

Jochen Lempert

February 3rd – March 31st, 2012

Rochester Art Center

February 4th – April 22nd, 2012

Over the past two decades, Jochen Lempert has drawn from his personal archive of hundreds of images to create photographic installations that immerse the viewer in a field of poetic visual associations. Before beginning his work as a photographer in the mid 1990's, Lempert spent a decade as a filmmaker with the German collective *Schmelzdahin* (*melt away*). During this period he was also studying entomology at the Friedrich-Wilhelms University in Bonn. His background in biology and film continues to inform his photography.

Lempert's images of the natural world – ocean waves, plants, birds, insects, reptiles, seashells, and taxidermied specimens from natural history museums – are made through a variety of experimental and traditional processes that, to a certain extent, mimic the inherent order and randomness of the natural world itself. While some of his photographs are taken with a 35mm camera from scientific research vessels in the North Sea or in the urban environment of his hometown of Hamburg, Germany, many are made through camera-less processes. He creates photograms by lying natural specimens directly on photographic paper. Foliograms, such as his *Transmission* series (2009), are made by placing leaves directly into the darkroom enlarger and allowing light to pass through them onto the photo paper. Lempert also prints his photographs using non-traditional techniques. Hand-printed on heavy photographic paper, they are not pressed and presented unframed – this enhances the viewer's sense of the paper as an object with the tactile quality of a charcoal drawing.

Some of Lempert's earliest works, such as *The Skins of the Alca impennis* (1995-) and *Symmetry and the Architecture of the Body* (1997-2005), show his interest in typologies and an archiving impulse. Images are sometimes fragmented across multiple prints that are then assembled into grids, or sequenced cinematically – series such as *Honey Guides of Digitalis* (2011) resonate with his films from the 1980's. Although nature photography is often considered to lie wholly within a documentary tradition, these works have stronger ties to modernism and conceptual photography. These connections become apparent when looking beyond Lempert's subject to his approach, practice, and the way he uses groupings and scale to respond to the exhibition space. His arrangements give us new insights into our own place within the patterns, structures, and chaos of the natural world.

For his first United States solo exhibition, Jochen Lempert has created two corresponding installations: one that is on view at Midway Contemporary Art in Minneapolis and another, larger presentation of his work at the Rochester Art Center in Rochester, Minnesota. The works on view provide an extensive look at his practice since 1995 and will be accompanied by a forthcoming catalog.

Jochen Lempert (Born in Moers, Germany, 1958) lives and works in Hamburg, Germany. He has recently presented solo exhibitions at the Ludwig Museum, Cologne (2010); Culturgest, Lisbon (2009); and the Museum for Contemporary Art, Siegen (2005). He has participated in numerous group exhibitions including: *Photography calling*, Sprengel Museum, Hannover, Germany (2011); *Milk Drop Coronet: 30 Exhibitions on the Virtuosity of Thingness*, Camera Austria, Kunsthhaus Graz, Austria (2010); *The Zero Budget Biennial* (2009); *Tactical support*, Tracy Williams, NY, USA (2009); *What does the jellyfish want?*, Museum Ludwig, Köln, Germany (2007); *Field Research*. Hamburguer Kunsthalle, Hamburg, Germany (2003). Lempert will be participating in the upcoming Paris Triennial: La Force de l'Art, Paris, France. He is represented by ProjecteSD in Barcelona.