



GALERIE BRIGITTE SCHENK

CURTIS ANDERSON / TAREK AL GHOSSEIN / RANDOM INTERNATIONAL / ILYA AND EMILIA KABAKOV / MARIA ZERRES

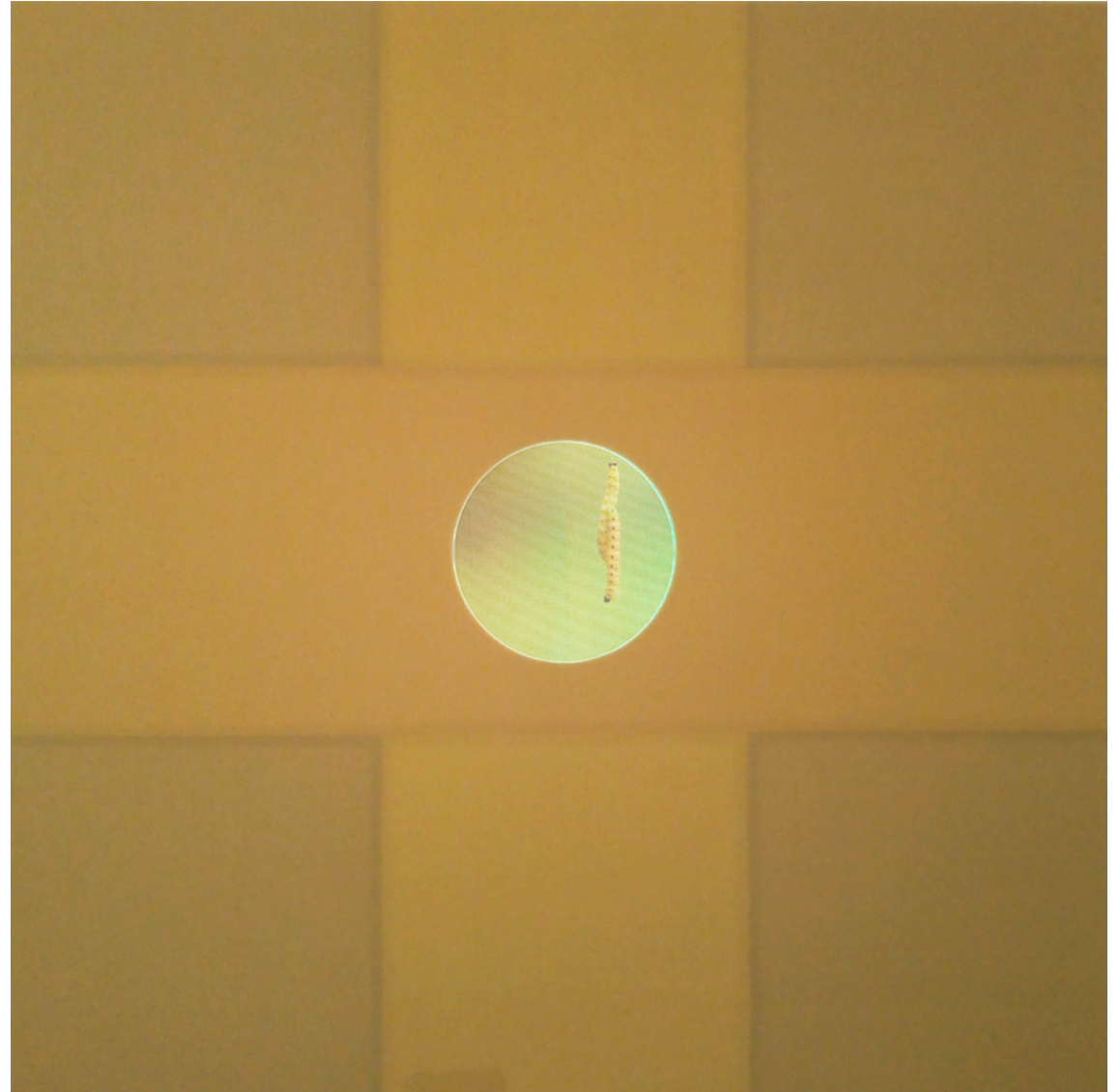
CURTIS ANDERSON

Filmed with a hand-held camera in the Giant Sequoia forest in the South of Cologne, a chance encounter with caterpillars climbing single strands of silk on their way to their nesting place in trees led to a series of short videos which have been pieced together. Single figures, pairs, triplets and larger groups are all concerned with verticality, one of Anderson's favorite themes. For him we humans possess individual vertical columns connecting us to the earth's center, the antipode and in two directions to spatial infinity. For the first time one of Anderson's synthetic silk / video works, the compositions of which are based upon Ad Reinhardt's so-called "Black Paintings" but consisting not of seven painted areas but rather of seven sewn silk panels, also in three colors, contains a sound track – of ambient noises recorded in the forest.

The second silk / video work pictures a young Japanese woman whose face has been covered with loosely hanging sheets of silver leaf secured by a layer of honey. Anderson has created an Asian, feminine and lunar variation on an image from Joseph Beuys's first gallery exhibition at Alfred Schmela's in Düsseldorf in 1965, *Explaining Pictures to a Dead Hare*, in which his face was covered with gold leaf. The mumbling voice of Beuys is replaced with a recitation in Japanese of a Basho haiku: "The autumn moon is bright, Sea-waves whirl up to my gate, Crested silvery white." The silver leaf is blown away by wind. This process and the speech component are then reversed in an endless loop of addition and subtraction.

