

MEASURE

© Kurt Hentschläger, 2014

Panoramic audiovisual installation
17.29 minute loop

The trance-like sequences of MEASURE move freely between natural and artificial forms, such as a shadow growing, clouds passing, grids spreading.

Time is simultaneously compressed and expanded to confuse the notion of motion altogether. Time rushes forward and comes to rest, much the same way as it does in the music of Indian ragas, a musical tradition historically associated with different times of the day and the changing seasons.

The work feels organic and at once artificial. Our perceptions of hues, colors, and luminescence shift almost imperceptibly, taking the place of a logical narrative or a musical structure consisting of beats and bars.

As nature filtered through digital communication channels becomes the new norm, the boundaries start to blur between mediated and physical experience. The degree of technical sophistication and the super-high resolution made possible by contemporary media production methods are accelerating the dominance of mediated reality. People now routinely perceive the “real world” through media filter.

MEASURE reflects on concepts of nature in the 21st century. It calls attention to the fact that we are at a turning point in cultural history, as mediated representations of the real world seem increasingly to outnumber direct perceptions.

Hentschläger’s work probes the question whether “nature” and the concept of the “original” can still culturally exist in this new situation. What exactly is real, in the sense of the pure and original, and is to be understood as constructed and artificial? The boundary has shifted. Are these dichotomies still meaningful when the real and the artificial have become so inextricably interwoven?

In MEASURE, a video work shot in the Vallée de Joux in the Jura Mountains of Switzerland, Hentschläger captures the essence of his experience of the pristine, high-altitude fields and forests in the valley. Although only a one-hour drive from Geneva, this area still feels remote and is mostly untouched by civilization.

In his studio, processing the ultra high resolution video and sound footage collected in the valley, Hentschläger pushes the artificiality inherent in media representation by adding synthesized audio-visual materials and effects, which are super-imposed in various layers, rendering a hybrid, and highly stylized impression.

MEASURE at first glance appears more grounded than earlier works, more deliberate in its realism. Real nature however has irresistibly been transformed by the exigencies of human design.