkness before immediately being swallowed up by it again. In his film Charrière brings together various icy landscapes from our planet into a sensual and poetic cosmos. The space-filling, feature-film-length projection allows the audience to immerse itself in this fascinating, deserted region. The exhibition setting intensifies the meditative effect of the scenery: the room is plunged in darkness and the vibrant sound backdrop underlines the atmosphere of the film.

As a visual artist, Julian Charrière is as much an explorer and a traveller as he is a scientist and an archaeologist. He effortlessly connects disparate art forms and different disciplines, as in the mysteriously concealed work *The Purchase of the South Pole* (2017). Hidden beneath the fabric normally used as a protective measure against the melting of the glaciers there is a cannon. Charrière is referring to Jules Verne's adventure novel *The Purchase of the North Pole* (1889), in which the North Pole is put up for auction. The earth's axis is to be straightened with a

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powerful shot from a cannon, in order to melt the polar ice cap and expose the treasures underneath. Lying on the ground around the cannon are lead-encased coconuts - 'souvenirs' from Charrière's expedition to the islands of the Bikini Atoll, which have been radio-actively contaminated for decades.

The stone sculptures *Not All Who Wander Are Lost* (2019) are distributed widely around the exhibition space and the inner courtyard of the Kunsthaus. They are erratic stones that have over the millennia been transported by glaciers far from their origins, and in which the artist has drilled numerous holes. The drill cores are symbols of the extraction and consumption of natural resources (some of the cores consist partly of noble metals such as aluminium, copper, gold or silver) and at the same time refer to the extraction technique for soil analysis. In the sculptures *Metamorphism* (2016) the artist takes this process one step further and creates a rock himself, not unlike a contemporary alchemist. The formations displayed in vitrines were made from artificial lava and melted discarded computer parts.

The entire exhibition is informed by the contrast between the elements ice and fire. *Tropisme* (2014) consists of flash-frozen prehistoric plants, the photographs *The Blue Fossil Entropic Stories* (2013) show the artist melting a glacier in Iceland. The element of fire reappears in the burning fountain in the video *And Beneath It All Flows Liquid Fire* (2019) and in *Thickens, pools, flows, rushes, slows* (2020) sculpted from large chunks of obsidian. Charrière uses the two contrasting elements to visualise change and transformation.

Julian Charrière's curiosity and his interest in understanding the environment lead him into areas that have become global hot spots. For the visitors, the tour of the exhibition becomes a journey through Julian Charrière's artistic cosmos, and at the same time offers an engagement with the effects of human activity on nature.

The exhibition, initiated by the former Director of the Aargauer Kunsthaus Madeleine Schuppli, is organised in collaboration with MASI (Museo d'arte della Svizzera italiana), Lugano, where *Towards No Earthly Pole* was shown from 27 October 2019 until 15 March 2020. In 2021 *Towards No Earthly Pole* will be shown at the Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, Texas.

Publication

A bilingual German and English publication is produced to accompany the exhibition. It is devoted to the work *Towards No Earthly Pole*, and places it in a context with essays by leading academics from the disciplines of philosophy, film studies, polar research and art history, as well as extracts from major literary and scientific texts. With contributions from: Francesca Benini, Amanda Boetzkes, Katherine Brodbeck, Dehlia Hannah, Scott MacKenzie & Anna Westerstahl Stenport, Shane McCorristine, Nadim Samman and

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Katrin Weilenmann, and an interview between the artist and Prof. Konrad Steffen, Professor of Climate and Cryosphere at ETH Zurich and EPFL.

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Julian Charrière (b. 1987, Morges) studied Visual Art at the École cantonale d'art du Valais (ECAV) in Sierre with Valentin Carron (2006) at the University of the Arts in Berlin (2007-2013), where he was a student and master pupil of the artist Olafur Eliasson at the Institute for Spatial Experiments. Charrière lives and works in Berlin.

Solo exhibitions (selection): *Towards No Earthly Pole*, MASI (Museo d'arte della Svizzera italiana), Lugano (2019); *All We Ever Wanted Was Everything and Everywhere*, MAMbo, Bologna (2019); *Julian Charrière. As We Used to Float*, GASAG Kunstpreis 2018, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin (2018); *An Invitation to Disappear*, Kunsthalle Mainz, Mainz (2018); *For They That Sow the Wind*, Parasol Unit, London (2016); *Kaiserringstipendium für junge Kunst*, Mönchehaus Museum Goslar, Goslar (2016); *Future Fossil Spaces*, Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts, Lausanne (2014); *We Are All Astronauts*, Centre culturel suisse, Paris (2014)

Group exhibitions (selection): *Critical Zones*, ZKM Karlsruhe, Karlsruhe (2020); *La Fabrique du Vivant*, Centre Pompidou, Paris (2019); *Elementarteil. 40 Jahre Kunst im Sprengel Museum*, Sprengel Museum, Hannover (2019); *Tomorrow is the Question*, AROS Aarhus Kunstmuseum, Aarhus (2019); *WILDNIS*, SCHIRN Kunsthalle, Frankfurt (2018); *Adapt to Survive: Notes from the Future*, Hayward Gallery, Southbank Centre, London (2018); *Le Rêve des Formes*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2017); *Tidalectics*, Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary, Vienna (2017); 57th International Art Exhibition: *Viva Arte Viva*, La Biennale di Venezia, Arsenale, Venice, Italy (2017); *+ultra. gestaltung schafft wissen*, Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin (2016); *The Future of Memory*, Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna (2015); *Des Présents Inachevés*, Les Modules du Palais de Tokyo, 12th Art Biennale de Lyon, Lyon, France (2013)

Prizes and grants (selection): *Prix Mobilière 2018* (2018); *GASAG Kunstpreis 2018* (2018); *Kiefer Hablitzel | Göhner Preis / Swiss Art Awards* (2015 and 2013); *Manor Kunstpreis Waadt* (2014); *IBB-Preis für Photographie* (2013); *Das NUMEN*, Projektförderung, Kulturverwaltung des Berliner Senats (2013); *Regina Pistor Preis* (2012)

Curator

Katrin Weilenmann, Guest Curator

Assistant Curator

Bettina Mühlebach, Research Assistant, Aargauer Kunsthaus

Media Preview

Thursday, 3 September, 10.30 am

Welcome by Katharina Ammann, Director, Aargauer Kunsthaus

Introduction by Katrin Weilenmann, Guest Curator

Followed by snacks in the foyer

Open House

Saturday, 5.9., 1 - 6 pm

In the presence of the artist

Details will be communicated on our website by mid-August

Free admission

Events

Events may change due to the current situation. Kindly consult our website for updates before your visit: www.aargauerkunsthaus.ch

All events are upon registration, admission restricted.

Book Launch and Sound Performance

Saturday, 24.10.

Book presentation in the presence of the artist and live sound performance by the musician and composer Robert Lippok

With thanks to: Dittrich & Schlechtriem, Berlin; Galerie Tschudi, Zuoz; Sies+Höke, Düsseldorf

Artist Conversation

Date to be announced

Julian Charrière in conversation with Katrin Weilenmann, Guest Curator

Tour with Konrad Steffen

Thursday, 5.11., 6.30 pm

Climate researcher Konrad Steffen explores polar and alpine regions. In conversation with Katrin Weilenmann, Guest Curator

Tour with Anja Blacha

Sunday, 6.12., 1 pm

Extreme athlete Anja Blacha recently completed a solo expedition to the South Pole. In conversation with Bettina Mühlebach, Assistant Curator

For further information

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