

ARTEFACT, Leuven.

ARTEFACT (Pleisto Scene)

Geert Mul (2014)

Dome 800 x 380 cm. Transparant printed foil and LED light.

Artefact is the annual arts festival of Leuven arts centre STUK. This years theme was: The Prehistory of the Image. Geert Mul made an special installation for the Artefact exhibition. From the inside the installation is illuminated with LED lights that change color permanently, making images appear and transform depending on the color.

I regard the prehistoric image a form of visual communication that is still present in the contemporary use of the image. Actually 'prehistoric image' is a pleonasm. The image is pre-historic by default: it does not need a historic (= linear) concept of time, like writing, to transfer information.

In the installation 'Pleisto Scene Artefact', I wanted to investigate the contemporary quality of the prehistoric image and the use figurative imagery as a magical depiction of man and nature. The figurative image introduces cultural and self reflection. By copying 'the real' the figurative image creates an artificial real. By comparing the two realities we are able to reflect on 'the real'. The image of a mountain does not only refers to a mountain, it refers mainly to the perception of that mountain, it refers to how culture allows us to perceive a mountain. Therefore visualisations of mountains are cultural specific by definition. The mountains themselves are neither cultural specific nor 'universal' as they simply defy the category; they are nonexistent without culture. This line of thinking does not devaluate the image – on the contrary, it confirms the function of the image as an instrument for basal reflection.

Animals that recognise themselves in a mirror, have a self-consciousness. In Pleisto Scene Artefact, I use the image of a person's shadow in combination with an image of the shadow of a tree. It is the most basal depiction of consciousness – a reflection and a separation of the 'I' and of Nature. This image in this work is created by the most basal medium: light. It depicts the shadow – even more minimal, being the absence of light. Making use of light in this work is a form of magic. Changing the colour of the light's makes images appear and disappear. The medium is so basic that it beholds a complete mystery for most people, it is long forgotten...

Today's visual language compared to the pre-historic image, is layered and cultivated, but the properties of the prehistoric image are still up-to-date. The image, by opening the world up for reflection, still constructs and mediates consciousness. The image constructs, recognises and articulates the different realities that exist next to one another: divine, spiritual, humanistic, virtual and augmented.

Geert Mul Feb.2014.

Kunsten centrum STUK Leuven.

Frans van Viegen.

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