

satellit\* solo show 09

**ROBERT BERGMANN & MAXIMILIAN SEEGER**

*what stories make worlds*

19. Oktober – 09. November

„Wherever. Whatever. Have a nice day.“

Keanu Reeves als Scott Favor in: *My private Idaho* (Gus van Sant, USA: 1991)

Footsteps and tumbleweed, wind howling through the landscape, silhouettes of dark wooden houses against the orange-red sky. The video work *Main.0099\_1(merrick butte.west and east mitten butte.cly butte.)* by Robert Bergmann and Maximilian Seegert deals with landscapes in Westerns and their narrative features. The depiction of the American desert landscape as hot, vast and empty is central to the USA's national myth. At the same time it acts as both a catalyst for the protagonist's action as well as a metaphor for the protagonist's inner world. The landscapes which appear natural at first turn out to be a montage of footage from different locations. For example, in various Western films, footage from the Monument Valley and the Tabernas Desert in Spain are used to create a landscape that seems coherent but is in fact stitched together. It is a construct both on an ideological level as well as on a practical one.

What cinematic devices are used to bridge huge distances with a short carriage ride? What does this process mean for the stories that are told and the ideology they convey - that of a male conquest of a vastness shown as empty and untouched? Bergmann and Seegert are using the Westerns landscapes as a case study, a way to interrogate medial constructions in general.

To create the video the two have used prefabricated 3D models, images from films and images produced digitally. In this way, they appropriate the process of montage used in old Westerns, where existing landscapes are assembled together to create a new, fictional one.

The video is composed in a way that emphasizes the protagonist's gaze and movement through space. The perspective shifts repeatedly as the distance between objects changes. Rocks oscillate in the background and a blackout simulates the blink of the cyclopean eye through which we watch the constructed landscape. The frame is moved, analogous to the movements of the fictional body whose perspective we see. It becomes clear that this fiction and the general understanding of reality are constructed mainly through the sense of sight.

In *Main.0099\_1(merrick butte.west and east mitten butte.cly butte.)* Bergmann and Seegert allow a digital illusion to erode. They strip the textures from their digitally constructed world. The animation is subverted. The underlying meshes that becomes visible in these moments reveal the function of the software used.

*Text: Leon Jankowiak (saasfee\*)*