

H A M L E T

Pascal Sidler - *European Southern Observatory*

Opening: Sunday, October 27th 2019, 2-6pm

Exhibition: October 28th - December 1st 2019

Opening Hours: Saturdays, 1-4pm or by appointment

We are confronted with a multitude of images on a daily basis. Digital photography and distribution channels do not deprive the image of its value. However, the costs for the production and dissemination are lower in comparison to analog photography and printed matter. Whilst a printed publication used to be issued once in a blue moon for anniversaries or commemorating extraordinary projects by those who could afford it, images are nowadays provided to broad audiences directly and with bearable transfer efforts.

In *European Southern Observatory*, Pascal Sidler looks at the accumulation of imagery and its transfer into the archive with the view of a painter. In regards to a printed publication, every decision concerning the inclusion of an image raises questions of cost and effort. This is probably even more true in regards to painting. Non-physical or digital image archives however, are hardly constricted by limits. Once such an archive is established, the addition of images is a procedure which creates little cost and effort.

The European Southern Observatory, ESO for short, is a research facility for astronomy and astrophysics and operates several telescopes in Chile. 16 European nations cooperate with Chile in financing and operating the telescopes. Not only the general daily operations are influenced by different interests: It can be assumed, that political, scientific, economic and cultural conditions also influence the creation of a supposedly neutral image archive and the material within.

With his treatment of the archive of the ESO, comprised of more than 500 paintings, Pascal Sidler performs a detailed examination and translation of every single image. The dissemination of imagery by the ESO, at first glance barely deliberated, gains an absurd earnestness because every image is taken seriously, but in its sheer number can impossibly be taken seriously.

The elegance of the conceptual approach of the series becomes evident through the effect obtained by looking at the 451 works presented in the exhibition. Only by encountering the physical presence of the painted image, a feeling of being overwhelmed and discomfort develops, which appears not in the least when the images are viewed in the webbrowser.

Like the nausea caused by reading a book on the vibrating back seat of a car because the eyes must constantly refocus, *European Southern Observatory* challenges the senses and pushes them to their limits. Pascal Sidler accomplishes opening up a plurality of layers by a seemingly simple translation. These layers reach from the consideration and theory of images, archives and mnemonic techniques, technologies and approaches to the search for extraterrestrial life and the basics and conditions of intra-European cooperation.

- Clifford E. Bruckmann

Pascal Sidler (*1989 in Zurich)
lives and works in Zurich