

TEMPORARY GALLERY

Press Release

06.09.2014 – 02.11.2014

BEN RIVERS. FABLES

Opening: Fri., 05.09., 7 pm

Press talk: Fri., 05.09., 11 am

Curated by: Regina Barunke

“Travellers are strange beings to go to great distances, and at great expense, to see new things, without having taken the trouble to look at their feet or over their heads, where as many extraordinary and unknown things are passing as they can possibly desire to know.”
(Alphonse Karr, *A Tour Round My Garden*, 1845).

Ben Rivers' recent 16mm-Film “Things“ (2014) is a 20-minute long travelogue in four chapters in which the British artist and filmmaker leads himself and the viewer through a tour of the four seasons. While Rivers undertook expeditions to far-removed or remote places of our civilisation in his earlier films, he now focuses his camera on unexplored things inside his own four walls. He sets off on a year-long journey through his own domestic surroundings that at the same time is also trip into his own imagination and collective memory. Xavier de Maistres' 1794 novel “Voyage Around My Room“ (*Voyage autour de ma chambre*) served as one of his starting points. In it, the author not only describes the measurements of his home according to longitude and latitude but he also dresses himself in travelling clothes every morning in order to begin an expedition of discovery with his eyes. For his part in “Things“, Rivers examines everyday objects and travel souvenirs, collected fragments of images, film and sound, his bed, his books and also observed through a window pane a squirrel playing in the garden. The chapter “Spring“ visible in the pages from the open copy of the novel “Fable“ (1971) by the French writer Robert Pinget, from which the exhibition title also derives, takes the view even deeper into a fictional narrative level: The story is told of someone who has returned home, with a varying identity, at a mythic time in an apocalyptic place that plays off picture material in the imagination and merges with everyday scenes. “Fable“ can be understood both as an allusion to the epic didactic genre of the animal fable as well as to the plot of the story.

In the second film “Slow Action“ (2011), the viewer again sets off on a 45-minute long journey. But he is abducted by the 16mm camera, this time to four of the most remote places on earth, hermetically sealed by water: the barren volcanic island “Eleven“ (Lanzarote), the sinking Polynesian archipelago “Hiva. The Society Islands“ (Tuvalu), the now abandoned rocky Japanese island of “Kanzennashima“ (Gunkanjima) that once flourished through coal mining, and the fictional island of “Somerset“ which still remains to be discovered. In a compilation of documentary, ethnographic study and fiction, the film explores the question: What will the world look like in hundreds or even thousands of years after the level of the sea has risen, new islands emerge, others sink and form their own populations? Narrators read from logbook entries and provide accounts of eco-systems and unknown species based on text fragments by the Cologne-based American science fiction writer Mark von Schlegell.

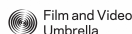
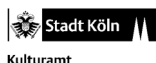
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On his camera voyages in “Slow Action“ and “Things“, Ben Rivers not only explores interlocking living environments but also always the act of filmmaking itself. He offers imaginary images containing the spirit of discovery, experimentation and research, the substance of which the viewer can take as the truth or not. His interest in fantastic literature, science fiction and travel reports that had their start in the late 18th century is reflected in the filmic interleaving of real and fictional spaces of perception.

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Gefördert durch



„Things“ was co-commissioned by „Stay Where You Are“, curated and produced by Steven Bode of Film and Video Umbrella and Gareth Evans. Supported by Jerwood Charitable Foundation. Film and Video Umbrella is supported by Arts Council England.

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Events to the exhibition:

06.09.2014

Ben Rivers, artist talk (engl.)

and introduction to the film series „Fables of the Visible“ with films by

João Maria Gusmão and Pedro Paiva

Cassowary, 2010, 4'37

Film on a Skeleton, 2004-2006, 0'30

Donkey, 2011, 2'

Dream of a ray fish, 2011, 2'48

Turtle, 2011, 2'40

Cowfish, 2011, 2'25

Proboscis, 2013, 2'55

The Soup, 2009, 3'35

Those animals that, at a distance, resemble flies, 2012, 2'05

Darwin's Apple, Newton's Monkey, 2012, 1'

Motorcycle, bike and human dots, 2014, 2'18

18.09.2014

Fables of the Visible (At Dawn)

Artavazd Peleshian, Obitateli, 1970, 8'45

Jaki Irvine, Swimmers & Seagulls, 2003, 6'

Bea McMahon, Film of Octopuses, 2013, 3'41

Georges Rey, La vache qui rumine, 1969, 3'

Margaret Salmon, Gibraltar, 2013, 17'40

29.09.2014

Ben Rivers - The Way of Things, Vortrag (engl.). **Steven Bode**, Film and Video Umbrella, London, in conversation with Regina Barunke

02.10.2014

Fables of the Visible (At Noon)

Serge Gregory, When Herons Dream, 2009, 10'34

Paul Bush, The Cow's Drama, 1983, 38'

Joseph Cornell, Carousel. Animal Opera, 1938, 6'10

16.10.2014

Fables of the Visible (At Dusk)

Nancy Graves, Aves: Magnificent Frigate Bird, Great Flamingo, 1973, 23'25

Ben Rivers, Dove Coup, 2007, 2'30

George Kuchar, The Mongrelloid, 1978, 8'48

Rebecca Meyers, night side, 2008, 4'39

Bethan Huws, Zone, 2013, 10'31 (u.V.)

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30.10.2014

Fables of the Visible (At Night)

Kenneth Macpherson, Monkey's Moon, 1929, 6'28

Pola Chapelle, How to Draw a Cat, 1973, 3'

Joyce Wieland, Rat Life and Diet in North America, 1968, 16'18

Jim Trainor, The Bats, 1999, 8'06

Jean Painlevé, Le Vampire, 1939-1945, 9'

Press contact:

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