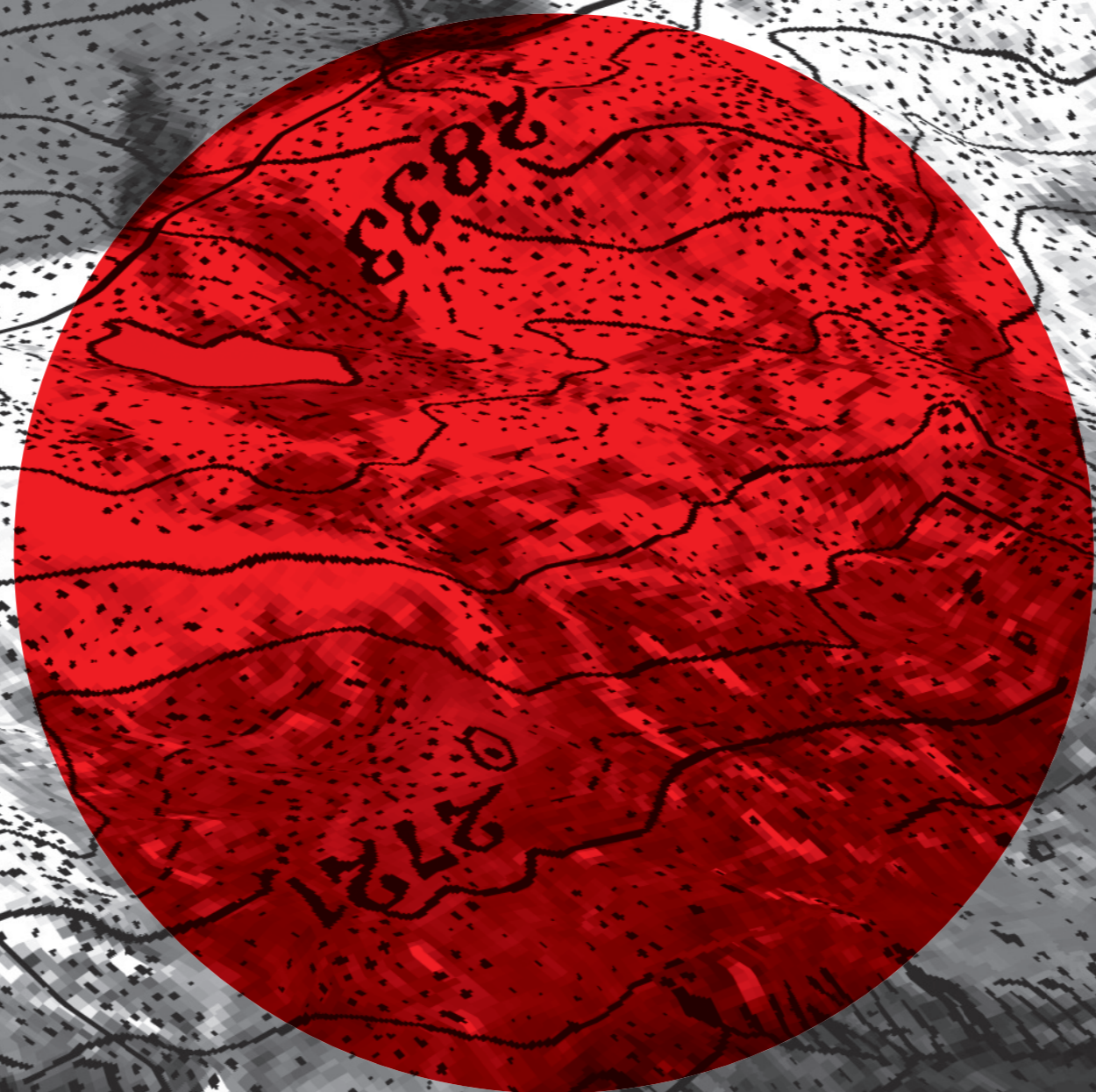




Linnæus

Aldi





Alpi is a research project in the form of a film. Sound and image are treated as equal components of a cinematic code in order to unfold an anthropological space of the Alps. In contrast to a scientific experiment, which might use the image as evidence of a thesis, Alpi starts the other way around: the project displays an excess of images of the Alps to match the tricky set of visual imperatives occupying our minds when imagining the massif. Alpi moves between the image-representation of an Alpine landscape and, at the same time, the urgent question of how visual representation has already become a codification of the image itself.

