

BERND NICOLAISEN

BIOGRAPHY

Bernd Nicolaisen (*1959) is a Swiss artist. He calls his remarkable photographic representations a "viewing of layers". He explores hidden finds from the history of the earth, which he tracks down in seemingly untouched, magical places. What he investigates in collaboration with scientists such as glaciologists, astrophysicists and geologists and abstracts in his work is the interaction and interplay of light in and on materials such as water, ice, stone and wood.

The deep ice blue in the almost 1000-year old glacier ice of Iceland is created by the refraction of light in the oxygenpoor ice that has been purified over hundreds of years (Restlicht, 2015). The wood of the mountain pines in the Sierra Nevada (USA) was ignited several times by lightning in its more than 4000-year lifespan, is now hard as stone and lives on inside the pines (Cycle Wood, 2008). The iron water deep from the earth of the Lower Engadine (CH) together with daylight and oxygen, promotes the formation of invisible microalgae which, through photosynthesis, leave a magical play of colors on stone structures (Iron Water Engadin, 2021).

Nicolaisen combines the 3.4 billion old rock dust from the geological investigations in the Pilbara (AUS) in physical and chemical processes with oxides, silver and gold pigments with local earths and powders to form stratagrams. Connections on glass plates, which, in collaboration with Adam Lowe and Factum Arte, merge into playful objects and look like seas of stars from distant galaxies (Strata of Pilbara, 2019-2021, Documentary).

Nicolaisen started his projects in 2004 with the 8x10" large format and a twelve-year work on the series of works „Restlicht“ 2004-2016. In 2012 he produced the documentary of the same name and in 2015 published the catalogue "Restlicht, Photographs-Tableaux-Lightboxes" for Hatje Cantz. In his abstract natural form conceptions, he works with a variety of media. Using photographs, stratagrams, 3D prints or objects, a dynamic work is created which, through its playfulness and multi-layered interpretations, reveals the change in nature and approaches to our earth- and lifetime.

Bernd Nicolaisen has shown his work in solo and group exhibitions, including: „Restlicht“, Grossmünster, Zurich (2015), „Restlicht“, Museum Gletschergarten, Lucerne (2016-2017); „Restlicht“, Scheublein + Bak, Zurich (2017); „Black Pearl“, Masterpiece London (2018); „Head of 67P“ and „Chury out of Horizon“, Physics Institute - University of Bern (2018); Photo Basel (2019); Musée jurassien des Arts (2024). In 2021 he was nominated for the Prix Pictet, the world's leading price for photography and sustainability. His works are represented in collections.

SELECTED TEXTS

EVIDENCE IN THE LITHOSPHERE - THE CRITICAL ZONE FOR LIFE

ANCIENT GLACIAL ICE - RESTLICHT

IMAGES OF WONDER, PENSIVENESS AND PERSITENCE

COMET IN DEEP SPACE - HEAD OF 67P ESA/ROSETTA MISSION

METEOR IMPACT - STRATA OF PILBARA

WOOD - TRANSFORMATIVE POWER: INSIDE OUT - WHITE MOUNTAINS

OXIDATION PROCESS OF WATER - IRON WATER ENGADINA

INSIDE THE GLACIER: EXPOSURE TIME

ICE - FROZEN SOURCES OF INSPIRATION

EVIDENCE IN THE LITHOSPHERE - THE CRITICAL ZONE FOR LIFE

Adam Lowe

The first universal common ancestor was a single cell capable of recording information, replicating, morphing and surviving in shallow warm water. We know it existed 3.458 billion years ago as a domal Stromatolith because we have the evidence in the Siliceous Sinter found in the Pilbara Craton. It may have existed much earlier but as the rocks metamorphosed the subtle evidence was destroyed.

Geological time is beyond our comprehension and geology keeps reaching further and further into the past. Millions of years become billions. The current estimate is that the planet is 4.56 billion years old, perhaps more. Evidence of microscopic organisms can be found in the rock record from about 3.7 billion years ago in shallow water sedimentary rocks, where they were preserved for eons. It took another 3 billion years for fossilized animals to appear in the rock record.

Time as a child had an elastic quality, resisting compression; an hour was a long time, a day an eternity. As we age it accelerates. Since Einstein, concepts of time (and space) have changed fundamentally yet nature reminds us that there are measures of time that remain unchanged and predictable. The solstices and the cycle of the moon happen today as they did for the first humans and as they had done for millions of years before humanity existed. In the eighteenth century with the study of the rocks that form the lithosphere and the clouds that are evidence of the atmosphere, the critical zone around the surface of the planet capable of supporting life came into focus. The forms of life that emerged from the sedimentary rocks shook religion and accepted knowledge in fundamental ways. Biblical time instantly became a fiction as the planet revealed its longevity. The first images based on the fossils of dinosaurs and other creatures that lived millions of years ago, shaped the narratives of the Natural History Museums that merged scientific study with technological innovation and the artistic imagination. Geology asserted the fact that humanity occupies a moment in time.

