

DARK GLETSCHER

2019 – Present

Frédéric Fourdinier



Dark Gletscher

2019 – present

Installation

introduction

Glaciers or Gletschers in German are, in their various forms, important elements of the Earth's atmospheric system, storing immense volumes of fresh water, interacting with the hemisphere in which they are located, controlling sea level changes. They create a significant and lasting impact on landscapes. The extent and intensity of each of these impacts varies over time, as glaciers and ice sheets grow and disintegrate in response to the mechanisms of climate change. In the current geological period of the Quaternary, often called the Ice Age and spanning the last 2.6 million years, glaciers and ice sheets have expanded at times of maximum glaciation to cover up to 30% of the Earth's surface.

Dark Gletscher explores climate and ecological issues through a transdisciplinary approach combining art, science and writing. Conceived as a modular installation, the work invites us to reflect on the disappearance of glaciers and their impact on ecosystems and collective memory. Through photographs, sculptures and stories, it offers a meditation on movement, absence and our responsibility in the face of environmental changes.



Val of Ferpécle - Switzerland

Dark Gletscher

Artistic approach

Genesis of the project

Dark Gletscher - project was born from a fascination for glaciers and their crucial role in terrestrial ecosystems. This project is part of a dynamic of movement, initiated by trips, hikes and immersions in alpine environments over several years. Through these experiences, I explored the interactions between mineral matter and natural forces, as well as an ethnobotanical approach while questioning the human impact on these fragile territories.

This project is also rooted in a broader reflection on the notions of temporality and transformation: how do glaciers, symbols of slowness and power, become silent witnesses of current climate upheavals?

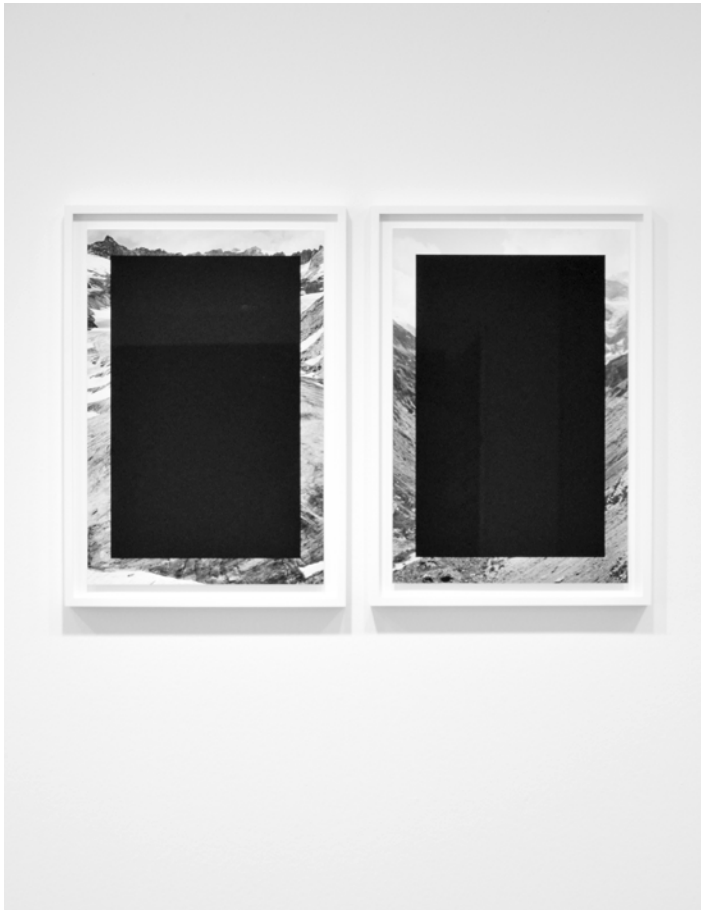
Key themes

Disappearance and absence

Glaciers, in danger of disappearing, are both a scientific reality and a powerful metaphor. Through Dark Gletscher, I question our relationship to what is fading: the landscape, collective memory, and the echoes of our responsibility in the face of these irreversible changes.

Movement and transformation

The life cycles of glaciers—expansion, retraction, disappearance—reflect the universal dynamics of movement. These phenomena, as geological as they are cosmological and intimately human, are at the heart of my artistic exploration.



Rhône - Zinal - 2020 - 2021 - 45X30cm - printing on paper hahnemühle



"Archive" - 2024 - mix media

Ecology and the Anthropocene

In this project, the Anthropocene becomes a framework to analyse the tensions between nature and human activity. By highlighting the consequences of urbanization and industrial exploitation, I seek to trigger an awareness of our interactions with ecosystems.

Creative process

Immersion in the landscape

Each work is born from a prolonged immersion in a specific environment. Through walking, observation and the collection of natural elements, I physically feel the transformations of the landscape. This sensory step nourishes my entire approach.

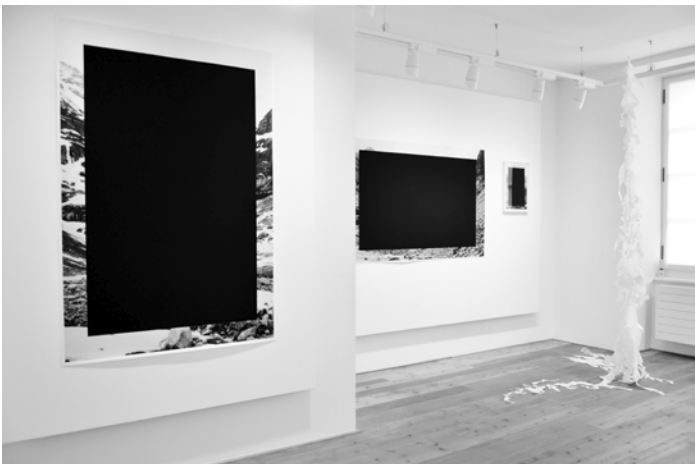
Dark Gletscher is presented as an evolving installation, whose form and content vary according to the exhibition venues. It can be seen as a rebus, inviting the viewer to connect and interpret the elements between them.

Research and scientific collaborations

My work is nourished by reading as well as meetings and collaborations with scientists specialized in glaciology, geomorphology, ethnology, cartography and physics. These exchanges enrich my approach and provide contextual depth to my creations.

Multidisciplinarity

Dark Gletscher combines photography, sculpture, installations and stories. This dialogue between disciplines allows to approach complex themes in a sensitive and accessible way. Reflecting the artistic universe that I have been building for several years.





