

### ***Strange Travelers***

David Brooks, Sanna Kannisto, Till Krause, James Prosek and Laurent Tixador & Abraham Poincheval

**Curated by Mark Dion**

Gallery 2

**January 9- February 6, 2010**

One shudders at the notion of contemporary travel. Images of the dreaded middle seat on a stale and stingy American Airlines flight haunt the imagination. Delays, discomfort, and duty meld with a vague sense of guilt for contributing to the carbon glut. This exhibition however has nothing to say about the banalities and petty betrayals of the business and holiday traveler, rather it focuses on a collection of international artists for whom travel is still an adventure, and is celebrated as the most profound way of knowing.

For the artists featured in *Strange Travelers* the notion of going places retains a sense of the marvelous. Their sense of travel is recognizable in the works of Jules Verne, Jacques Cousteau, and Paul Bowles. The journeys they consider and undertake recognize the complex and often grim historical realities, and are not without risk, however they are accompanied by the certainty of wonder the potential of discovery. Bound by an understanding of travel as a sophisticated technology of knowing, these artists also share a core commitment to placing themselves in the field. The voyage itself may be emphasized and the destination is less of a goal but rather a strategic and provisional excuse for extending the journey.

Each of these artists maintains a scientific worldview, which does not view science as a foil to a sense of wonder. Rather than viewing science as a manner of explaining away or bleeding the fascination out of the beauty of nature, these artists see science as a tool of amazement that allows nature's rich complexity and diversity to be apprehended. They owe as much to the history of visual arts in the service of science (Audubon, Blossfeldt, Painleve) as they do to the legacy of landscape and earth art.

The exhibition contains works by a number of international artists, some of whom, while widely known in Europe are exhibited here for the first time in a New York gallery context. Till Krause, founder and director of the Maunch Galerie fur Landschaftskunst in Hamburg, which is devoted to artists exploring, mining and expanding the landscape genre, is widely known for both his own explorations of mapping as well as his numerous and varied collaborative endeavors with artists, scientists, urbanists and institutions. Sanna Kannisto, who lives and works in Helsinki, established herself as a photographer and media artist of exceptional skill working alongside of scientific researchers in the rainforests of the American tropics. Her work underscores the problematics of isolating organisms from their intricate web of relationships in the forest community. Laurent Tixador and Abraham Poincheval are a collaborative team from France whose projects are invested with a sense of adventure, risk and reassessment of the romantic tradition embodied by tales like *Robinson Crusoe*, and *Journey to the Center of the Earth*. For

this exhibition, artifacts and documentation from their project in Murcia, Spain, in which they were entombed and each day excavated a tunnel is exhibited. David Brook's understanding of the urban landscape and its features as not outside of the biological and geological process is expressed by exploration of the city as an entropic site. Vernacular urban features are understood as in flux between a natural past and future. Lastly, painter and celebrated author James Prosek explores the cultural hybridization occurring in wildlife art. His "tool birds," reference a society that struggles to understand value in nature outside of pragmatic and capitalist systems. His work rooted in scientific and wildlife art probing the space between knowing, not knowing and imagining.

For further information, please contact the gallery at 212-414-4144 or [mail@tanyabonakdargallery.com](mailto:mail@tanyabonakdargallery.com).