

## **Polar research aesthetics: an artistic reconstruction of scientific processes, looking for a hole at the pole**

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The aesthetic of scientific processes is an aspect of research in which the scientific disciplines themselves are not mainly interested, regarding it as a byproduct of their activities needed to reach their set goals. From an artistic perspective instead, the specific sensory appearance of science or scientific actions can serve as pool for extracting motives. Within a wider interest in models of and for reality and their form languages in my artistic work, I see the natural sciences as one major apparatus for explaining the world today.

Currently working as an artist in residence at Hanse-Wissenschaftskolleg, Institute for Advanced Study in Delmenhorst/Germany, in cooperation with the Alfred-Wegener-Institute for Polar and Maritime Research, I took part in an expedition to the German Neumayer station III in Antarctica. There, I observed geoscientific research activities. Under supervision of both scientists working on seasonal projects and the wintering crew, who is running the station's long-term observatories, I participated in research activities, assisted and conducted some measurements myself. Actions and operations were then reconstructed and recorded in single video clips, a compilation of which will be presented during the talk. This documentation of the re-enactments, which were performed in Antarctica is at the core of the presentation. While scientific language uses numbers, formulas, graphs, or figures as its symbolic form, here science is conveyed using the characteristics of a visual medium. The outcome of artistic research is not apparent from datasets and curves, but generated findings and insights stay in the logic of their field: the investigation, (re)production and deconstruction of contemporary imagery and aesthetic experiences.

The underlying criterion for choosing the scenes - their common ground - is the quest for entrance or transition spots, the study of pits and holes. On one hand, these points metaphorically stand for the breakthrough to new knowledge beneath the layer of the familiar and known (in sciences, in the arts), the search for a portal in Antarctic regions on the other hand alludes to the theory of a hollow earth, accessible through a hole at the pole. This old scientific theory from the 17th century is falsified for ages but survived as a conspiracy myth until today. Especially polar research, conducted on a continent dedicated entirely to rational natural sciences with their claim for objectivity, could not be more opposed to such speculations. At the same time, the place seems to be an ideal projection surface for alternative, fantastic ideas and theories.

Subtracting the original purpose of the scientific actions repeated by the artist sets the focus on their inherent characteristics; contrasting them with an opposed narrative questions their status as suppliers of one single truth.