Anatomy II - 2023 - Matterhorn network - approximately 250x180 cm - white geotextile - Espace Graffenried - Aigle - Switzerland
A part of missing mass, Arolla - Cheilon - Unteraar - 2020 - 2021 - 30x45cm framed - print on hahnemühle paper

List of Works

The installation **Dark Gletscher** is expressed through a plurality of mediums:

- Photographs with **"A part of missing mass"**: Silver captures of a glacial front where 70% of the surface is obstructed by a black area, symbolizing the missing mass in the universe, this theoretical dark energy in expansion and acceleration.
- sculptural **"Anatomy"**: Cartographic pieces cut from white geotextile, a material used on certain glacial fronts in Switzerland to slow the melting of glaciers, suspended in a state of precarious balance.
- sculptural **"Anatomy"**: Cartographic pieces cut out of white geotextile, a material used on certain glacial fronts in Switzerland to slow the melting of glaciers, suspended in a state of precarious balance.
- Texts and short stories **"A glacier, a walk"**: Introspective stories about walks to glaciers, offering a literary dimension to the project. Available with the "Archives" elements



View from exhibition at Evolène - Maison des alpes - Sonner le gla[s]-cier - artforglaciery.ch - Suisse



Turtmann - A part of missing mass - 2020 - 2022 - wall paper - 145x96cm



Arolla - Cheilon - Unteraar - 2020 - 2021 - 30x45cm - printing on paper
hahnemühle

A part of missing mass

2020 - 2022

print on paper

Variable format

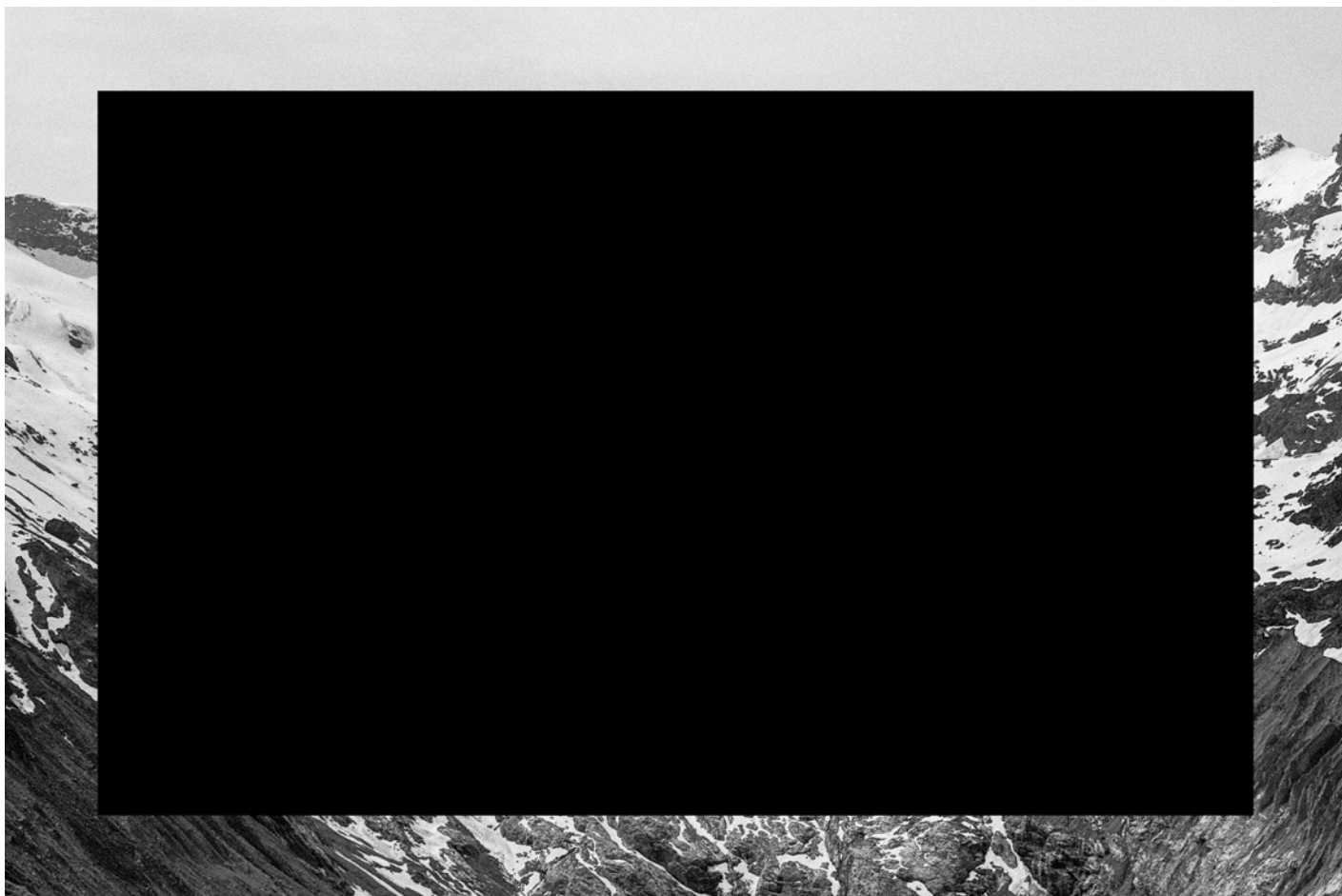
In the near future, a large proportion of Alpine glaciers will disappear. In the foreground, a black rectangle obscures 70% of the photograph's surface, making it impossible to observe. The value of this opaque rectangle refers to the theoretical percentage of dark energy in the known cosmic universe. According to this theory, it would cause the universe to expand and accelerate. Moreover, considered as diaphanous matter, this dark energy would allow light to pass through the cosmos, but at the same time prevent the possibility of seeing its end, the cosmic background, and therefore its past and future: a form of Smithsonian «sight not sight».

The theme is one of missing mass, absence and disappearance, and the viewer is faced with the frustration of not being able to perceive the landscape he or she is supposed to be observing. An anticipation of the future to come in this Alpine territory. The process of this work is always the same: set off on foot from a given point towards a glacial front, take one or more (silver) photographs and block them off with this black surface. The aim is to build up a repository of views of major Alpine glaciers that are about to undergo major (or even total) ablation. To date, 19 glacier fronts have been produced, in a variety of formats and printed on different types of paper. This work is currently being developed and produced, focusing for the moment on Switzerland, with other neighbouring countries to be explored at a later date.

