

Press release

KUNSTHAUS
CENTRE D'ART

MELANIE MANCHOT

Open Stage. Back Stage

14.4.-16.6.2019

The exhibition at Kunsthaus Pasquart brings together for the first time a comprehensive overview of Melanie Manchot's (b. 1966, Germany) work responding to the landscape, community and tourism-led economic infrastructure of the Swiss mountain valley Engelberg. It marks ten years of producing both photographic and video works relating to this alpine region, forming a sustained enquiry into our complex relationship with mountains as spaces of real and imaginary exploration of our place in the world.

Arising from her interest in the ways we look after the places temporarily in our care, Manchot focuses on the «back stage» and the hidden labour necessary to make a mountain function. She has worked repeatedly with various teams in Engelberg to observe and articulate this through her photographs and videos, exemplified impressively in the video works *Out Of Bounds* (2016) and *Leap after The Great Ecstasy* (2011). In a state of continual preparation, impressions of nature and human empowerment are placed in a state of suspense. In the series *White Light Black Snow* (2017) the artist questions the material qualities and conditions of the colour white and, in examining the ability of the camera to « see » and to « reproduce » snow and ice, is concerned ultimately with the medium of photography itself. Manchot's latest work *Alpine Diskomiks* (2019) arranges the convergence of image and sound, similar to a tectonic shift of land masses, and unfolds a continuous panorama of a mountain chain from the covers of 50 records, all of them showing the image of a mountain. An accumulation of sound that increases and reduces sequentially allows us to experience the drama of the labour and the continual process of construction and removal in the mountains.

Most of Manchot's works hover on the threshold between the documentary and staged event, themes that are equally evident in one of Manchot's most ambitious performative works, *Dance (All Night, London)* (2017), presented as a large-scale video installation in the Salle Poma. For an entire night Manchot brought together a variety of movements and cultures by working with dance schools based in London's East End, each of which presented a different style of dance. In the course of the night the place transformed into a social space, formed by the dynamic of various gestures and movements which co-existed through a multitude of rhythms. The work questions the potential for variety, difference and collective belonging in the context of our increasingly complex societies. A new version of this collective dance performance will be performed live in the old town of Biel on 25 May. Manchot is bringing together nearly all Biel's dance organisations, combining completely different traditions (Barock, Afro, Jazz, Breakdance...) in the collaborative event. The public is warmly invited to accompany the dance groups on their procession through Biel's old town and to experience the gathering of all the dancers and drummers in the Ring.



Melanie Manchot, *Above/Below*, 2017, Detail, digital C-type print, 80 x 120 cm; Courtesy Melanie Manchot; © 2019, VG Bild-Kunst Bonn

Curator of the exhibition

Felicity Lunn, director Kunsthaus Pasquart

Publication

The exhibition is accompanied by an illustrated publication (dt./engl./franz., edited by MAC VAL and Kunsthaus Pasquart. Ca. 100 illustrations, 244 pages, hardcover, 2018.

Guided tours

Thurs 9.5.2019, 6pm (fr) Natacha Isoz, art historian

Thurs 6.6.2019, 6pm (dt) Felicity Lunn, director Kunsthaus Pasquart

Artist's talk

Thurs 23.5.2019, 6pm (dt) Melanie Manchot in conversation with Felicity Lunn.

Collective performance

Sat 25.5.2019, 8:30-9:30pm In the old town of Biel

You are cordially invited to accompany the Biel dance groups brought together by Melanie Manchot on their procession-like route through the old town of Biel.

Press conference

Friday, 12.4.2019, 10:30am

Opening

Saturday, 13.4.2019, 5pm

Children's preview

Saturday, 13.4.2019, 5-6:30pm