Filmed in forty different locations in the Alps over seven years, a process generating forty hours of footage, all sequences in Alpi are scenes of everyday life: from the Alpine farmer chained to the concept of a so-called “traditional life” in the Italian Alps, to the Arab business man who surveys a staged Alpine ski-landscape from the window of a shopping mall in Dubai; from a police academy hidden in an Alpine mountain, to the snowy landscape of Davos masking the World Economic Forum. The Alps are charged with a set of image grammars, instituted by Western concepts of image production and presentation. For example, the German “Heimatfilm” served as an ideological tool to institute an uncanny desire for the claim of territory. Commercials, movies, travelogues, and the advertisement industry continually codify an image of the Alps through today. One sequence in Alpi depicts an Indian film production crew. Here the image of the Alps might serve to represent Western economic wealth, or function as a stand-in for an Indian massif such as a politically troubled region like Kashmir. The image of the Alps is charged with a chain of pre-figured meanings ranging between the “Heimatfilm” and “the exotic”, and complicates the notion of modernity towards a Modernity-at-Large (Arjun Appadurai).

As is true for any project and for Alpi in particular, making the images public introduces another anthropological space – the space of exhibiting. In this case it connects to one of the project’s points of departure, the work “La vita, La Natura e La morte” (“The Life, The Nature, and The Death”, 1896–99) by the Italian painter Giovanni Segantini. The monumental Alpine triptych is one of the first attempts to conceptualize visually forms of social-human existence in the Alps. For the 1900 World Exhibition in Paris, plans for the large-scale panoramic installation included surround sound, music, real streams of water, grass, and animals. This live-cinematic event was never fully realised. The more we utilise the excess of images, the more we might be able to des-imagine the Alps. Des-imagination is not intended as a form of psychological repression, rather it is a confrontation with the impossibility of defining a single identity or meaning of the image of the Alps. Revealing the excess, in the form of an exhibition, a screening, or a publication, sets up a condition in which to unfold the silence between sounds as well as the blindness between images.

The editing of the sequences follows the principles of montage that articulate both the place of the filmmaker and of the audience searching for an inner voice to express the lack of the singular image. The labour of looking is shared between the project-makers and the project-viewers. This democratisation of the means of production aims not to teach the viewer from a position of knowing, but from a confrontation with an excess of which we are not quite sure how to handle. A critique of representation not only remains in an image taking apparatus or institution, but addresses us – how we, both as producers and perceivers, co-produce an imperative aspect of the image of the Alps.

Alpi can be taken as a case study that unpacks the over-exposed image of a place such as the Alps. Without removing sounds and images, it proposes withdrawing from its different visual compulsions through a confrontation with the excess machinery. It might grant the power to lay bare the geo-politics imbedded in an image, and how such a place as the Alps is imprisoned by the imagery of power motives. Here, the exhibiting of the excess of images in particular may help us to des-imagine the visual codifications of the Alps, and, in so doing, it re-politicises both the image and our imagination. The real image of the Alps takes place in the moment of des-imagining it.

– Doreen Mende

Doreen Mende works on the excess in exhibiting and the power of display. Current projects include the book *MONTRAGE* in cooperation with Filipa César, consultancies for UNESCO Office Ramallah/Palestine, an exhibition with KP Brehmer for CAAC in Sevilla and The AND: Place of Action for Cinema Clash Continuum at Rietveld Academy, Amsterdam. She is also editing a book on *Inhibition as a Form of Exposure* (specter books, 2012), related to her PhD research at Goldsmiths, University of London. Since Fall 2010, she is Theory Tutor at the Dutch Art Institute.

Going to the Alps? Thinking of trekking outdoors? Dreaming of skiing in Switzerland? Watch Armin Linke’s film first. Beware. You will always be inside, deep inside laboratories, factories, ski resorts, or Swiss bunkers hidden in the mountains. Nature? Who speaks of nature and wilderness? Yes, there is a farmer, a dour and sun-tanned farmer in the middle of a valley, but he has been stranded there by his family and thinks that being alone outdoors is nothing but punishment. For him, wilderness stinks. Yes, for sure, you will see the Alps but as they have been reconstructed inside a shopping mall in Dubai – a theme park for skiers who have just dismounted from their camels – as a painting inside an art gallery, or as a “virtual tour” inside the train that leads Japanese tourists to the Jungfrauojoch – and when they alight eventually on the platform they see nothing but deep fog! Never outside, that’s the whole point. No, I am mistaken, there is a glacier visible at some point in the bright midday sun, but this Pitztaler glacier is being carefully covered so that it too remains inside a protected artificial skin to prevent it from melting too fast... And there is also the World Economic Forum in Davos, this meeting of heads of state and pundits, but here too you see nothing but the barbed wires that keep them insulated from the Alps! You will participate in a demonstration in the Val di Susa, but it too is fully staged just as much as the toy trains or the micro-storms of a meteorological scale model in Lausanne, or a police academy inside a bunker.

