

# Johnen Galerie

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## David Claerbout

2 May - 21 June 2014

Opening: 2 May 2014, 6 - 9 pm

On the occasion of *Gallery Weekend 2014* Johnen Galerie will show three new works by Belgian artist David Claerbout.

The idea for *Travel* dates back to 1996, but it was only in 2013, that the technical capabilities to actually realize this work were available. The work is based on a composition by Eric Breton from 1980, an early realization of therapeutic music, which is supposed to alleviate stress and have soporific effects. Claerbout drew on one of the most striking motifs, that are being associated with relaxation and tranquility: the woods. The entirely artificial synthesizer music corresponds to the impressions of nature, that have been created on the computer with great attention to detail. Claerbout offers a highly suggestive environment, that captivates the viewer in an indissoluble tension of banality, hypnosis and critical self- reflection.

*Oil workers* is based on an internet photo. It shows oil workers in Africa taking shelter from the rain under a bridge, being in a state of waiting. The water masses inspired Claerbout to an image that is flowing ambiguously between social documentation, waiting, viewing (while the oil workers reflect the situation of the viewer), and pictorial abstraction. The motif of waiting also reflects a very ambivalent human condition. It can evoke boredom, frustration, reflectiveness and feelings of freedom.

*Highway Wreck* also is based on a photograph: after a complete traffic standstill, people are leaving their cars to observe the cause for the traffic jam: a damaged car, and rescue workers at the side of the road. The attention is focused on the accident. It is not the emergency though that is at the core of this work, but rather the contrary: an over 70 year old photograph. Nevertheless, the viewers are attracted to the here and now of the disaster and remain in voyeuristic rigidity, like spectators of a motion picture.

*Highway Wreck* is an attempt to disarm this spectacle.

Recent exhibitions of David Claerbout's works include *Tel Aviv Museum of Art* (2012), *MoMA San Francisco* (2011), *Pinakothek der Moderne*, Munich (2010) and many others. David Claerbout (b. 1969) lives and works in Antwerp and Berlin.

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