

BROT FABRIK

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Courtesy Heike Strelow

Mathias Kessler - Natural Fictions

May 28th to July 04th 2010

Opening: May 28th 2010 at 08.00 pm
The artist is present!

For the first time in Europe, Mathias Kessler presents his living sculpture "Nowhere to Be Found," a human skull suspended in a glass aquarium, filled with salt water in which the artist attached living corals. Over the course of several years, the skull will grow and transform into a coral reef.

Now living in New York, Austrian artist Mathias Kessler is known for his spectacular projects, which often involve elaborate expeditions and extreme physical experiences. In a unique approach to "straight photography," the artist chooses for his subjects the most isolated and secluded places in the world: the Costa Careyes Islands on the Pacific coast of Mexico or the icebergs in Ilulissat on the coast of Greenland. On his latest cave expedition to the Guyana Highlands with the explorer Charles Brewer (2009), he used a very powerful magnesium strobe to illuminate his scenes, a technique which references the early pioneers of photography.

All these remote places are far away from light smog and air pollution, and total darkness is only interrupted by the light from the stars and the moon. Kessler uses the night to achieve a virtually unimpeded clear view. Under such conditions, the perfect landscape photograph that Ansel Adams promoted can be achieved. But this idea is deceptive. Only the artificial intervention, using an alternative source of light, makes the subject visible. Thus, the idea of the perfect landscape photograph is transformed into a *reductio ad absurdum*. The illuminated islands or icebergs turn into stages, into grandiose settings without actors. The artist deals with our relations, with our impact on nature, and the question of how nature and landscape can be consumed and cultivated. He adds to art history not just another exciting night-piece, but he also critically questions the romanticized pursuit of adventure tourism and "authentic" nature by Western consumer society.

Kurator: Dr. Dieter Buchhart, Wien

Nowhere to Be Found - Idee und Konzept: Mathias Kessler und Andreas Kattner;

Film Idea: Mathias Kessler; **Kamera:** Andreas Fitzner, Peter Tooke; **Edit:** Peter Tooke

Rotating Iceberg - Video: Mathias Kessler; **Edit:** Peter Tooke

Fotografische Zusammenarbeit in Venezuela: Andreas Fitzner und Thierry

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