



Staircase 19.01. – 03.04.2016

SASHA HUBER:
MY RACISM IS A HUMANISM. A LECTURE
(2013)

Duration: 29 min

Director, Producer: Sasha Huber

Author: Hans Barth

Translator: Gyan David Sharan

Cast: Thomas Götz as Louis Agassiz

Casting: Sasha Huber, Petri Saarikko

Director of Photography: Siro Micheroli

Cinematographer: Christoph Fritschi, Siro Micheroli

Post-production: Combo Entertainment

Until recently, the life and work of Louis Agassiz (1807-1873) have been intentionally embellished. He has mainly been presented as a glaciologist, scientist, and director of academic institutions, both in his country of origin, Switzerland, and in his adopted country, the USA.

In 2007, the international “Démonter Louis Agassiz” campaign, launched by historian Hans Fässler, began to open the eyes of the Swiss public, and exposed Louis Agassiz’s involvement in crimes against humanity.

Louis Agassiz was one of the pioneering thinkers of 19th century’s ‘scientific racism’. He studied enslaved Africans in the places of their suffering, and taught that they were innately and eternally inferior. He advocated strict racial segregation, ethnic cleansing, and government measures to prevent the birth of interracial children. His ideology can be traced right up to the Nazis’ racial theories.

Visual artist Sasha Huber began her body of work about Louis Agassiz in 2008 with the *Rentyhorn* project, renaming a mountain that has been known by the name Louis Agassiz. The mountain’s new name Rentyhorn commemorates Renty, a slave who Agassiz ordered to be photographed on a South Carolina plantation “to prove the inferiority of the black race. In summer 2013, Huber had her first solo exhibition (Louis Agassiz (1807-2013): Eine Heimsuchung) in Switzerland in Frauenfeld, following an artist’s residency during which she added greatly to her Agassiz project. For one of her new works for this exhibition she invited Agassiz scholar Hans Barth from Freiburg, Switzerland, to write the script for a theatre piece. This was performed by Thomas Götz, an actor from the Swiss canton of Thurgau. In the fictitious lecture, Agassiz attempts to vindicate himself and his theories.

Sasha Huber is a visual artist of Swiss-Haitian heritage, born in Zurich (Switzerland) in 1975. She lives and works in Helsinki (Finland). Huber’s creative practice spans a variety of media, including video, photography, performance-based interventions, and publications. She has participated in numerous international exhibitions, including the 56th la Biennale di Venezia in 2015, 19th Biennale of Sydney in 2014, and holds an MA from the University of Art and Design Helsinki, and is currently undertaking doctoral research on racism through the lens of art at the Department of Art at Aalto University, Helsinki (Finland).

Enquiries:

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