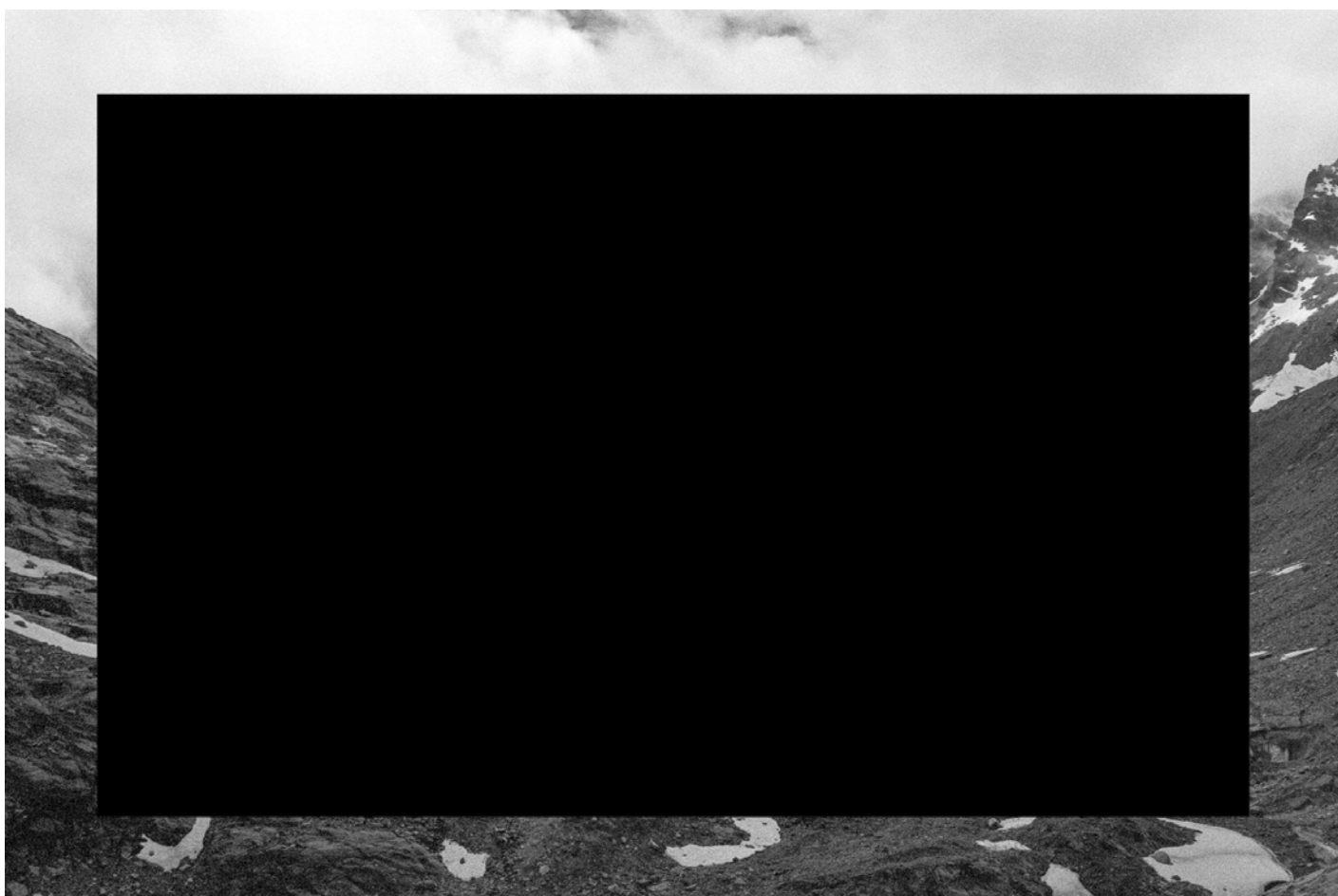
Find out more: [website link](#)



Mont Miné - A part of missing mass - 2020 - 2021 - wall paper - 96x145cm



Ferpèche



Corbassière

A part of missing mass

To date: 19 glaciers Switzerland photographers (2019-2023)



