

Press release

Thomas Baldischwyler

Star Pit Gate

Mediapark

July 16 – August 20, 2022

Opening Friday July 15, 6–9 pm, at Mountains RLP

Mountains is pleased to present a storefront staged by Thomas Baldischwyler.

Baldischwyler is a German artist who, after various stays abroad, lives again in the city where he also studied: Hamburg. His artistic approach is developed through field research, and his practice lives and is determined by the context in which it takes place. Collage, painting and installation are all techniques that the artist uses to playfully create connections of meaning between elements separated in time and space. In most cases, this field research is based on interviews.

During a conversation that took place in the summer of 2021 with Mountain's co-operator Markus Summerer about the Cologne graphic designer Bianca Strauch and her work in the 1990s, Summerer's own Rhineland past increasingly became a defining theme. In 1996, Summerer was part of the short film "Die gespielte Kunstkritik (Tomorrow is another day)" which was recorded on VHS tape by the video collective N-TV in one of the shells of the Cologne building project "Mediapark".

Here Baldischwyler's interest also switched from the main subject (Rikrit Tiravanija had received the art prize of a Cologne insurance company and his associated residency at the Kunstverein was critically commented on) to the then rather randomly chosen setting of the recordings (Cologne's Mediapark was one of the white post-reunification elephants. A misinvestment clearly emerging in the shadow of Berlin's new magnetism in the end of the century).

At the beginning of 2022, when Baldischwyler was invited by the Cologne project space Mauer to exhibit not far from the Mediapark, in the former home of the post-war architect Hans Schilling (known as the "Trümmerbaumeister"), it seemed obvious to make use of the research he had already done. However, Baldischwyler's temporary enthusiasm for the American director and special effects supervisor Douglas Trumbull superseded the plans and the installation, titled "Astrolabium", became a meditation on post-Fordist living capsules on a path to nowhere.

During the construction breaks, he walked the few metres towards Mediapark and photographed details of Otto Piene's "Star Pit" fountain, which still stands functionless in the centre of the sad ensemble. The absence of water and lights reinforced the citadel look of the winding steps and undulations. When he was back in Hamburg, Baldischwyler sifted through the footage and transformed the pit into a gate - In reference to the "Stargate" sequence from Stanley Kubrick's "2001 - A Space Odyssey" filmed by Trumbull using an analogue trick technique he developed.

Two collaged objects are now on display in the Mountains window. They use this material and their format reflects an LED display that is also installed. On this display a digital low res travesty of the aforementioned Trumbull technique can be seen. In addition, the irritating double exposure of the invitation card is dissolved and a red time code indicates the end of the quasi-public intervention.

"Ich habe etwas Reales anzubieten; nicht das Schrumpfen der Welt in den Zellen der menschlichen Vorstellung, sondern die allseitige Expansion, das Katapultieren des Schauenden in den Raum, wo freier Atem ist. In diesem Himmel ist das Paradies auf Erden."

Otto Piene, *Wege zum Paradies*, 1961

Thomas Baldischwyler graduated with a diploma from HfbK Hamburg in 2004.

Upcoming and recent solo exhibitions by the artist include Kunstverein Lüneburg (fall 2022); Aarduork, Venice, IT (2022); Mauer, Cologne, DE (2022); Galerie Conradi, Hamburg, DE (2021); Una Vetrina, Rome, IT (2018); Diko Reisen / Galerie Nagel Draxler, Cologne, DE (2017).

Upcoming and recent group exhibitions include Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg, DE (fall 2022); Kunstverein am Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz, Berlin, DE (2021); Künstlerhaus, Wien, AT (2020); Jahn und Jahn, München, DE (2019); Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin, DE (2018); Villa Massimo, Rome, IT (2018).

Work by the artist is held in numerous public and private collections in Europe.

Thomas Baldischwyler is represented by Galerie Conradi, Hamburg.

For press images please contact the gallery at office@mountains.gallery or call +49-171-9013691

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