



Press Release

# PERFECT VISION

## Stephan Crasneanski

Based on "Evidence" by Soundwalk Collective and Patti Smith

Gallery Studio Naegeli presents the sound visual exhibition "Perfect Vision" by **Stephan Crasneanski**.

The exhibition features three series of drawings, collages and paintings by **Stephan Crasneanski** as well as a sound-video piece in collaboration with **Patti Smith**. "Perfect Vision" takes its inspiration from the writings of three emblematic French poets: Antonin Artaud, Arthur Rimbaud and René Daumal.

This multimedia project is based on the show "Evidence" by **Soundwalk Collective** and **Patti Smith**, exhibited at the Centre Pompidou in Paris between October '22 and March '23. After a big success in Paris and for the first time in Switzerland, an extract of the show will be on view at Studio Naegeli.

**Exhibition: August 16 - October 15, 2023**

**Opening: Tuesday August 15, 19:00**

**Artist will be present**

**STUDIO NAEGELI**

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Between 2019 and 2021, **Stephan Crasneanski** and **Patti Smith** collaborated on the creation of *Perfect Vision*: a triptych of albums which take their inspiration from the writings of three emblematic French poets: Antonin Artaud, Arthur Rimbaud and René Daumal. Central to the work was the poets' necessity to travel to different lands to acquire a new vision and perspective on themselves and their art. Recorded in the Sierra Tarahumara of Mexico, the Abyssinian valley of Ethiopia, and the Himalayan Summit of India respectively, the core idea is that each landscape holds sleeping memories that are the witness of human passage. Produced with Russell Elevado, Leonardo Heiblum, Nicolas Becker and Soundwalk Collective's Simone Merli, each album retraces the poets' footsteps, channelled through on-location recorded soundscapes and musicalities, in search of hidden, earthy sounds that hold embedded existence, with Patti Smith revisiting the poets' words that have been inspired by the landscapes. The result is a sound and visual montage that traverses the works of Rimbaud, Artaud and Daumal in their voyage to elsewhere.

Stimulated by these metaphysical journeys, the musical and sound composition of *Perfect Vision* is the starting point for this exhibition that Soundwalk Collective and Patti Smith have conceived for the Centre Pompidou.

*Evidence* is a poetic and immersive quest, an ode to a world without borders, a contemporary reflection on the infinite and the universal, a spiritual quest for oneness as a living and life-giving presence.

The physical, sound and visual journeys of Soundwalk Collective enter into a conversation with the poetic trajectories of Patti Smith, to create a new vision and language.

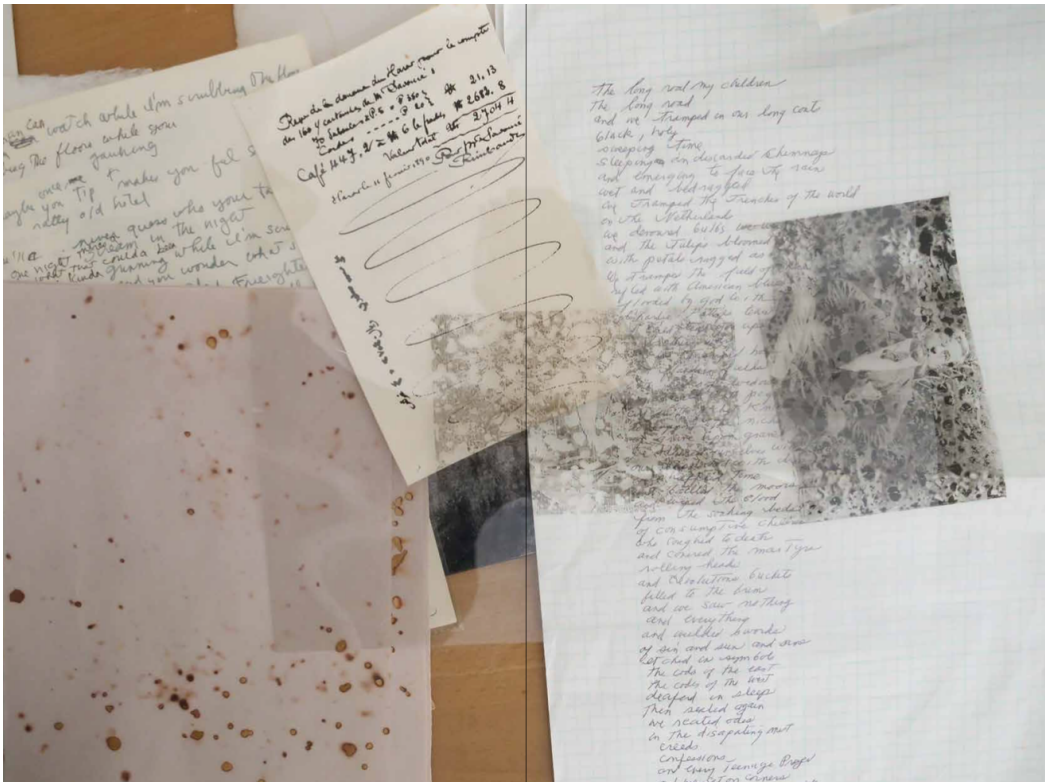
The exhibition space presents sound, film and abstract imagery.