Arolla



cheilon



Tsili ore nouve



Unteraar



Lang



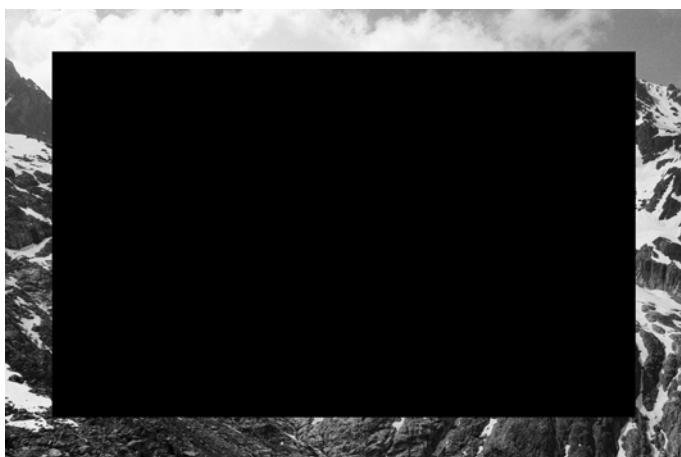
Corbassière



l'En Darrey



Moming



Trient



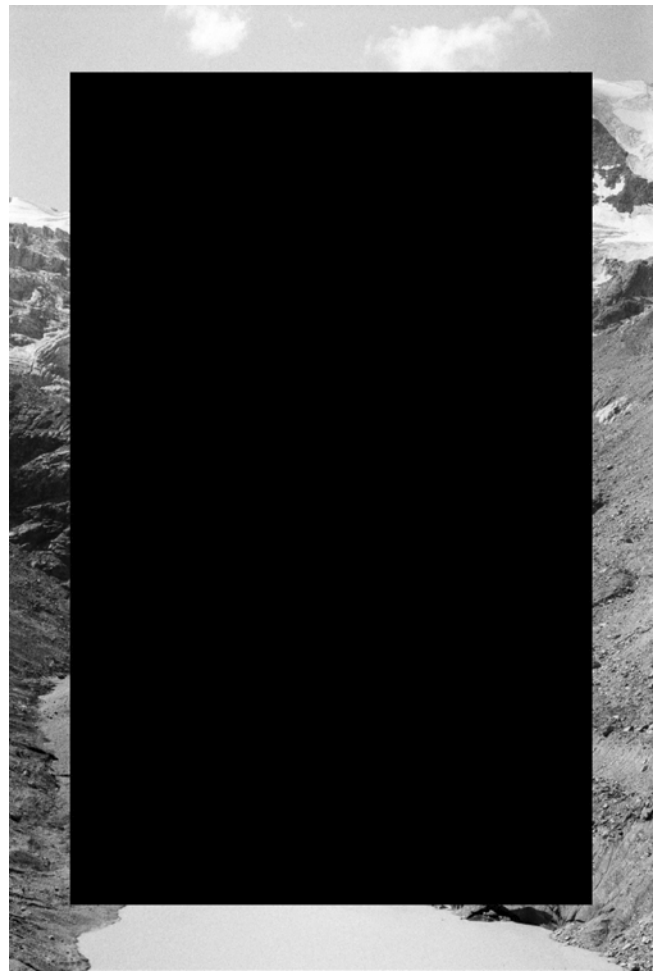
Mont Miné



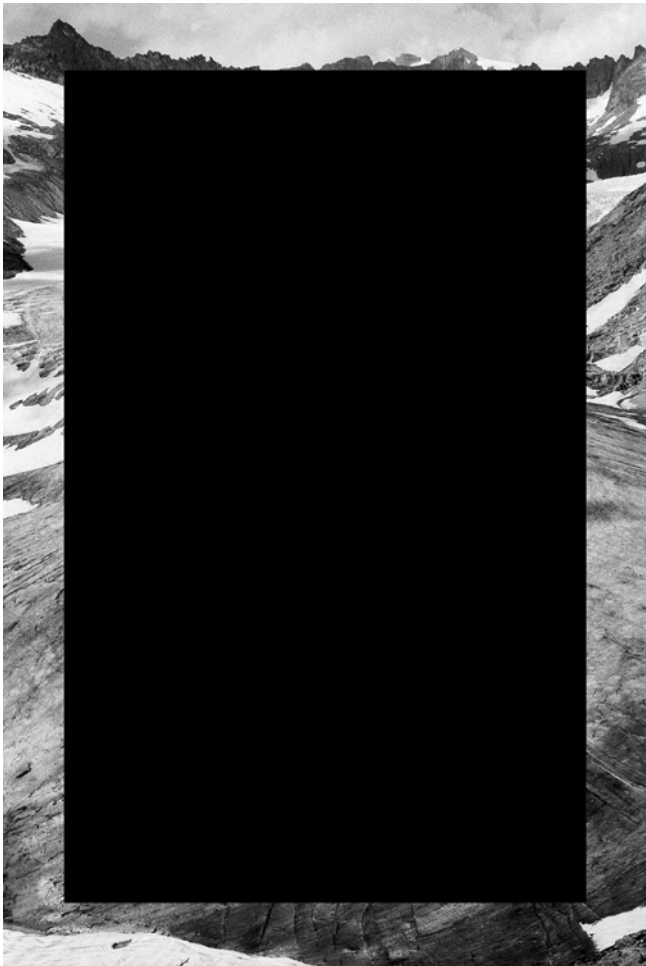
Coulon



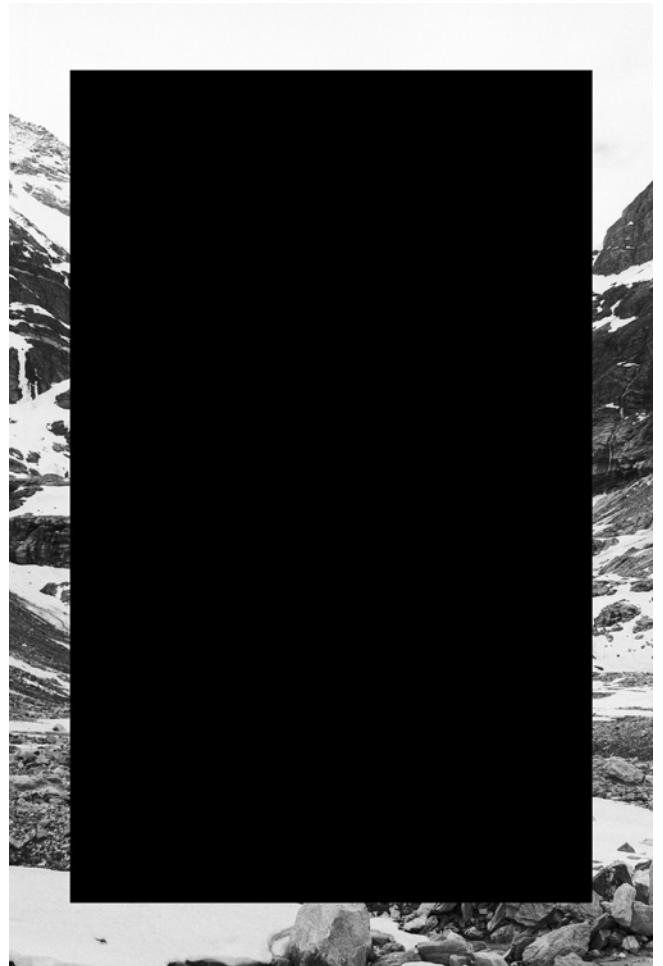
Aletsch



Moiry



Rhône



Turtmann



Zinal



Fiescher

Archives

A reflection on scientific consciousness and the connection with nature

The staging «**Archives**» explores the importance of awareness through the scientific prism, an essential filter in our modern societies. Through the study and validation of facts, science explains, confirms and reassures, while relaying data and information instantly. This glacial universe, studied and analysed with increasing precision, gradually reveals the complex workings of the Earth's climate evolution and highlights the crucial role of glaciers.

It offers an immersion in this reflection through a collection of scientific research reports, graphic diagrams with superimposed words, as well as prints of observations of glacial territories. These elements, sometimes enriched by objects collected in the field, form a visual and intellectual puzzle that invites the viewer to question their relationship to the natural world.

However, one question remains: what to think of these data, figures and elements, which do not directly show the glacier itself? Human beings, in their quest for meaning, feel the need to quantify, classify and represent the universe around them. But do these scientific approaches really promote a richer contemplation of nature? Through what filter do we observe the world, and what connection do we have with it, even though we are part of it?

«**Archives**» is not just an assembly of elements, it is an invitation to reflect on the way we perceive and interpret our environment, between science and sensitivity.



