

PRESS RELEASE

Véréna Paravel & Lucien Castaing-Taylor *Ah humanity!*

24 March – 24 May 2020

Temporarily closed but still busy with exciting contents

Due to the current situation, caused by COVID-19, the Kunsthau Hamburg will remain closed. Accordingly, the exhibition *Ah humanity!* cannot be opened.

But still: let's stay in contact!

We are currently working on digital formats to provide insights into the exhibition and the work of the artists Véréna Paravel and Lucien Castaing-Taylor. We will announce the continuation of our program on all digital platforms.

Press events

Despite the current situation, we would like to give journalists access to the exhibition *Ah humanity!* For this purpose, you can register for individual appointments under presse@kunsthauhamburg.de

Digital Sneak Peak

Monday, 23 March 2020, 7 pm

Live on Instagram: @kunsthauhamburg

In their experimental works Véréna Paravel and Lucien Castaing-Taylor bridge the classical film genre, their interest in anthropological themes and the visual arts. At the centre of their attention is the human being from complex perspectives, with all given social and psychological motivations, as a part of a community, along with the consequences of human activity on our planet.

The exhibition *Ah humanity!* brings together films that deal with non-conformism and the absurdity of human behaviour. *Somniloquies*, 2017 delves into the inner world of dreams. Historical recordings from the 1960s accompany the images. They are based on audio material of the American songwriter Dion McGregor who, for seven years, was recorded in his sleep by his New Yorker flatmate. During his dream phases he had extensively expressed his absurd fantasies. While the camera slowly moves over nude bodies, the subconsciousness with all its inconsistencies breaks through and speaks. Set as a double projection, *Commensal*, 2017 is dedicated to the preposterous motif of cannibalistic desire. The work portrays Issei Sagawa who, in the summer of 1981, had murdered a fellow student in Paris and devoured parts of her body. The filmmakers deliberately evade the stigmatization of the perpetrator; they instead attempt to find, in striking close-ups and found footage deriving from Sagawa's childhood, the biographical reasons and motives that led to this crime. The eponymous film *Ah humanity!*, 2015 reflects the interplay between humans, nature and machines. The work was shot with a smartphone through a

handheld telescope after the nuclear disaster in Fukushima. Based on this technique, the images evoke an abstract, apocalyptic vision on the inherent vulnerability of humanity.

In a present in which only the countless catastrophes have plainly revealed the severe implications caused by the economization of our living environment, Paravel/Castaing-Taylor's radical film language calls upon us to pause, to think, rethink and to act.

Curated by Anna Nowak

Véréna Paravel and Lucien Castaing-Taylor have been collaborating at the Sensory Ethnography Lab of Harvard University since 2006. Their works are found in many museum collections, among others at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, and the British Museum, London. They were exhibited a.o. at the documenta 14, 2017, the Biennale di Venezia, 2010 and 2017, the Tate Gallery, the Centre Georges-Pompidou, the Whitney Museum of American Art as well as the Shanghai Biennale, 2014 and the Aichi Triennale, 2017.

Véréna Paravel is an anthropologist, filmmaker and photographer. She studied with Bruno Latour at the École Nationale Supérieure des Mines in Paris and obtained her doctorate at the University of Toulouse. In 2004 she taught at the Columbia University, New York before moving on to lecture at Harvard University.

Lucien Castaing-Taylor is anthropologist and filmmaker. He studied at the University of Southern California under Timothy Asch (1932-1994) and received his doctorate at the University of California, Berkeley. In 2003 he accepted a call to work as a professor at Harvard University, where he initiated the Sensory Ethnography Lab and which he has directed since.

Accompanying program

Taking into account the COVID-19 development, we inform you if the following accompanying events take place, have to be postponed or cancelled:

Artists' conversation

Friday, 8 May 2020, 7 pm

Véréna Paravel, Lucien Castaing-Taylor & Anja Dreschke (Moderation)

In cooperation with Warburg-Haus, Hamburg:

Flexibles Flimmern: Screening of the film *Leviathan*, 2012 at the Warburg-Haus

Monday/Tuesday, 18/19 Mai 2020, Doors open 7 pm, film starts at 8 pm

Further Information about reservation shortly on: www.kunsthausehamburg.de

Exhibition tour & panel discussion at the Warburg-Haus: Ethnographic techniques between film and art. Institutional perspectives

Panel discussion with, among others, Anselm Franke (Head of Visual Arts and Film, HKW Haus der Kulturen der Welt Berlin), Anna Nowak (Kunsthause Hamburg, curator of the exhibition), Moderation: Leena Crasemann & Benjamin Fellmann (Warburg-Haus Hamburg)

Sponsor / cooperation partner:



WARBURG-HAUS

We will gladly provide you with press material upon request.

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