© Stephan Crasneanski



Patti Smith © Stephan Crasneanski



# "All is evidence"

By Patti Smith

Verification, substantiation, corroboration, affirmation, authentication, attestation, documentation, declaration, signs, traces, manifestation.

To speak of Evidence is to speak of a friendship that originated up above the world, on a flight from Paris to New York City. Stephan Crasneanski and I were seated across from one another; I don't remember how we first spoke. I do know that by the end of our rapport, we were no longer strangers.

Our discussions led swiftly to an intense visual and sonic collaboration. This alliance produced *Killer Road*, focused on the death of the singer Nico, which conjured a road in Ibiza, a fatal accident amid the screaming of crickets and stars crackling at night. My interpretation of Nico's poetry and lyrics was embedded within the frenetic language of *Soundwalk Collective*, a shimmering backdrop for her rhythmic torrent of words.

After finishing *Killer Road*, not wishing to cease this evolving communication, we continued to develop new projects. Retracing the steps of the poet adventurer Arthur Rimbaud, Stephan journeyed to Harar, one of the holiest cities of Islam, and on to the Abyssinian high-plateau. He returned with images, film, and recordings, bringing evidences of these sacred places to me. These tokens helped to generate an atmosphere enabling me to channel Rimbaud in Abyssinia. Propelled by the chanting of Ethiopia's Sufi musicians, the sounds of the wind and the relentless rains, the swirl of dust rising from the red earth, I found a voice for our second recording, *Mummer Love*.

foreboding mountains, swam in unforgiving waters, and rode in the back of trucks across the African plain. All contained the scent of these places, my window, my earth. I was able to tread where he had trodden.

And so, I entered the alchemist's castle, where all things are spun into gold. Not the small bars of gold or heavy coinage that burdened the belt of Rimbaud, not a certain drug to deaden the pain of Artaud's existence, not even the translucent tiny "peradam" found on the slopes of Daumal's Mount Analogue. Rather the incalculable riches of a friendship formed in the clouds, up above the world.

Happiest when tackling multiple projects, we embarked on yet another work, *Peyote Dance*, reflecting our mutual love of Antonin Artaud. Deciding to approach him from an unexplored angle, Stephan departed for Mexico to the Copper Canyon in the Sierra Tarahumara. It was here that Artaud had participated in the exhausting and transporting peyote ritual. As Stephan gathered aural components in this treacherous region, I remained in New York City, deep in study. My room was strewn with books, sketches and photographs as I meditated on the harrowing and ecstatic peyote dance, channeling Artaud's strangely empathetic, visceral voice.

Stephan searched for the proximity of these complex masters, I for their state of mind. In homage to the poet-mystic René Daumal, he once again packed his gear and set off for the majestic mountain, Nanda Devi, bliss-giving goddess, the tallest peak of the Garhwal Himalaya. To make ready for my own ascent, I read translations of Sanskrit texts as well as Daumal's great unfinished work, *Mount Analogue*.

Our trilogy completed with the physical recordings of the work of Arthur Rimbaud, Antonin Artaud and René Daumal. In this installation at the Centre Pompidou we have amassed the ephemera gathered from our mental and physical pilgrimage: cloth, beads, wood and stones, indigenous instruments. For us, all is Evidence. Stephan combed through mounds of preparatory debris as I drew, composed and made maps that were not maps but footprints of imagination. It was he who had journeyed to caves and deserts and altitudes I could not negotiate. He climbed

foreboding mountains, swam in unforgiving waters, and rode in the back of trucks across the African plain. All contained the

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For questions please get in touch with Anna Högl

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In collaboration with the **Röthlisberger Collection**

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## **Opening hours**

**16th August - 17th September**

Wed - Sun 14:00 - 18:30 and by appointment

**18th September - 15th of October**

By appointment