Recherches sur les Glaciers tempérés au Laboratoire de Glaciologie du Centre national de la recherche scientifique (CNRS)

Autor(en): Liboutry, Louis

Objektyp: Article

Zeitschrift: Jahrbuch der Schweizerischen Naturforschenden Gesellschaft,
Wissenschaftlicher und administrativer Teil = Annuaire de la
Société Helvétique des Sciences Naturelles, Partie scientifique et
administrative

Band (Jahr): 158 (1878)

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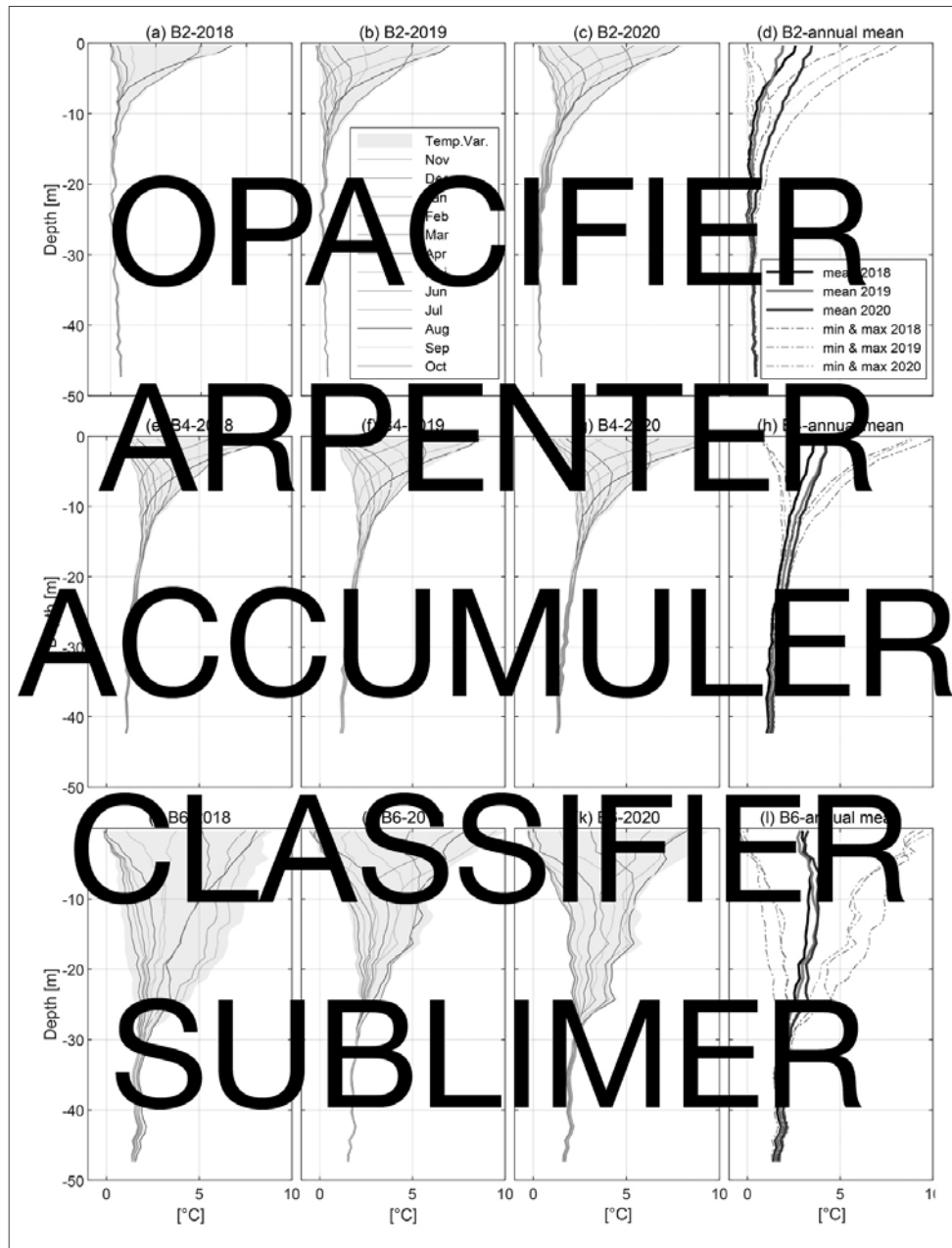
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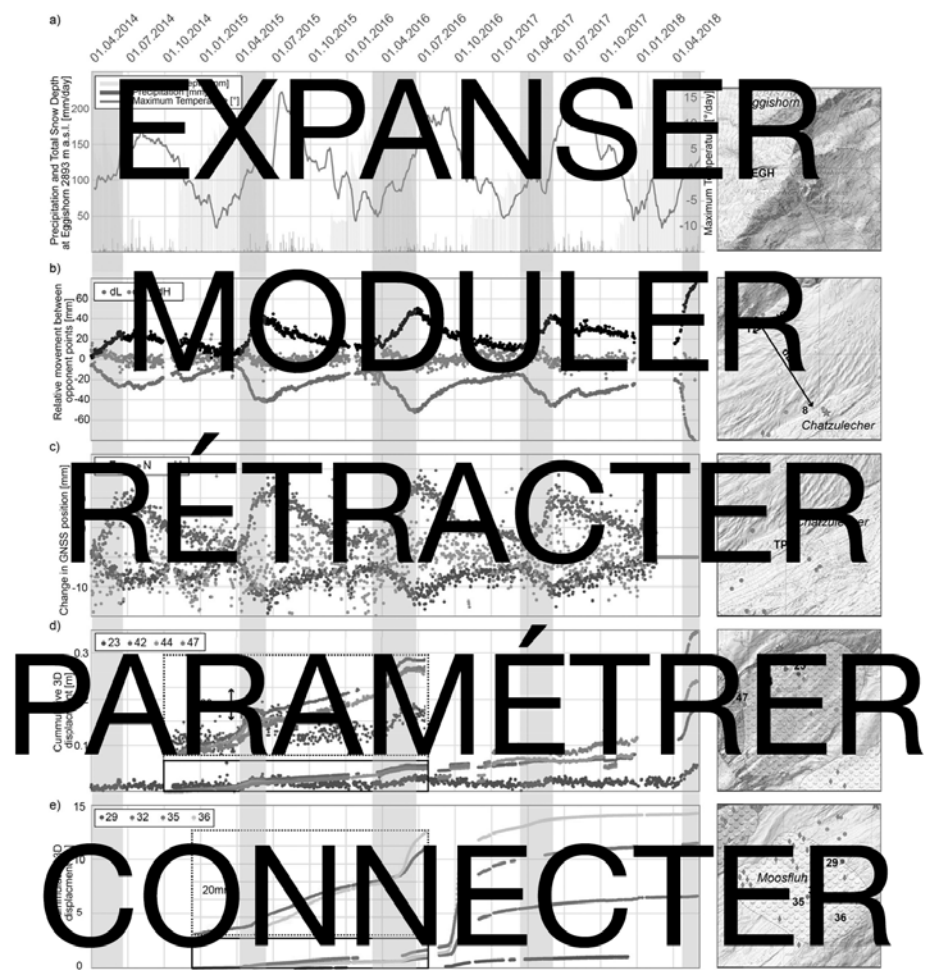
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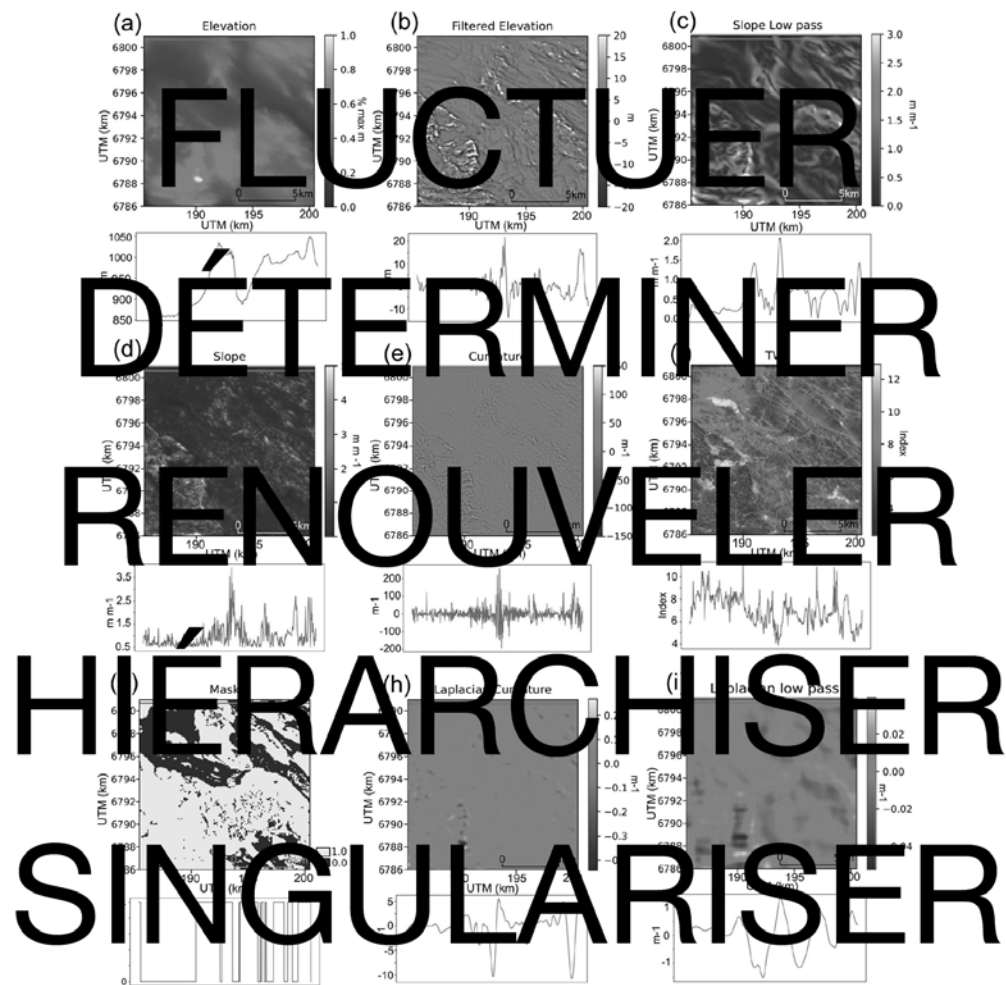