„Ascension“ 2017

Silk on wood, video rear-projection, 90×90×30,5 cm

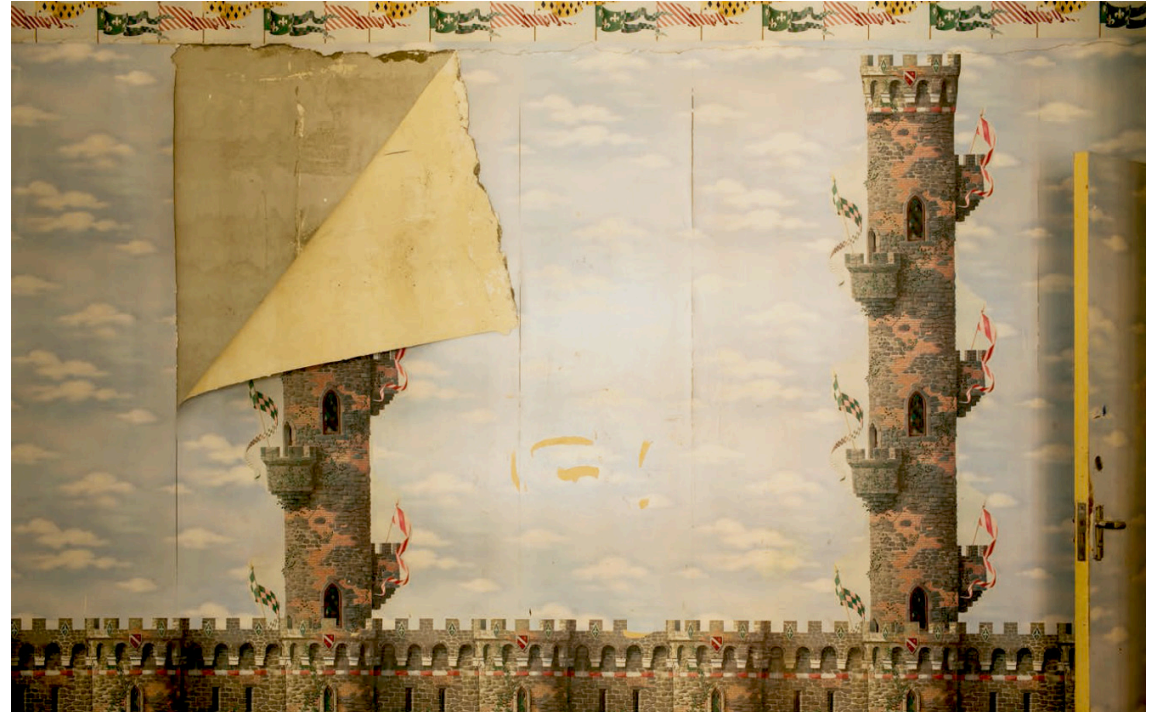


TAREK AL-GHOUSSEIN

„0148“, 2015-2017
lambda print, 100×150 cm

The plan for a state-supported residential complex in the Al-Sawaber district of Kuwait City had been elaborated by the Canadian architect Arthur Erickson in 1977, but, realised half-heartedly as it was, it proved to be a divisive phenomenon. Potentially a material statement of solidarity with Erickson's ideas, it was set to signify an entry into the modern age; but then the execution fell short, jettisoning important details and key features of the original plans such as integrated green areas, shops and restaurants: the project as built was perceived as a flop. The futuristic precursor of a present-day residential mall never came to be as such, the 'new conception of life' it had promised could find expression only to a limited extent and Erickson himself did not include the building in his subsequent catalogue of works. But as such ambivalent and written-off projects often do, the Al-Sawaber complex generated a life of its own and thereby its own purpose. It was not only perceived as a failure. Local recollections affirm that it was unique in the entire region. The complex was home to Muslims of both the major sects, to Christians, Hindus and Buddhists, Kuwaitis and other nationals side by side, it was multicultural. The fact of its defying pigeon-holing, of plans abandoned and of failure found scope and form here, and fostered an altogether specific life of its own which could assuredly not have arisen anywhere else in Kuwait at that time.

Prompted by the invitation to represent Kuwait at its pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 2013, Al Ghousein turned to fathom his complex roots in depth, Kuwait having been part of his origins at least for a short time. With the probable



demolition of this architecture looming, the artist began capturing the compounded mood, enhanced again once tenants moved out, in still-life compositions. His photographs, until then intense explorations of the self-portrait theme, and in which he was personally always intercalated in one way and at some point or another, intensified in the Al-Sawaber series into portraits of a higher order. These are portraits of a time, of a life, a home, steeped in a melancholy, poetic, ironic and morbid mood that engenders distance and intimacy simultaneously. Through this perceptual filter, Al Ghousein achieves the feat of recording the complexity of a building and its people as, together, the higher, contemporaneous testimony to the time and life of an era.

