

Galerie Max Mayer

Worringer Straße 64
40211 Düsseldorf

Henning Fehr und Philipp Rühr

Leisure Time Future: The Rattlesnake

January 8 – February 6, 2016

It was a night towards the end of the 1930s, in a remote forest outside of Paris, at the foot of an old tree split by lightning where a group of intellectuals devoted themselves in cultic rituals and orgies to conjuring a society without leaders and hierarchies as well as overcoming the alienating dictates of politics, religion and economics. They were Acéphale: a secret society whose members – Walther Benjamin, Colette Peignot, Jacques Lacan and their founder Georges Bataille, among others – would exert a sustained influence on the humanities for the rest of their century. That the direct effects of their actions meagrely failed to meet their aims and that most of the group's protagonists looked back at that period with consistent disillusionment is, much like the glorified and often exaggerated reception of this two year endeavour (1936-1938), all history by now.

But even to this day, people still come together, sometimes in secrecy, sometimes in public, in forests, in deserted industrial ruins, on beaches and in deserts, in order to collectively try out new forms of community with the conscious intent of influencing the larger societies around them through their actions.

In the last episode of their *Polyrhythm Technoir* trilogy, Danji Buck-Moore, Henning Fehr and Philipp Rühr follow the traces and agents of the newer variants of just such scenes, which have been growing since the eighties around a collective interest in techno. The narration is carried out by the candid, unscripted remarks of the protagonists. They receive copious space to provide their own descriptions of the variety of heterogeneous positions, experiences and concepts which – and this is what unifies them – are reflected in their broader social practices and the implications of these practices. Meanwhile, the authors consistently refrain from offering any restrictive contextualisations. The filmmakers thus manage to provide a close approximation of the real conditions of production within this heterogeneous scene, in opposition to much of the existing documentation surrounding the culture-industrial success of this particular formation.

Through their lengthy shots, occasionally disconnected sequencing of images and sounds, as well as montages of club and festival scenes with designed urban and natural spaces, the artists manage to create a precise focus; the world which we are confronted with is always a predetermined one but also a world yet to be determined, both materially and immaterially, and as such, it always carries the potential of utopias within it. The film's

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depictions of works of Land Art are emblematic of this. They function both as connective elements within the dramaturgy but also as works on the boundary of supposedly binary oppositions – nature and culture for example – both dissolving these boundaries and operating as hinges between them.

This focus is also carried over into the exhibition's installation. Canvases painted with images of snow machines in use at an artificial winter paradise also function as acoustic panels. They not only improve the audio quality in the installation by absorbing reflected sound but also constitute a frame for the otherwise open arrangement of the installation and thus operate in distinction to traditional cinema architecture. Snow machines, both in terms of the technology itself and its usage, are on one level symbolic for the mechanical construction of our landscape and surroundings and, on another, for the closely related construction of societies which are brought about and kept alive by the specific forms of tourisms attached to these machines.

By presenting this film in the framework of their second solo exhibition at Galerie Max Mayer, Henning Fehr and Philipp Rühr meander towards the boundaries between different and only occasionally overlapping systems, much like a passage read from off screen in the film. With this, they perform both the production and distribution of a certain kind of knowledge, which has always been the necessary prerequisite for transformative processes.

Roy Huschenbeth