



Alwin Lay, And Cigarettes, fragment, 2011, Germany

Looking at the Big Sky

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An exhibition project of the Goethe-Institut in cooperation with Braunschweig University of Art, Düsseldorf Art Academy, Academy of Media Arts Cologne, Academy of Fine Arts, Munich.

The sight of a big sky is closely associated with freedom and openness. The faraway horizon is synonymous with the vastness of thought; the high blue sky of day and the starry nocturnal firmament are codes for the sublime. They also remind us of the childlike pastime of looking for pictures in cloud formations or marveling at the boundlessness of the universe.

The choice of “Looking at the Big Sky” as the title of a contemporary video art programme was associated with the hope that the ideas and illusions would know no boundaries, that the sky would be the limit in all directions. At the same time, it sounded like an appeal to the participating artists to venture – perhaps naïve, but unerring – look at longings, utopias and great aspirations, and to think the existing concepts of authenticity and beauty beyond the present. Students of four German art academies (Hochschule für Bildende Künste Braunschweig / Braunschweig University of Art, Kunstakademie Düsseldorf / Düsseldorf Art Academy, Kunsthochschule für Medien Köln / Academy of Media Arts Cologne and Akademie der Bildenden Künste München / Academy of Fine Arts, Munich) were invited to enter recent single-channel videos in the competition “Looking at the Big Sky”. 14 films – works which respond to the thematic postulation with an astonishing variety of motifs and practices – were ultimately selected.

The spectrum ranges from fictional narratives and stagings to individual assertions and performances, from found-footage montages to pseudo documentaries. At the same time, two major perspectives crystallize in the works, and were thus formulated in the headings of the two screening blocks: whereas the videos subsumed under “The Beauty of the Familiar” aim towards personal introspection that divines meaning in the inconspicuous and unspectacular, “Departure for Tomorrow” encompasses videos seeking to formulate an outlook on the immeasurable and indeterminate.

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