

SWARMS, SPIDERS, MOTHS

SEARCHING FOR TRACES: MAXIMILIAN PRÜFER, INSECT WHISPERER

For six years Maximilian Prüfer has been developing his own printing process. Using what he calls “naturantype,” the artist records such phenomena as the beating wings of moths, or the trails of ants and snails and questions their structural processes. Prüfer’s works are highly aesthetic objects and conceptual examinations of the world. *BRUT* is Prüfer’s first monograph.

Berlin, January 17, 2017 – “I’m fascinated by movement and patterns, time, space, and anything that flies,” explains Maximilian Prüfer. The thirty-year-old has developed a printing technique that makes it possible for him to capture even the most minimal of movements and preserve them in the form of a print. His specially coated paper is so sensitive that it allows the tracks of ants or the beating of a moth’s wings to be seen. Although the process of creating an image seems to be left to chance, Prüfer also provocatively intervenes in the movements, by using traces of scent, bait, and obstructions to pre-determine the direction paths will take.

For Prüfer, the swarm is a structural model, while the printed surface is a seismograph of the most miniscule state of existence. How do living creatures behave in certain situations; how do they organize themselves—and is it possible to perceive regularities in them? In dialogue with nature, Prüfer explores social and philosophical models using the animals as an example. He particularly examines the correlation between culture and evolution and puts his findings in relation to the behavior of man.

Yet, it’s not just the traces of the smallest living creatures that comprise a major theme of the art that Prüfer introduces in his role as a chronicler of change. The motion of water, or the vividness of a dead fish are existentially questioned. “At the moment an image is produced, human anatomy allows for the possibility of movement, as well as of portrayal. The naturantype makes it possible for me to depict nearly every movement in the image. The foundation for each of my pictures is a precise concept of the image—which, however, I usually don’t translate through myself, but through a natural phenomenon or through movements. To put it very simply, I’m fascinated by how one can make it possible to see complex themes, or discover an opportunity for clarity.”

Prüfer has been awarded the City of Augsburg’s Art Prize for visual arts for his philosophical and artistic investigation. *BRUT* is now his first monograph. Essays by the authors Markus Gabriel, Roman Grabner, Alexandra Grimmer, and Claire Breukel invite readers to consider the world’s existential questions—and to trace their own vestiges.



**MAXIMILIAN PRÜFER
BRUT**

Texts Claire Breukel, Markus Gabriel,
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Graphic Design Alexandra Fuchs,
Maximilian Prüfer

German, English
2016. 172 pp., 95 ills.
25.00 x 29.00 cm

39,80 EUR

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Especially in the digital age, Hatje Cantz regards itself an element linking museums, artists, galleries, collectors, and art lovers. Conveying knowledge - in terms of both content and visuals - as well as an enthusiasm for art is always at the heart of our engagement.

In keeping with our ambition to make it possible to experience art beyond the medium of the book, Hatje Cantz has launched the EDITION GERD HATJE as we continue to expand our portfolio of strictly limited, signed editions featuring works on paper, photographic works of art, and art objects.

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