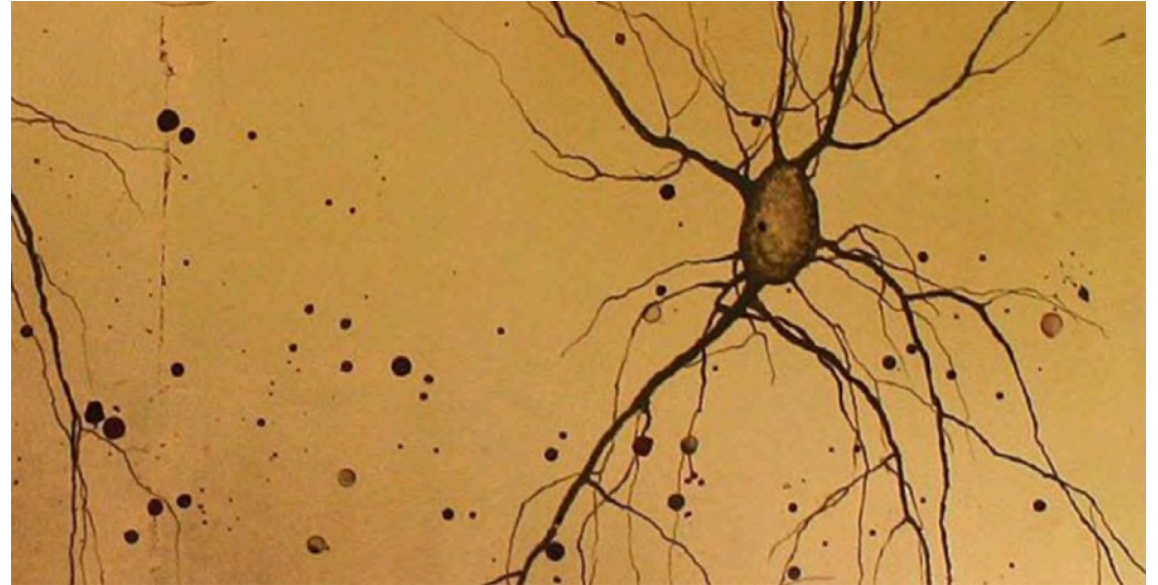
RANDOM INTERNATIONAL

*"Swarm Studies" (prints), 2019
each 100 × 120 cm, Edition 3 + 2 AP*

Since 2010, Random International's ongoing Swarm Studies have been exploring the intelligence in motion of self-organising systems through increasingly dematerialised, sensory environments. Evolving from this, the latest swarm studies focus on a frame-by-frame examination of the complex collective expressions inherent to the swarming organism. The individual frames are extracted from the studio's own BOID simulations, which are the long-standing source material for all swarm studies that Random has published to date.

Boids is an artificial life program, developed by Craig Reynolds in 1986, which simulates the flocking behaviour of birds. His paper on this topic was published in 1987 in the proceedings of the ACM SIGGRAPH conference. The name "boid" corresponds to a shortened version of "bird-oid [i.e., bird-like] object". Incidentally, "boid" is also a New York Metropolitan dialect pronunciation for "bird". Rules applied in simple Boids As with most artificial life simulations, Boids is an example of emergent behavior; that is, the complexity of Boids arises from the interaction of individual agents (the boids, in this case) adhering to a set of simple rules.. The basic model has been extended in several different ways since Reynolds proposed it. The movement of Boids can be characterized as either chaotic (splitting groups and wild behaviour) or orderly. Unexpected behaviour such as flocks splitting and reuniting after avoiding obstacles, can be considered emergent. The boids framework is often used in computer graphics, providing realistic-looking representations of flocks of birds and other creatures, such as schools of fish or herds of animals.

(after Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia)



ILYA AND EMILIA KABAKOV

„The Fallen Sky“
Oil on polyester, 700×800×20 cm

The installation “The Fallen Sky” represents the idea of sky on earth. In Kabakov manner there is of course a poetic story to it:

