



45 Rue de Lausanne, 1950 Sion, Switzerland
www.lemme.site

Thomas Julier – Dawn Chorus Protocol
10 December 2022 – 11 March 2023

The windowpanes of the space vibrate, transporting a sound produced by synthesizers throughout the duration of the exhibition and transforming *Lemme* into a sound sculpture. Polyphonic sounds and intricate rhythms can be heard, which serve as the soundtrack for two video works that Thomas Julier places in dialogue with one another. The two videos, *Chameleon Eyes* and *Puzzle of a Maze*, are each core pieces of independent work complexes by the artist that deal with questions of space and time. In the exhibition *Dawn Chorus Protocol*, the unconventional simultaneous presence of the two works unfolds in interaction with the live soundtrack. Julier creates an experiential space in which the relationships between the videos and the sound constantly shift and reconfigure. The essence of the aesthetic experiences to which *Dawn Chorus Protocol* invites us cannot be grasped by our senses and intellect without contradiction.

Thomas Julier is interested in the aesthetics of computer- and machine-generated experiences and their role in our conception of nature. Ideas about nature are shaped by social discourse and by tools and technologies that humans use to approach nature at a particular time in a particular setting. Through technologically supported research, we increasingly perceive natural phenomena as complex systems of relationships that are discussed in terms of their interdependencies rather than viewed in isolation. In his artistic practice, Julier deals with phenomena of the cultural and technical construction of ideas about nature.

In the 1990s, which the artist spent as a teenager in Brig, he was socialized with MTV, computer games, science fiction, Napster, raves and techno. An interest in issues relating to the mass media, along with a playful and experimental approach to complexity, have always accompanied his work. During his fine art studies, this interest was complemented by aspects of art history and cultural studies. For some time now, Thomas Julier has been producing a growing number of projects in collaboration with scientists and humanities scholars. With *Dawn Chorus Protocol*, he combines traces of his aesthetic formation in Valais with his current interdisciplinary work. He invites us to gather our own experiences in encountering this work of art, and to immerse ourselves in a web of unexpected relationships and systems of reference.

Chameleon Eyes is a site-specific public artwork in Heiligfeld Park and the surrounding residential area in Zurich-West. It centres around the movement of birds: the flight paths of resident and migratory birds are tracked and broadcast live on a double-sided LED display in the park. The display is fed by data from two thermal imaging cameras installed on the rooftop of recent cooperative housing blocks. Much like a chameleon's eyes, the two heat-sensitive

cameras can move independently of each other, chart a 360-degree field of vision and spot their prey in the sky even at a considerable distance. Choreographed through algorithms, protocols and variables, Chameleon Eyes captures the vibrant activity of birds in the local habitat and visualizes their movement using the abstracted colour scale of thermal imagery. In addition to the direct transmission of the park display, previous video sequences can be accessed on a dedicated website. They represent an archive of bird flights recorded by Chameleon Eyes to date, and can be viewed on one of the two screens at Lemme.

With *Puzzle of a Maze*, Thomas Julier invites us to explore an object that structures and measures time, just like a clock. The centrepiece of this work is a video animation of a sphere with a structured surface, turning on its axis in a void. Slowly, the sphere splits up. The shards gravitate away and then gradually reconfigure, all the while continuing to rotate on the axis of the sphere. *Puzzle of a Maze* establishes an interplay between physical and virtual representations of the clock-like rotating sphere. A selection of shards has been 3D-printed in stainless steel and drawn with a pen by a machine. These works correspond to files stored on the InterPlanetary File System, which can be accessed by means of an app. The app enables visitors to explore the artwork, and it allows the owners to view their tokens and to vote on future developments of the work, which will take place in virtual and physical spaces. A reference point on the Ethereum blockchain synchronizes all playbacks of the video, whether you watch it on the app or in the exhibition. Everyone observes the same exact moment in the continuous process of disintegration and reintegration of the rotating sphere.

<https://thomasjulier.info/en/dawn-chorus-protocol>

Curator: Josiane Imhasly

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