	S_1 ha	u_1 m/an	q_1 10^4 m ³ /an	S_2 ha	u_2 m/an	q_2 10^4 m ³ /an	ΔQ 10^4 m ³ /an	$\frac{\Delta Q}{S}$ m/an	$\frac{dh}{dt}$ m/en	b m/an	β_t m/an
1908	3.3	8	26.4	1.3	5	6.5	-20	-6	-2.5	3.1	-1.3
9	15	7	22	2	4	4.8	-5	-3	.8	.3	.5
1910	5	8	15	1	4	4.4	-6	-3	0	.3	1.4
1	1	8	24.8	1.1	6	6.6	-1.2	-1	0	.5	1.3
2	25	11	35.7	1.1	7	7.7	-	-	.7	.2	1.62
3	3.4	23	78	1.1	11	12.1	-66	-2.0	1	-1.	.8
4	3.45	22	76	1.2	13	15.6	-60.3	-1.87	.9	-.9	.9
5	3.5	22.5	78.7	1.3	13	17	-62	-1.9	.8	-1.	.8
6	3.55	21	74.5	1.32	12	15.8	-58.7	-1.8	.7	-1.1	.7
7	3.6	19	68.4	1.35	11	14.8	-53.5	-1.66	.6	-1.	.8
8	3.6	23	88	1.37	15	20	-52.2	-1.9	.5	-1.4	.4
9	3.65	24	86	1.3	15	21	-5.6	-2.1	.5	-1.6	.2
1920	3.7	27	100	1.4	15	21	-	-2	.3	-1.5	.3
1	30	1	1.45	18	26	-	-4.9	-2.63	.3	-2.3	-.5
2	1	1	1.5	36	-	-101	-3.12	.3	-2.83	-1.	
3	31	114	1.53	21	32.1	-82.6	-2.56	.25	-2.25	-.4	
4	27	100	1.57	17	26.7	-73.2	-2.3	.2	-2.1	-.3	
5	30	111	1.6	17.5	28	-80	-3.4	.2	-3.2	-1.4	
6	32	118		30	48	-70.4	-2.2	.1	-2.1	-.3	
7	3	3	2.6	3	3.6	-0.4	-	0	-1.9	-.1	
8	4	2	46	46	3	6.3	-1.10	0	-2.1	-.3	
9	1	1	2	2	-74	2.3	.1		-1.8	0	
1930	5	1.6	1	29	-56	.7	.1		1.8	0	
1	4	1	20	1	54	-1	.2		.9	.1	
2	3.7	20	74	1.5	13	19.5	-60	-1.8	-.3	-2.1	-.35
3	3.6	13	46	1.4	10	14	-32.4	-1	-.4	-1.4	.4
4	3.53	11	38.8	1.35	8	11	-28	-.9	-.5	-1.4	.4
5	3.5	10	35	1.3	8	10.5	-24	-.76	-.7	-1.5	.3
6	3.4	9	32	1.27	7	9	-21	-.8	-.8	-1.6	.2
7	3	8	26.4	22	6	7.3	-19	-	-	-1.6	.2
8	25	8	26	2	6	6	-1	-	-1	-1.6	.2
9	22	8	25.7	15	7	8.	-7.7	-	-2	-1.77	0
1940	2	10	32	11	8	9	-2	-4	-	-1.7	.3
1	3.15	10	32.5	.95	8	7.6	-25	-.77	-1.5	-2.3	-.5
2	3	11	33	.8	6	4.8	-28	-.9	-1.7	-2.6	-.8
3	2.97	11	32.7	.77	6	4.6	-28	-.9	-1.9	-2.8	-1
4	2.93	10	29.2	.72	5	3.6	-25.6	-.8	-1.9	-2.7	-.9
5	2.9	10	29	.7	5	3.5	-26.5	-.8	-2	-2.8	-1.
6	2.8	0	26.3	.63	4	2.4	-25.6	-.8	-2	-2.8	-1.
7	2.7	9	25.3	.57	5	2.85	-21.4	-.66	-1.9	-2.6	-.8
8	2.6	8	24	.5	6	3	-18	-.56	-1.8	-2.3	-.5
9	2.55	7	19	.45	6	2.7	-16.4	-.5	-1.7	-2.2	-.4
1950	2.5	7	17.5	.4	4	1.6	-16	-.5	-1.5	-2	-.2





