Agnes Meyer-Brandis: Cloud Cores, Moon Geese and Wandering Trees
“Cloud Cores, Moon Geese and Wandering Trees” is Switzerland’s first major solo exhibition for artist Agnes Meyer-Brandis. The German artist is interested in exploring the world through the use of extended “fantastic” reality applications, ” as she describes them. Through her installations and videos, she presents seeming impossibilities that defy physical laws and shake our perception and knowledge.

In her artistic confrontation with scientific questions and approaches she is concerned with the “experience of possible worlds.” Analogue and digital media become tools for staging spaces for experience and thought. Through her works, the artist reveals a complex interplay between science and art. To that end, she founded the experimental “ResearchRaft – Institute for Art and Subjective Science,” in which her projects are categorized. Her research focuses on the poetic and scientific investigation of underground, terrestrial and superterranee phenomena. The exhibition includes space–encompassing installations and videos from various areas of her exploration.

Curators: Sabine Himmelsbach and Raphael Rogenmoser

Photo: Agnes Meyer-Brandis, Moon Goose Colony, 2011, video still.

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07.09.2017 - 12.11.2017

Cloud Cores

1. Fluid Matter, 2008
2. Waldenkerne, 2017
3. Tropos Subsurdum, 2017
4. Pause II, 2017

With her series on Cloud Cores, Meyer-Brandis cast her eyes skyward and researched aerosols in weightlessness. On the invitation of the German Aerospace Center, she carried out several experiments during a parabolic flight. The resulting videos, Fluid Matter, shows the artist carrying out her experiments, examining the behavior of dust, water and small objects in weightlessness, and investigating the formation of drops.

The video installation Cloud Cores shows miniature scenes choreographed in relation to the impact of gravity. The scenes, created in real time, raise questions about our perception of reality, when for example a model of a moated castle appears to float within a cloud core.

Meyer-Brandis’ research on the theme of Cloud Cores is spread out into what she calls a Subsurdum. The artist’s invented word refers to the digging out and uncovering of information, but also to the absurd, the not quite understood, from which something new emerges. In Tropos Subsurdum she gives us insight into her investigations and the research cosmos of her experiments on weightlessness and cloud formation.

Another element in the research aspect of Cloud Cores is the video Pause II, which was created during preparations for the experiments in weightlessness. Taking a break from work, lying in a meadow, the artist tried to thread a contrail in the sky through the eye of a needle.

To Meyer-Brandis, it is essential to actually carry out her experiments. Her ideas are rarely simulated digitally, rather, they are implemented physically. The development of research equipment and tools is thus of central importance and can also be documented in her installations and video documents.

In her long-term performance, Moon Goose Colony, Meyer-Brandis imprinted 11 geese according to the behavioral biology methods of Konrad Lorenz, gave them the names of astronauts, and prepared them for their trip to the moon with a comprehensive “astronaut training.” The development of the geese and the various experiments are documented in a video.

In Moon Goose Analogues, an art research environment is created to prepare the geese for their lunar travels. 

This interactive research-aesthetic training camp – in a control center within the exhibition space – connects visitors with the Moon Geese in their habitat in the Italian Abruzzo region via live feed.

Impact - Studies on Cause and Effect

7. Meteoro-Subsurdum, 2017
8. Impakt Subsurdum, 2017
9. 42 – The Large Meteor TRAP (Terrestrial Renouting Array Pad), 2017

In her impact studies, Meyer-Brandis focuses on her artistic research into the relationship between cause and effect. At the same time she also inquires into the connection between scientifically verifiable methods and the pictorial character of narratives.

Her impact studies are a series of investigations into objects and phenomena that vacillate between falling and weightlessness. Impakt Subsurdum and the Meteoros Subsurdum illustrate the research context.

Meyer-Brandis sees the experiment as a guideline. For example, Lying on Dimensions from the series Meteoros Subsurdum investigates the impact of gravity on the human body. How long can someone stand at an angle before falling?

The video 42 – The Large Meteor TRAP (Terrestrial Renouting Array Pad) suggests a new approach to the accurate, scientific prediction of meteonic impacts. In a test facility in the Moroccan desert, Meyer-Brandis positioned an antenna that were meant to direct meteors to the designated field.

On Green and Wandering Trees

5. Moon Goose Colony, 2011
6. Moon Goose Analogue, 2012/2017

In 2008, Meyer-Brandis launched Moon Goose Experience, a large-scale, complex project. This work is inspired by Francis Godwin’s 17th century fantasy tale, “The Man in the Moone.” In the story, Godwin describes an adventurous trip to the moon in a goose-drawn vehicle and manages to convey the effects of weightlessness convincingly.

The Moon Goose is the mythological creature that moves each year between earth and moon. In the artist’s cosmos, the goose becomes a means of communication and companionship, and represent a kind of symbolic, heraldic animal, thanks to their explorations of gravity and weightlessness.

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