

Esther Schipper

Christoph Keller
ANARCHEOLOGY
September 19 – October 25, 2014

Esther Schipper is pleased to announce ANARCHEOLOGY, a special presentation by Christoph Keller.

As part of his ongoing examination of the history of science and of the way in which knowledge is gathered and organized, the artist continues his project investigating Western anthropology, in particular the history of Western European engagement with the Amazon region. Keller has created large-scale images based on digital scans of foliage he collected in Brazil. Works in the series *Herbarium Amazonas*, show leaves in different states of desiccation. The decay of both organic and man-made material (on which the leaves are seen to rest in the scans) suggests the impossibility of halting entropic processes, alluding to the realization that nothing can be preserved, particularly not states of cultural development.

The images of a green feathery fern-leaf and a velvety fur-leaf, scanned in far more range and detail than either a human eye can perceive, or a lens-based photographic systems could possibly depict, printed to measure 150 x 225 cm, are installed on a wall entirely covered with a wallpaper showing colorful vertical scan lines. The irregular pattern is in fact generated by a faulty calibration of a digital scanning device, which then produces an autopoietic color strip image, akin perhaps to a machine's self-portrait. The combination creates a visual equivalent of the conflation of nature, technology and its failure.

In a small basement space of the gallery a new film entitled *Anarcheology* will be screened. Images of tropical landscapes devoid of humans alternate with text passages, creating a haunting essay film about Western engagement with other cultures and about the encounters of written language with oral tradition.

With these works the artist refers to a post-archeological situation, in which the narrative connecting an object or an image with a larger historical context is examined. His collecting of foliage from the Amazon region, for example, recalls the gestures of earlier Western European naturalists who assembled specimen (from flora, fauna and the animal world, both dead and alive) during their explorative journeys in order to deposit them in museums of natural history in their own lands. Part of a wider Enlightenment project to classify and map the world, in some sense these collections (and the processes assembling them) constitute the beginning of the modern notion of natural sciences. It is this procedural definition of a discipline by its approach, in this case by its *scientific* method, that Keller continuously addresses in his work on the history of scientific inquiry, exploring how the organization of knowledge influences our thought and results in the sometimes arbitrary distinctions between what is considered science and what is not.

Esther Schipper

Christoph Keller, born 1967 in Freiburg/Breisgau, studied Mathematics, Physics and Hydrology in Freiburg, Berlin and Santiago de Chile, as well as liberal arts and film at the University of Arts, Berlin and at the Academy of Media Arts, Cologne.

Selected solo exhibitions and projects include: *Small Survey on Nothingness*, Schering Stiftung, Berlin (until October 4, 2014); *Expedition Bus–Shaman Travel*, presentation at abc Berlin (2012); *Aether–between cosmology and consciousness*, Nouveau Festival du Centre Pompidou, Paris (2011); *Voyages Extraordinaires*, CRAC Alsace Lorraine, Altkirch (2010), *Observatorium*, Kunstverein Braunschweig (2008).

Recent group exhibitions include: *Marie Voignier / Olaf Breuning / Christoph Keller - os trópicos*, curated by Tobi Maier (until September 28, 2014) Centro Cultural CAIXA São Paulo; *The Reluctant Narrator* curated by Ana Teixeira Pinto Berardo Museum, Lisbon (upcoming, October 15, 2014—January 11, 2015); *Realität und Fiktion*, Villa Schöningen, Potsdam (2013); *Ghostbusters–or how to stress photography*, Kunsthal Charlottenborg, Copenhagen (2013); *Virtuosity–A Concert on Skill and Disruption, Strength and Nonchalance, Morale and Cheating*, Berliner Philharmonie, Berlin (2013); *L'Institut des archives sauvages*, Villa Arson, Nice (2012) and *A Terrible Beauty Is Born*, Biennale de Lyon (2011).

Christoph Keller lives and works in Berlin.