Anatomy I - 2023 - Aletsh network - 250x180 cm - white geotextile

Anatomie

2023
white geotextile
variable dimensions
approximately 250 x 180 cm

Deployed as a record of what remains of today's glacier networks, these cartographic projections of European alpine glacier networks show their organicities, ramifications and interconnections. Cut with scissors from white geotextile, a material currently used to limit the melting of certain glacier fronts, they are suspended at their northernmost extremity as a reminder of their cartographic origins, and spread out by gravitational force towards the ground without taking into account their original geographical form. Like living organisms in temporary shrinkage, continuing their decline towards certain disappearance in future decades, these anatomies speak of the past, the present and the future, for inexorably their expansion will resume one day, in a future that probably doesn't belong to us.

Technically, these cut-outs are derived from cartographic surveys taken from Swisstopo data (Swiss Federal Office of Topography), which are then projected and drawn onto geotextile, which I cut with scissors and connect together with a thin transparent thread.

read more : <https://frederic-fourdinier.com/installations-sculptures/dark-gletscher-2/anatomie/>



Anatomie I - 2023 - réseau Aletsh - 250x180 cm - géotextile blanc



Anatomy I - 2023 - Aletsh network - 250x180 cm - white geotextile
Maison des alpes 2024- CH Sonner le gla[s]-cier - artforglaciery.ch



Anatomie I + II - 2023 - Aletsh et Matterhorn network- 250x180 cm - white géotextile

Gletscher

series of short novels (in french)
2019 - 2023...

These series of short stories recount the walks or approaches, lasting a day or more, to one or more glaciers during my excursions to feed the Dark Gletscher project.

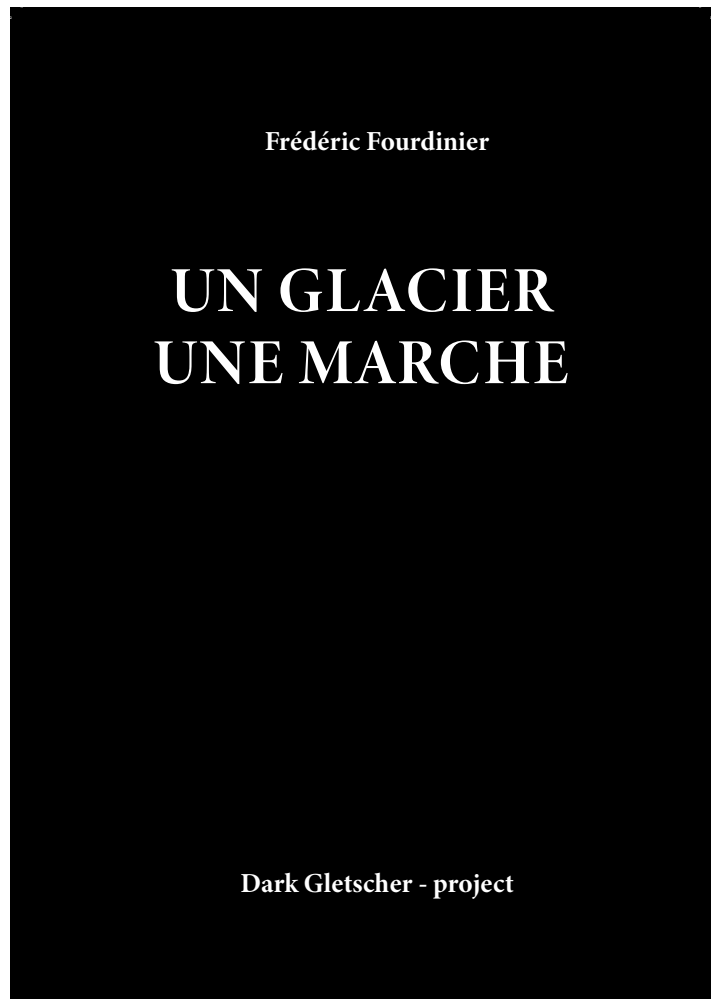
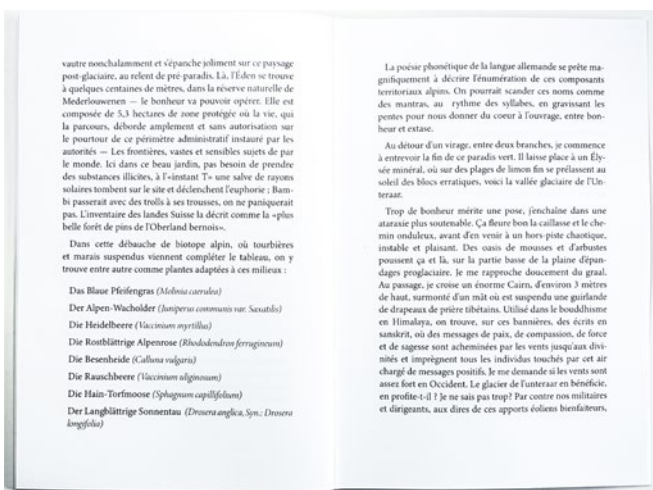
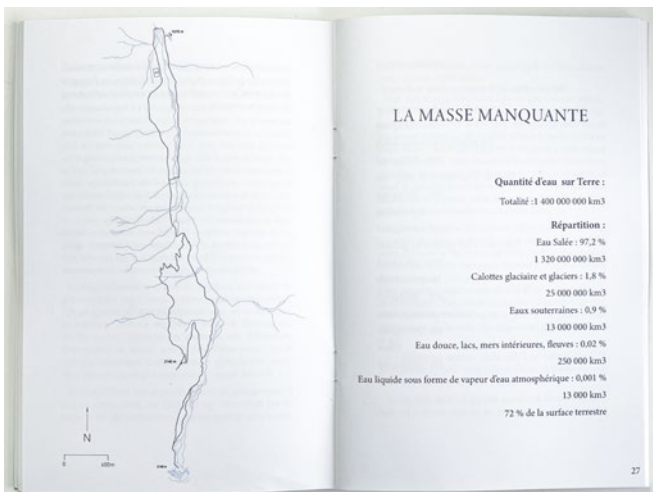
Each itinerary generates a point of view, a theme, questions that often reveal themselves at rest, reading my notes and other visual notebooks taken on the spot, or through various research, scientific and technical readings or post-experience literary works. These stories are written relatively late after the walk, which allows me to digest the experience and get to the heart of the matter, putting aside certain emotions that might pollute what I want to talk about.

