

A Raft of Time

Suddenly I'm standing there myself, without having planned it, by the glacier, shaken by how the snow is melting, by the thunder of rivers plummeting into the valley below. From a height of almost 2,500 meters I can see how bold lines are drawn through the glacier by ice and gravel, ending in a gravel pit. Everything is strangely still, distant and oppressive at the same time. And then the storm hits.

How can we understand and interpret what is happening in our own time? We learn again that we knew and that we know now. But we did nothing and we do nothing. The work around *Dead Reckon* (2018–) and *Sense (Universal(s))* (2020–) departs from overlapping topics and then assumes different standpoints, aiming to show different aspects of the problem that have not been translated by knowledge into experience, but that could be. The work takes place where actions from different time periods and different circumstances accumulate to make an imprint. It appears increasingly important to actively change our perspective, and to learn more about “the wood wide web,” starting with e.g. fungi and trees.¹ Someone described it like this: “*You go out and buy a plum tree and prepare to plant it. You stand in a spot that has sun and shade. You identify with the plum tree [and you think:] I could grow here.*”²

Like a pair of lightning conductors, the painted drawings *Dead Reckon* and *Sense (Universals)* are physically grounded by hanging close to the floor, in relation to a locally created storm, influenced by gravitation and reacting with water. The material “remembers.”

The term *Dead Reckon* appeared while working on the earlier drawing *Isolario* (2005) and refers to systems of orientation and navigation – systems that connect with Space outside the exhibition area, and that indicate time and space: “[ded-rek-uhn] *verb (used with object) Navigation. to calculate (one's position) by means of dead reckoning.*”³ The lines starting from the rotation around the circle in *Dead Reckon* will gradually diverge, and the expression dead reckoning has also taken on the meanings ‘speculating’ and ‘guesswork’ as the use of the method produces cumulative errors. “*Dead Reckoning means to determine your current position from previous measurements or estimates of your position and without input from a system measuring your absolute position. One major issue when relying on a Dead Reckoning solution is the sensor bias drift.*”⁴

The word universal is related to the *Universe* but is also used as an adjective, to strengthen the meaning of other words, as in *Universal cleaner*. The color in *Universal(s)*, *Dead Reckon* and *Sense (Universal(s))* is intensified and pales by constant replenishment of pigments and cleaning of the tools. The intention is to make the pigment adhere to the to the underlying material and not be drained away. (No cleaning product is necessary.) At the same time, the circle points to the universe, and the plural form *Universals* brings up further questions. “*‘The problem of universals’ [is] connected to the issue of how universal cognition of singular things is possible.*”⁵

The method used to produce the works in the exhibition *A Raft of Time* focuses on rendering abstractions comprehensible, like measurability, environmental effects, and time and place. The works depart from the points of intersection that arise when different topics overlap and create new perspectives. That overlap has been particularly noticeable in the making of *Sense (Universal(s))*: long walks, reading, meetings, and producing iron gall ink. That ink, known and used since late antiquity, is used to produce permanent documents, does not pale and cannot be erased and thus relates to eternity. At the same time, the ink is connected to destruction because of its ability to literally burn through the material it is written on, especially if it is exposed to careless treatment or stress. One detail in the larger narrative of *Sense (Universal(s))* is *the fact that the words stress and burnout* are nowadays used about human beings and nature – including the oak, which is the source of the ink.

1. Mycorrhizal network / www.sciencemag.org
2. G.Greider, Sveriges Radio, 28/5, 2017
3. www.dictionary.com/browse/dead-reckon
4. <http://liu.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:797012/FULLTEXT01.pdf>
5. <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/universals-medieval/#OrigSpecMediProbUniv>