

In a sketch for a film, Michelangelo Antonioni notes: “The Antarctic glaciers are moving in our direction at a rate of three millimeters per year. Calculate when they’ll reach us. Anticipate, in a film, what will happen.”

Metaphorically speaking, to feel cold means to feel deeply alienated. Alienation was already a dominant concern for sociologists around 1900: the alienation of man from society through individualization, alienation from nature through urbanization, alienation from work through mechanization. For philosophers like Theodor W. Adorno, alienation thus turns into a key concept in terms of the role art plays in and for society: Without alienation there is no art, and ultimately it is only art that prevents total alienation.

Ironically, it is the countercultural protest against “social coldness” and against the “rigidification” of middle-class society in the 1960s that anticipates the ideologemes of flexible Capitalism 2.0. This move, in fact, paves the way for a new type of alienation – one which reverses the metaphors: Coldness and rigidity are replaced by liquefaction, start-up and dynamics – social alienation, however, continues even as people now strive for self-optimization.

*Antarctica* looks at the pattern underlying alienation – this “relationship based on the absence of a relationship.” Showing numerous contemporary artworks; the exhibition explores how the term “alienation” functions in our world today. In doing so, it also addresses the following question: What other forms of relationship to the self and to the world do we need? Before we can even begin to create something like a space supportive of self-determination and self-realization?

The exhibition is preceded by a symposium on the subject.

*(This document was automatically generated by Contemporary Art Library.)*