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Back to the dark: David Claerbout about a future without light

In his video works, he relies on slowness and calm: the Belgian artist David Claerbout presented his work and a vision of the future at the Leipzig HGB. With the end of analogue photography, a medium of assurance and trust disappears, he says. Is a new darkness gathering?



Loss of Light: David Claerbout on Thursday in the Leipzig HBG. Source: André Kempner

Leipzig. It takes time for his work. Pretty much time. Covering 1,000 years, David Claerbout's video "Olympia" simulates the disintegration of the Berlin Olympic Stadium, showing the gradual overgrowth of the Albert Speer building in real time. He scanned every single stone and put it together in the computer. Even the current weather flows into the presentation. Duration: 2016-3016. An allusion to the "thousand-year Reich" of the National Socialists. On the other hand, even John Cage's piece in Halberstadt Cathedral, designed for 639 years "Organ2 / ASLSP" of clear duration. We will not be able to verify whether future generations will continue this work, which is what makes the appeal of approaches that combine artistic seriousness and a satirical game with human hubris. Claerbout speaks of a tension between utopian and lived time.

The slow in the fast, the right in the wrong

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The Belgian born in 1969, who is celebrated internationally as a master of deceleration and boredom, presented his work at the Academy of Visual Arts on Thursday at the invitation of Heidi Specker and Clemens von Wedemeyer . On the slow in the fast, he restarts the questions of the right life in the fake, knowing that the subversion has long been part, if not the pioneer of what it intends to infiltrate.

If time is money, then this art is expensive because it robs a resource that, like Clearboudt, refers to Jonathan Crary's book "24/7. Sleepless in late capitalism "implies, to be completely confiscated. By contrast , Claerbout , who has discovered photography and film through painting and lithography, on the other hand, expands time, seems to stop it, so that the super-slow-motion confetti chips in his work "The Confetti Piece" seem to be in the air. The subject of the two-channel video projection is a scene that takes place at a local election party in the US could play. Thousands of snippets we drop petals from the sky as the guests begin to clap. For 18 minutes. There is no sound to it. No distraction. You have to endure that. Boredom, says the artist, is certainly part of the concept. For three years he worked on the "Confetti Piece", other projects would also employ him for 16 years.

Loss of light, loss of confidence

David Claerbout has troubling theses, which he brings in his presentation on the denominator "dark optics". In a very simplified way, he means that photography has done its job as a means of ensuring the emergence of digital photography. Analogue photography was a medium of light, of hope. Now, algorithms would produce something that looks like a picture. In addition, there is the looming loss of the lens. "Imagine you are blind," he says. "How do we find our way back to the things that are no longer there?"

One is in the middle of a process in which a system of truths that has been cultivated for around 160 years is disappearing, says Clarboudt. "We do not feel it. What we feel is panic, uncertainty. "It has everything to do with the loss of trust. Claerbout's vision of the future is bleak in the truest sense of the word, because she no longer needs light. The digital image of the world and its inhabitants no longer relied on analogy and recording, but on concept, conversation and consensus. What that means shows the current state of politics. "Its hard. Politicians work 99 percent of their image. "

And what is Claerbout planning ? "One of my next work will be an explosion. I'm going to get my computer up. "