

ARCHIPELAGO MOUNTAIN

28.07. – 09.09.2017

Press material

Opening Thu July 27th, 2017, 7 pm

**Guided Press Tour Thu July 27th, 2017, 12 am
Residenzplatz 10, 2nd floor**

Images

<http://galerie5020.at/programm/archipelago-mountain>

Participating Artists:

Meriç Algün (TK/SWE), Ana de Almeida (PT/AT), Martha Atienza (PH/NL), Ann Böttcher (SWE), Amy Croft (UK), Sara Deraedt (BE), Isidora Krstic (SRB/AT), & Stephanie Misa (PH/ AT)

Archipelago Mountain proposes a geographic *re-imagining* to better articulate the decolonial present. An archipelago: a group of islands that lends its topography to ideas of evolution, inter-connectedness, diaspora and change; dispelling the pervasive idea of a nationalistic “wholeness”, and weaving a micro(u)topia of relations. Edouard Glissant’s *Traité du Tout-Monde. (Poétique IV)*, calls it archipelagic thinking— a reassessment of the insularity of bound cultures, of nation-states, and the heaviness of “continental thought”. The archipelago is an alternative imaginary, one that posits that identity could be as a conglomeration of islands.

As the first curatorial and artistic collaboration between **Ana de Almeida** and **Stephanie Misa**, *Archipelago Mountain* sustains a correspondence between the two artists that materializes into an exercise of placement. Their collaborative installation “Untitled” (2017) consists of a production of a temporal trace (an image, a song, or an object) that narrates a space that one (currently) “is” in. What is produced are artefacts of projection and desire (appropriated, created, disfigured, and chosen), they can represent geographic places, but also live on a fictional, hybrid or even barely composed plane.

In *Archipelago Mountain*, de Almeida and Misa invite artists to contribute specific positions to this installative dialogue. The positions evoke different and complementary connection points between landscape, mapping, cartographic and geological geographies, or internal spaces as systems for ordering states of identity, and as set coordinates that constitute and determine the space of the group exhibition.

Ann Böttcher with “Der Wald an den Strassen des Führers (Der Umgang mit Mutter Grün)” (2008), and “Deutsche Waldbäume und Waldtypen (Der Umgang mit Mutter Grün)” (2008) shows a series of collages and drawings that refer to a book written in 1929 by Walther Schoenichen, under the full title of *Der Umgang mit Mutter Grün: Ein Sünden- und Sittenbuch für Jedermann* (In the Company of Mother Earth: An Everyman's Book of Vice and Virtue). Böttcher's rich collages of index cards, notes, quotations, and photographs reflect on the official Third Reich’s policy concerning its “woodland heritage”. Slowly, an image of the forest emerges as a living monument to a German sensibility of certain time and place: its portrayed purity a constructed projection of human imagination—an uncanny abstract portrait of marching soldiers, standing tall and firm against the wind, in the form of stately spruces.

Amy Croft, in her works “grey sky blue” (2013), a looped video projection of 23 minutes, and “Light Strikes the Surface and Fizzes” (2013), a series of aquatint etchings, raises questions about the coding of our visual environment and the perception of space. Croft’s interest lies in the parallels between the dematerialization of design and architecture into atmospheric affects, and the manipulation of supposedly natural elements such as clouds and the weather. The installation interrogates the conditions needed to perceive and locate oneself within the spatial depths of reality, representation, and virtuality, and as Croft writes: “depth of space seems to contract, atmospheric sensations occur: vapour, an opaque [words illegible] in the air. City and interior – city and open air are entwined. Figure and ground are indistinguishable”.

Sara Deraedt’s “Car Interior” is an on-going series of photographed car interiors which in Archipelago Mountain, Deraedt exhibits as framed photographs. As curator Will Benedict writes in 2010, “Deraedt’s images concentrate on spaces that are simultaneously public and private and therefore available to her but at different degrees of built-in distance. These space’s mediated dual status as both accessible and off limits provide a condition in which their appearance could be endlessly construed, as perhaps sexual, frightening, emotional, or strikingly affectless.” Deraedt’s images hold a liminality that access an internal landscape, not necessarily that which is represented in the photographs.

In her sculptural installation “Fernweh” (2017), **Isidora Krstić** breaks down a careful selection of images taken from vacation brochures that the artist re-assembles to the point of making the places they represent just barely recognisable. The single images are stripped back to their basic elements: colour and paper; and where geometrical and spatial elements introduced, new spaces of interpretation open up. Though former places vanish through their deconstruction, the artistic process reactivates a desire towards a landscape that exists as (an acquired) memory of a future past.

Meriç Algün shows three interrelated pieces, “The Concise Book of Visa Application Forms” (2009) is a bound encyclopedia-like book that consists of an archive of visa application forms with questions like “have you engaged in any other activities that might indicate that you may not be considered a person of good character?” or “are you and your partner in a genuine and stable relationship?”. In “Billboards” (2012), the series draws from “The Concise Book of Visa Application Forms”, re-printing inquiries found in the forms onto tarpaulin banners. The

displacement of these questions underlines the invasiveness of the queries and, in turn, questions the questions themselves. “Ç (The Unfortunate Letter)” (2013) refers to the latin script letter called a c-cedilla, as in Meriç. In this work, comprised of a collection of personal letters addressed to Meriç Algün from Swedish agencies such as banks, universities and the migration office, the ç is frequently confused, altered or omitted attesting to the foreignness of the missing letter.

"In “The Guerrilla is Like a Poet”, **Martha Atienza** lays out the landscape of “home”. Born to a Dutch mother and a Filipino father, “The Guerrilla is Like a Poet” is a video work composed of four scenes intercutting the geographical range of the Philippines and the Netherlands. It portrays intimate stories: of Atienza’s mother sheltering the family from a typhoon, her father and his family in Tanguigui island, and a scene where a voice, belonging to Jose Maria Sison, one of founders of the Communist Party of the Philippines and in exile in the Netherlands since 1986, can be heard singing in the background. Atienza’s “The Guerrilla is Like a Poet” harkens back to Sison’s poem where “He has merged with the trees/ The bushes and the rocks/ Ambiguous but precise/ Well-versed on the law of motion/ And master of myriad images” and leaves us with the sense of one who grows up and continues to live in an island stranded out in sea, susceptible to nature’s forces, where the ocean in its continuous motion, becomes home in itself. Perpetual mobility is revealed as fundamental to the nature of home. Perhaps we are most at home when we are moving.”