Projects 12 : Joan Fontcuberta, Pere Formiguera : The Museum of Modern Art, New York, June 18-August 9, 1988

Author
Fontcuberta, Joan, 1955-

Date
1988

Publisher
The Museum of Modern Art

Exhibition URL
www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/2149

The Museum of Modern Art’s exhibition history—from our founding in 1929 to the present—is available online. It includes exhibition catalogues, primary documents, installation views, and an index of participating artists.
projects: joan fontcuberta
pere formiguera

Micostrium Vulgaris. Not frightened by the presence of humans, a Micostrium plays with the Doctor's hand.
Alopex Stultus

Threschelonia Atis

 peter ameisenhaufen: a life in research

Peter Ameisenhaufen was born in Munich on May 5, 1895, as the first child of the explorer, big-game hunter, and safari guide Wilhelm Ameisenhaufen (b. 1860 in Dortmund, d. 1914 in Dar es Salaam) and his wife Julia (b. 1873 in Dublin, d. 1895 in Munich). Peter and his sister spent a happy childhood...in the care of their aunt... When he was ten years old, he traveled to his father in Africa for the first time. The African fauna clearly aroused a great wonderment in the young boy. Upon his return...he dragged everything into the house—dogs, cats, fish, birds, and other animals—his sister related to us.... When Aunt Maria asked him if he liked the animals... he replied succinctly: “Yes, from the outside and from the inside.”

At the age of eighteen Peter moved to Munich, where he began his brilliant university career... Professor Klaus Fischer, a colleague of Ameisenhaufen, gives us in his memoirs an eloquent account of these early years: “Peter Ameisenhaufen was the youngest assistant professor at the university. He gave lectures on zoology and scientific ethics. Despite his age, he had acquired an astonishing amount of knowledge.... I deeply regretted his dismissal.”

Regarding Ameisenhaufen’s dismissal from his university position... there still exists the letter sent by Dr. Walter Frank, the chancellor at that time... [it] includes the following passage: “We deeply regret that a scientist of your stature could commit the error of following a false path that is of little scientific value.”

Greatly bored by the conservatism of science in Germany and by the political developments of the time, Ameisenhaufen emigrated to the United States in 1933, one year after his dismissal. He was accompanied by his laboratory assistant, Hans von Kubert.... In 1932 an important person entered the professor’s life: Helen X., a young woman from Scotland.... From this period comes the greater part of the preserved documents, notes from the laboratory, personal keepsakes, letters, and seven chronologically unconnected volumes of the painstakingly kept journals.... Between 1933 and 1950 Peter Ameisenhaufen experienced his most intensely creative period. During this time he classified virtually every known species. He traveled in almost every country on earth, carried on an extensive correspondence, and, when not traveling, worked in the laboratory.... In early 1950 he was diagnosed as having leukemia.... He decided, as a result, to leave the United States and to go to live with Helen in the vicinity of Glasgow, where he spent the last five years of his life....

On August 7, 1955, Professor Peter Ameisenhaufen drove alone to the north of Scotland. Three days later his car was found on the coast, near a cliff. His body was never found.... Helen died in an automobile accident three years later. Her little house... was sealed by her family. Through a whim of fate, it has been opened to us.
biography: Joan Fontcuberta

Born Barcelona, Spain, February 24, 1955

Resides in Barcelona

Before his collaboration with Formiguera on Fauna, Fontcuberta completed a series of photographs titled Herbarium. The pictures are plant studies, whose straight, analytical style mimics Karl Blossfeldt's botanical catalog Urformen der Kunst, published in 1928. However, Fontcuberta's subjects are constructed entirely from found organic and inorganic materials. Photographed in the flat, objective, stripped-down manner of Blossfeldt, Fontcuberta endorses the notion that documentary photography does not necessarily yield the truth about its subject, but is simply another style of photography.

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education

University of Barcelona, Masters Degree in Communications, 1978

selected individual exhibitions

- 1988
  - Zabriskie Gallery, New York
  - Städtische Galerie, Filderralle, Stuttgart

- 1987
  - Centro de Arte, Palacio Almudí, Murcia, Spain
  - Galeria Roma e Pavia, Porto, Portugal

- 1986
  - Zabriskie Gallery, New York
  - Hadler/Rodriguez Gallery, Houston
  - Presentation House Gallery, Vancouver
  - Museo de Bellas Artes, Bilbao
  - Museo de Arte y Historia, Durango, Spain

selected group exhibitions

- 1988
  - Center for Creative Photography, Tucson
  - The Photographer's Gallery, London*
  - Galerie Jutta Rossner, Stuttgart*

- 1987
  - Museum Folkwang, Essen*
  - Galerie Zabriskie, Paris*
  - Museu de História Natural, Coimbra, Portugal*

- 1986
  - Galerie Maeght, Barcelona

selected bibliography

- Dr. Ameisenhaufen's Fauna (with Pere Formiguera). Göttingen: European Photography, 1988
biography: pere formiguera

Born Barcelona, Spain, May 5, 1952
Resides in Sant Cugat, near Barcelona

education
University of Barcelona, M.F.A., 1977

1988

individual exhibition
Galeria Visor, Valencia

1988

selected group exhibitions
The Photographer’s Gallery, London*
Galerie Jutta Rössner, Stuttgart*

1988

Marcuse Pfeifer Gallery, New York
Museum Folkwang, Essen*
Galerie Zabriskie, Paris*
Museu de História Natural, Coimbra, Portugal*

1986

Galerie Maeght, Barcelona
Perspektief Gallery, Rotterdam

1985

Museo Español de Arte Contemporáneo

1981

selected bibliography
Dr. Ameisenhaufen’s Fauna (with Joan Fontcuberta). Gottingen: European Photography, 1988


Herbarium (introduction by Pere Formiguera, photographs by Joan Fontcuberta). Barcelona: Cromoarte, 1985

*An exhibition of Fauna.