These novels are conceived as keys to approaching the protean work that is Dark Gletscher, a way of allowing readers and viewers to enter the intimacy of my universe. To complement the texts, analog photographs support the itinerary.

Download link : <https://frederic-fourdinier.com/ecritures-nouvelles/gletschers/>

8 novels are currently available:

La masse manquante - *La rupture* - *Les causes à effets* - *Un constat* - *Un parallèle* - *Une incursion* - *Une traversée* - *une rencontre*



Exhibitions :

Dark Gletscher

Espace Graffenried - Aigle - Switzerland

2023

www.espacegraffenried.ch

The Dark Gletscher, initiated in Switzerland in 2019 and presented for the first time on the occasion of this exhibition, is the result of environmental, physical and cosmological reflections. Glaciers - Gletscher in German - are considered here as essential and impactful parts of the Earth's atmospheric system. This work is part of a mobile dynamic for Frédéric Fourdinier, who has looked into the question of glaciers and their movements through trips, hikes and other crossings in various alpine spaces, over the seasons and over several years. Physical contact with our environment, in particular with its mineral elements, plays a key role in the design of Dark Gletscher. At Espace Graffenried, this project takes the form of an immersive installation bringing together extracts from two substantial works: it includes prints of various formats from the series A part of missing mass, which presents photographs of glacial fronts 70% obscured by a black surface (see details on the pages below). This value echoes the theoretical percentage of dark energy that would make up the universe and generate its expansion and acceleration.

Frédéric Fourdinier also presents a new version of the Anatomie series, which consists of cartographic projections of current Alpine glacier networks, emphasizing their ramifications and inter-connections. Cut from white geotextile used to limit the melting of glacial fronts, these projections





are suspended by their northernmost end and spread towards the ground by gravitational force. The artist compares them to living organisms, anatomies testifying to the past and drawing the future. The various encounters with Swiss and European glaciers gave rise to a series of short stories written by Frédéric Fourdinier. These texts, presented here as an integral part of the exhibition, allow us to explore the questions raised by the artist in more depth. Dark Gletscher invites us to reflect not only on the relationship between human beings and their environment and the actions they take to preserve it, but also to question in a (meta)physical way the limits that constitute the universe, the notions of presence and absence, expansion and retraction, acceleration and emptiness.

Chloé Cordonier
(Exhibition manager at Espace Graffenried)

read more + video : <https://www.espacegraffenried.ch/frdric-fourdinier-dark-gletscher>

Acquisition by the municipality of Aigle of 3 photographs A part of missing mass, Arolla - Cheilon - Unteraar - 2020/2021 -30x45cm framed - print on Hahnemühle paper, to enter the art collection of the Graffenried space.

A part of missing mass

(3 photos, extract from the series)

Droom / 1 pour tous - furtive exhibition, Uccle, Brussels

Group show

Organizer: Gregory Decock

21/06 > 21/008/2023



Zinal - Rhône - Aletsch - 2020 - 2021 - 30x45cm - printing on paper hahnemühle

Sonner le gla[s]cier

Interdisciplinary project:

Workshop artists/scientists + Collective exhibition

Organized by Cairn at the Maison de Ribeaupierre, Evolène, Switzerland - Curator: Maéva Besse

learn more: <https://le-cairn.ch/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Regarder-le-glacier-sen-allen-Dossier-de-presse-07.24.pdf>

Dans le cadre des expositions - Regarder le glacier s'en aller / artforglaciens.ch

Dark Gletscher

Installation

2024

In the proposed installation, the visual absence of the subject addressed, in this case the glacier, attempts to address the importance of awareness through the scientific prism, a major filter in our societies which, through the study and validation of facts, explains, confirms and reassures. These data, this information and others are relayed and mediated instantly, they allow us to observe our environment from various angles in a dazzling instantaneity. This glacial universe is explained more and more finely and the new discoveries allow us to understand the workings «the why and how» of the evolution of the Earth's climate and therefore the importance of these icy masses. On the tables and on the walls of the exhibition are present: the photograph of a glacial front obscured by a black mass, referring to the 70% of a probable dark energy that would compose the universe in expansion and acceleration, we find among other things reports of research and scientific studies, graphic diagrams



with words superimposed on them, prints of readings of observations of glacial territories as well as elements collected around, also consultable the writings that I made following walks towards glaciers which allow the visitor to enter a little more into my universe, is also in the room, suspended, the cutting of a glacial network that spreads on the ground, it is cut in this famous geotextile deposited on certain glacier fronts to try to reduce its melting. What to think of all these data of these figures of these elements not really showing the glacier, the human being needs to quantify, to classify, to represent the universe which surrounds him, do they allow us more contemplation? by which filter do we observe nature? What link do we have with it? While we are part of it.

From this installation, another question tries to emerge, do we become more aware of things once disappeared or absent, like the Reichstag in Berlin covered by Christo & Jeanne Claude and then rediscovered once the sheets lifted or, are we able to anticipate a loss?



Workshop for artists/scientists + location of the collective exhibition at the Maison de Ribeaupierre, Evolène, Switzerland

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