Armin Linke has succeeded in doing with film what he has been doing for years with photography: situate the envelopes inside which our existence unfolds. He is to the visual arts what Peter Sloterdijk is to philosophy: a spherologist. Artists as well as social scientists are often divided between those who show the outside – let’s say nature – and those who probe the inside – let’s say society or the depth of our souls. Except this is never the choice we make: humans are inserted into artificial spheres of existence that provide them simultaneously with an inside and an outside. Spheres. Envelopes. Artificial skins. Very difficult to express, to stage, to deploy, to film, because they fit neither inside nor out. Hence the radical move so beautifully displayed in this work of art: capture the absorption of the outside by the inside so that the envelopes may be made visible from within. As if we could see through them. But humans are no more able to live “outside” than cosmonauts out of their space station. What they do is more interesting: they rehearse what they would do outside if ever they manage to reach it. One day. Finally outdoors. Like the sheep at the very end of the film. Inside what? A long cultural tradition of transhumance over an Austrian glacier.

What is most extraordinary is that Alpi manages to show this introverted existence, those artificial sites, those highly technical and scientific encounters, those mines and bunkers and factories, those cultural Umwelt, without either conniving with them or criticizing them. This is the most uncritical film ever made about the utter artificiality of the modern world. But “uncritical” has to be taken just as positively as “artificial.” Why? Because no critique could see further and higher and more globally than the poor souls trapped inside their bunkers. This work totally transforms what is meant by “tunnel vision.” Yes, Linke has tunnel vision. No irony is present in this work that is, at the same time, so funny and generous. Let’s hurry to meet him where he travels with his camera. And don’t forget to rent the right sort of gear.

– Bruno Latour

Bruno Latour is a philosopher and anthropologist working in Paris. His many books on science and culture include *Laboratory Life*, *Science in Action*, *We have never been modern*, *Pandora’s Box: Essays in the Reality of Science Studies*, *Politics of Nature*. He was curator of the ZKM exhibits *ICONOCLESIS: Beyond the Image Wars in Science, Religion, and Art* and *Making Things Public: Atmospheres of Democracy*. He is now Professor and vice-president for research at Sciences Po Paris.

Jahrespartner:



STADT DORNBIERN



Projektpartner:



Einladung

Das vai Vorarlberger Architektur Institut lädt Sie und Ihre Freunde zur Ausstellungseröffnung am Freitag, 19. Juli 2013, 19 Uhr ein.

Zur Ausstellung sprechen Armin Linke und Verena Konrad.

Zentrum der Ausstellung ist der gleichnamige Film „Alpi“. Armin Linke verdichtet in diesem Film die Ergebnisse einer siebenjährigen Recherche über das aktuelle Bild der Alpen als europäisches Klischee wie auch als komplexer Lebensraum. Kulturelle, soziale, wirtschaftliche, landschaftliche und klimatische Veränderungen, für die die Alpenregion modellhaft steht, werden ebenso diskutiert wie die Bedingungen für architektonische und raumplanerische Gestaltung im alpinen Raum.

Begleitprogramm

Konzert mit Renato Rinaldi und Giuseppe Ielasi am 5. Oktober 2013 im Rahmen der Langen Nacht der Museen

Architekturgespräche Filmgespräche Führungen auf Anfrage

Mehr Informationen unter [www.v-a-i.at](http://www.v-a-i.at)

Armin Linke Alpi 20. Juli bis 5. Oktober 2013

Vorarlberger Architektur Institut Marktstraße 33 6850 Dornbirn

Dienstag – Freitag 14 – 17 Uhr Donnerstag bis 20 Uhr Samstag 11 – 17 Uhr und nach Vereinbarung

Sonntag, Montag und an Feiertagen geschlossen

Eintritt frei [www.v-a-i.at](http://www.v-a-i.at)

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**Alpin Vision & Annäherung & Ausstellung**