

RIVERINE ZONES CONNECTED

Video-Room Installation Project by Philipp Geist

In his video-room installation 'RIVERINE ZONES CONNECTED', multimedia artist Philipp Geist displays video recordings and video stills from national and international rivers. Using underwater video cameras Geist has filmed the world beneath the surface. It is an attempt to get in touch with our immediate reality; an artistic examination about the ubiquitous element of water. Geist manages to show a part of our reality that is usually hidden from us.

His installation shows urban streams, small brooks and vast rivers in equal proportion. The recordings are frequently raw in their look and feel. Videos are purposefully recorded at low resolution giving a grainy image. Colours range from monochrome to intense and bright. Blurring and over exposure are also employed. Without using the usual TV aesthetics, they allow the viewer a real but also confusing insight. The normal and known becomes a surreal landscape.

In his artistic work Geist visualises both planned and coincidental processes. He carefully chooses the place where he lets his camera dive into the water and with the help of a cable; he allows the camera to move in the rhythm of the water. Natural movements and human design processes are thus connected. At the same time, Geist's search for what is hidden beneath the surface becomes an investigation of the moving image.

Another element of the project are satellite images from Google earth. Geist has marked these images with red dots that denote where the camera went into the water, giving an almost direct location of his underwater imagery. The satellite images not only describe the rough locations of his filmed works, but also allow the viewer to gain an insight into the rivers' surroundings. His micro point of view gets extended into a macro point of view. On some occasions the camera emerges from under water and films from an unusual position half below and half above its surface, showing the riverbanks, buildings and bridges. It is through these much rarer pictures that the viewer gets a chance to make a direct connection between the satellite images and the video stills. More often than not, though, the connection between the marks on the satellite images, denoting Geist's filming, and the resulting visuals is left open to interpretation since his satellite and underwater imagery are consciously presented out of synch.

Geist compares the underwater worlds of various metropolises and places with one another: the clear water of one river is shown in contrast to a canal full of discarded objects such as tins, street signs or even bicycles. With the approach of a searcher, he traces living creatures and floral worlds on the grounds of our waters with his underwater video camera. Aspects of human behaviour are exposed, relative to the precious resource of water in different regions of the world.

Another aspect of the installation is the idea of rivers as a connecting network between countries juxtaposed against rivers as boundaries. The river, acting as a border between two countries (as a separating force) counter-balances a view of another time where (in a different part of its course) the river acted as a connection between two cities. The connecting moment of a seemingly neutral medium like water, which can be highly political at times, is brought up as an issue through a

collage. Geist connects all satellite imagery of the rivers he filmed until the creation of the collage and creates an imagined international network of rivers.

In his video-room installation, Philipp Geist presents the rivers as video projection or on video monitors. He supplements these with meter long floating video stills, strung together or as a surface filled up with imagery. Depending on the spatial and technical conditions in place, the underwater film sequences can be presented on one or more monitors or on one or more video projectors. The exhibition space will influence the artist's decision about whether or not to display video stills, and number of stills and quantity within the space.

Geist's 'RIVERINE ZONES CONNECTED' is a work in progress, which continues to examine rivers worldwide in regards to the forgotten, displaced or simply unknown. Portraying the vital element of water through all its facets: Ethnological, political, religious, and above all environmental aspects will be drawn on depending on the rivers peculiarity.

Topics like scarcity of water, melting glaciers, rivers running dry and transforming into salt desserts, will be considered within this project in the future. The dramatic situation of water scarcity will be hinted at through the depiction of dried out riverbeds. Further more symposia are planned to run alongside the different installations of the exhibition, dealing with various topics, each concerned with water and completed with ecological information.

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[Http://riverine.videogeist.de](http://riverine.videogeist.de)

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