

BJÖRN DAHLEM
Der Wahrheitsraum (Palus Somni)

Opening: September 2, 2020, 7 p.m.
Exhibition duration: September 3 – October 17, 2020

Björn Dahlem's extensive installation titled "Wahrheitsraum (Palus Somni)" takes on the interpretation of the world by recourse to physical modeling and scientific imaging techniques and their claim to certainty. The "Truth Room" represents both utopia and dystopia, an unattainable image of desire, a room that is basically inaccessible. *Palus Somni*, the "Marsh of Sleep" refers to a level terrain cover by petrified lava on the moon not far from *Mare Tranquillitatis* where the Ranger 6 spacecraft landed in 1965 and the first shots of the lunar surface were taken. In this exhibition the "marsh of sleep" seems to be used as a metaphor for the paradox that added knowledge seems to increase rather than decrease ignorance. With increasingly powerful telescopes enabling us to explore the depths of outer space we now have access to images, as never before, and yet outer space remains unfathomable, even completely strange. The "Truth Room" is a space of constructive scientific uncertainties, that retains its ambiguity and tests other models of scientific representation, while its black door promises access to knowledge. It remains unclear whether it is an entrance or an exit.

Since the end of the 1990s Dahlem has been exploring how to translate scientific world images into imagery that are not exhausted in assimilating appropriations of standard images. His sculptures and installations address interstellar space and its galaxies, black holes, dark matter and star clouds, but also theories and models of cosmology, particle physics and quantum mechanics. He deliberately uses everyday materials, juxtaposing the scientific fiction of the world with a separate art-immanent reality that does not necessarily produce a homogenized reality. Wooden boards, neon tubes, found objects and everyday objects are turned into paradigmatic abstractions that are seen as a three-dimensional approximation to something that eludes anything tangible. The works by the artist are imperfect and faulty but at the same time show great precision. What we see here is not paradigmatic realism but only a vivid approximation in which science merges with philosophical reflections on how something that appears to be completely abstract from a human perspective can be rendered and made intelligible. Dahlem's aesthetic of supposed simplicity generates an accessibility that draws on the familiar. At the same time his installations create a counter-aesthetic to the general notion that all imperfection could be eliminated – also in art.

The structural complexity of his works reflects the intricate models and theories from which he derives his motives, while also leaving space for individual explorations of the 'cerebral waves', 'new celestial globes' and 'light columns' found in *Palus Somni*. In times in which the 'Flat Earth Theory' is finding an ever greater following again and conspiracy theories abound Dahlem links art and science to present science as something that is never entirely rational but as a field guided by unproven assumptions – in short, a field that thus produces new knowledge.

Vanessa Joan Müller, art historian and curator

Björn Dahlem (* 1974 in Munich, lives and works in Berlin) is professor of fine art at the Bauhaus University Weimar. He poses in his works the question of the connection between aesthetic imagery and scientific images of the world. He became internationally known for his expansive installations made of simple materials, which find their starting point in complex questions of scientific theories and models. Dahlem's works can be seen regularly in international exhibitions and are part of important art collections such as the New York Museum of Modern Art.

selection of solo exhibitions: *The Still Expanding Universe*, Kunstverein Wolfenbüttel, 2018. *Mare Lunaris*, Berlinische Galerie Berlin, 2015. *The End of it All*, Kunstverein Braunschweig, 2012. *Silencio*, Oldenburger Kunstverein, Oldenburg, 2012. *The theory of heaven I - The Milky Way*, KIT - Art in the Tunnel, Quadriennale

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2010, Düsseldorf, 2010. *Solaris, Utopia Planitia II*, Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin, 2004. UCLA Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, 2004.

selection of group exhibitions: Berta Fischer, Björn Dahlem, Naum Gabo - Into Space, Haus am Waldsee, Berlin, 2020. *Irony and Idealism*, Kunsthalle Münster, Münster, 2018. IRONY & IDEALISM, Gyeonggi Museum of Modern Art, Gyeonggi-do, South Korea, 2017. *The Universe and Art*, Artscience Museum, Singapore, 2017. *The Universe and Art*, Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan 2016. *Our Magic Hour - How Much Of The World Can We Know ?*, Yokohama Triennale 2011, *Yokohama, Japan, space. The art and a dream*, Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, 2011. *The Uncertainty of Objects and Ideas*, Hirshhorn Museum, Washington, 2006. Busan Biennale, Busan Museum of Modern Art, Busan, South Korea, 2006.

Exhibitions in the Krinzinger Gallery: *Der Wahrheitsraum, (Palus Somni)*, Krinzinger Gallery, 2020.