This scrap of ‘sky’ glided in and fell on the Piazza of Art Cologne on April 10, 2019 during a severe hurricane. Its edge penetrated the grass to a depth of 1,5 metres. City employees were able to determine the story of this ‘scrap’ in 1991: a Russian pilot living in the Czech city of Velke Slavizy, built a room on the top floor of his house and there gathered a large ‘flying’ collection of the beginning of the century: navigational maps, compasses and other navigational instruments of historical value. The ceiling and walls of the room were decorated with various views of the sky: clear, cloudy, and stormy. A severe storm, moving across Eastern and Northern Europe during the night of April 10 2019, destroyed this structure and carried away the pilot’s walls, decoration and all. One of the parts, most likely the entire ceiling of the room, turned up on that night on the Piazza of Art Cologne.

The bronze plaque and the etched letters are intended to convince the viewer that this is what really did happen. Various aspects come to the fore: the absence of a special artistic object, leaving viewers either to believe that “this is really what happened” or think that what they see is a sculpture; and one cannot help but ask why the piece of sky is here and what it means in the context of the surroundings. The Kabakovs are playing with these various levels in order to question, to confuse and amuse the spectator.



MARIA ZERRES

*„In Smarkant- Sigmar für Dich“, 2011
Oil on canvas, 305 × 290 cm*

When artist A.R. Penck visited Zerres at her studio in the early 1990s, he noted, ‘Everything’s right here’, and, ‘The empty space can be there without representing a gap; it is on a par with filled-out space. That makes for dynamism’. And then, ‘Black and white are handled like colours. This is colour.’

The simultaneity of planes and events in paint that characterises her compositions, the lack of proportion, her use of different views in a single picture and the confident, undaunted handling of paint and colour are characteristics that we can link to the phenomenon of the simultaneity of planes and their immediate availability. Overlain and adjacent. At any time. The nine paintings presented at Galerie Brigitte Schenk in the 33-part cycle *Agonie*, created in 2009-2011, from which paintings are also shown at Art Cologne, make this vividly clear.

