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Daniel Gustav Cramer – Sixteen Works
24th October – 28th November 2015
Opening reception 23rd October, 6 – 8 pm

Imagine a road, a car, it is evening, curves, a mountain, the sea. We are in Italy, near the Amalfi coast. Someone is sitting inside this car, crossing bridges, taking turns, driving from beach to beach.

Daniel Gustav Cramer's exhibition is in its essence a portrait of a landscape, of a man on a road, lost in his thoughts; it's a portrait of the experience of a single moment. If you take this image as a starting point, the exhibition unfolds and reveals the different faces a journey can have. There is for one the strange sense of time, which feels rather in points of time, personified, present, than a continuous flow – every curve offers a new encounter of it.

In the room there is a large-scale framed photograph installed. The image consists of a thinly delineated grid made of squares, each the size of a household napkin. The pale empty fields (hinting at an explorer's cartographic map) speak a language of minimalistic nature; at the same time the photograph exemplifies Cramer's methodology, with a toned down, reflected and distant demeanor he portrays the magnitude of the sea, the vastness of the oceans and humanity's efforts in trying to read these surfaces. On the gallery floor, blocks of white marble are stacked on top of each other. The stone plates, with their thin and organic black lines running through them, communicate to the print across the room. Yet they present a more raw portrait of our land. Imbedded in the landscape they were carved out and now, unpolished and unworked, insist on their material value. With their marble skin and dead weight they trigger different emotions.

Daniel Gustav Cramer's works are the amalgam of an ongoing research, like a traveler's journal that describe the human conditions they draw its images from a collective experience and our commonly shared memories. Our urge to explore, to collect and to archive, to eventually connect our journey to a relevant memory is something Cramer is trying to capture through a variety of formal and linguistic strategies, through live experiences and the appropriation of existing memories.

These two works can be seen as the starting point of the exhibition. Also in the exhibition, there are three steel rods, sticks, leaning against a wall. Of human size they take reference to the artist's ancestry, a sort of genealogy. Its presence, which assumes responsibility and which puts the artist's work in a lineage, proposes a way to look forward. Daniel Gustav Cramer is constantly going through a process of distilling his objects down to an essence, which captures an emotive response, something which links one object to another. Some of the works in this exhibition have been shown in the past – the crude marble blocks on show now, were stored and displayed in a steel and glass pavilion (1) in front of the sea during their trip from the mountains to the gallery – and others might re-occur in future ones; they become part of a narrative which is being told over many stages, many journeys.

In another part of the room, a stack of black paper is placed on the ground with a corroded steel ball sitting adjacent in its corner. The dark pages are blank and neatly stacked, they act like a counterpoint to the white marble. A group of photographs from his series Tales suggest a more narrative layer to the story which is unfolding in the gallery. Like a journey within a journey, these repetitive images, with their ever so slight differences imbue our imagination of how at some point “time” was holding its breath at a place named Portofino, and, returning to the marble stones stacked on the floor, how these works tend to embrace both poles – they are at once objects of documentation and vessels of memory.

– Samuel Leuenberger

(1) Unpolished and rough, displaced and on display, the pieces have been inhabiting as a temporary storage the small architecture of the “Sant’Ilario Pavilion” (2015), an exhibition project by THEVIEW Studio conceived and directed by Vittorio Dapelo, curated by Francesco Garutti and set along the ligurian Riviera. www.theviewstudio.com

Daniel Gustav Cramer (Born 1975 in Neuss, lives and works in Berlin, Germany) received his MFA at the Royal College of Art, London, UK. Recent exhibitions include: solo: Three, Kunstsaele Berlin, Germany; Seventeen, Kunstverein Nürnberg, Germany; 72, SALTS, Basel, Switzerland. Group: Eppur si muove – Art and technique, Mudam, Luxemburg; Waterbound – Vom Leben mit dem Wasser, Museum Kallmann Ismaning, Munich, Germany; Terra Incognita, curated by Dorothee Mosters, KIT / Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, Germany; Reliability of Recognition, BolteLang, Zurich, Switzerland; Unendliche Bibliothek, Alte Fabrik / Gebert Stiftung für Kultur, Rapperswil – Jona, Switzerland.

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