

ARTFORUM

Monica Studer and Christoph van den Berg

GALERIE IM GLURI SUTER HUUS

Bifangstrasse 1

August 27–December 10

This venue, in the center of Wettingen, outside Zürich, radiates with the atmosphere of a picturesque Swiss farmstead—a visitor doesn't necessarily expect to find contemporary art here, and certainly not the kind that Monica Studer and Christoph van den Berg are known for.

Within a clever and finely tuned scenographic series spanning two floors are the interactive moving-image installations (*Wesen* [Beings] and *Forscher* [Explorer], both 2017) and the digital videos *Dark Matter – One Million Years Later*, 2017, and *Wind-Wasser-Wolken* (Wind-Water-Clouds), 2015/17, as well as supplementary smaller works, such as the “real-time” animation *Verlauf* (Gradient), 2017—generated frame by frame via an algorithm—and a series of ink-jet prints, “*Flackern I–III*” (Flare I–III) 2017.

The pieces, and the experimental arrangement of the exhibition, are captivating, humorous, and intelligent in their self-reflection. The observer enters the installation *Beings* as if for an initiation, bending to pass through a low door. One then stands in diffuse light in a room painted green, gazing at the digitally animated projection of a silhouetted image of an ancient forest. Birds chirp and trees grow by the second in the thicket. Scaffolding, which seems both strange and fitting, underscores the constructed and virtual elements of the staging. Using a control lever, one can follow a bird's call in the image until a magically luminous, abstract figure appears. The sounds of nature break off and a threatening electrical din becomes louder and louder, while the bright shape rapidly grows larger until it disappears and the game can start anew. In this way, Studer and van den Berg plumb the boundaries between chance and necessity, reality and fiction, powerlessness and authority.

Translated from German by Diana Reese.



Monica Studer and Christoph van den Berg, *Wesen (Beings)* (detail), 2017, HD 3-D video projection, color, sound, run time variable.

— Max Glauner

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