One of Bernd Nicolaisen's photographs of a polished piece of stone contains a feature that is referred to as the "Quatro Amigos" – this anthropocentric projection of friendship onto four single celled organisms should not be allowed to distract from the significance of the image. The four organic nodules are encapsulated traces of organic matter almost 3.5 billion years old. They are the earliest evidence of life.

The photographic image, enlarged and printed onto a smooth gesso surface with many of the qualities of the polished stone, is both poetic and provocative. As with the 3D alabaster objects, it is not initially obvious what you are looking. With information from Nicolaisen's film and interviews with geology professors Martin Van Kranendonk and Kathleen Campbell, the picture moves beyond geological evidence and delves into the nature of life itself.

While Nicolaisen's photographic projects have always focused on time, it is in a form we can 'hold in the palm of our hand'; the frozen water of the glaciers in Iceland and the surface of the Bristlecone pines in California in which living wood and stone appear to fuse. These images represent periods of time that we can relate to. They are variations on the traditional themes of vanitas painting; hourglasses, flowers, candles, skulls, soap bubbles, ear of corn. Time has always been a theme in art. With his work and the film "ZerOne - First Life" Bernd Nicolaisen manages to merge art, science and technology to mind-boggling effect.

Adam Lowe (*Oxford, 1959) is the director of Factum Arte and founder of Factum Foundation for Digital Technology in Conservation. He was trained in Fine Art at the Ruskin School of Drawing in Oxford and the RCA London. In the mid 1990's Lowe established a print workshop in London dedicated to the production of pigment transfer prints that blurred the boundary between image and form.

In 2001, Lowe moved to Madrid and created Factum Arte, a multidisciplinary workshop dedicated to digital mediation for the production of works for contemporary artists. Lowe founded Factum Foundation in 2009 with the aim of using Factum Arte's innovative processes and technologies for preservation, high-resolution recording, education, and the development of thought-provoking exhibitions.

He has been an adjunct professor at the MS Historic Preservation at Columbia University, New York since 2016. Lowe became a British Designer Industry, awarded by the British Royal Society of Arts. He has completed recording and preservation projects in Egypt, Nigeria, Somaliland, Saudi Arabia, Russia, Brazil, Chad, Iraq, Italy, UK, USA, among other countries, and his work has been exhibited at institutions such as the National Gallery of Art, the Royal Academy, The Prado Museum, Waddesdon Manor and Fondazione Giorgio Cini. Lowe has written extensively on the subject of originality, authenticity and preservation.

ANCIENT GLACIAL ICE - RESTLICHT

RESIDUAL LIGHT: A HYBRID OF PHOTOGRAPHY AND LIGHT ART, 2004-2016

Klaus Honnef

Photographs used to be considered where images were assigned a defining characteristic. But the photographed, analog images in reality are silhouetted. Nevertheless, the light initiates the photographic process. It sets off the automatism, which distinguishes it from every other technical method of image creation.

Residual light is the trace of light remaining at the end of the day, just before nightfall. It creates a special, often poetically atmospheric mood. It requires patience and determination to put it to photographic use. Residual Light is the title of Bernd Nicolaisen's project, which distinguishes it from conventional photography.

Light is not only the cause of what becomes visible in Nicolaisen's pictures, it is also the subject matter itself; sometimes resembling the photograms, made without a camera, which initiated the history of photography. His works remind us of the light paintings of Heinz Hajek-Halke, through to the work of Chargesheimer and Heinz Mack. What becomes visible, apart from the light, in Nicolaisen's pictures can appear to be just as abstract as the works of the artists mentioned previously. It is, however, the reflection of a precise, perceptible, and completely tangible reality.

When considering the meaning of Nicolaisen's images, common categories of attribution fail. This is what makes it easier to express what his pictures are not, rather than what they are. They bear an astounding resemblance to photograms, but only to the kind that develop thanks to natural light. They are recordings, made from the distinctive point of view of their author, utilizing the specific capabilities of the bellows camera. So light is not their only creative factor. They distinguish themselves from light paintings as they are produced without the use of artificial light sources.

It is also significant that, although light is the object of the images, it produces a picture of something else, and does not exclusively portray itself. One may grant Nicolaisen's pictorial objects a general kinship to the illuminated art of Adolf Luther, James Turrell, and the like; who, as they reveal their art in a space, will simultaneously make the space itself appear.

The images originate from ancient glacial ice found in the caves of Iceland, formed during a time span of tens of thousands of years. The light, penetrating layers of ice in which traces of lava have been embedded over time, is residual light that has been progressively filtered, refracted, and reflected. It sparsely illuminates the cave. Traces of lava emerge as structural elements. Time is condensed into the image as if it were a quality of the ice itself.

Nicolaisen presents the finished pictures in light boxes, similar to those of Jeff Wall but in significantly larger, almost superhuman formats. Additionally, he displays them in a cave-like ambience; for example at his exhibition in the crypt of Zurich cathedral. This provokes a shivering sensation of physical participation in the observer. This specifically selected form of presentation evokes associations with the symbolic meaning of light in almost all cultures, as a metaphor for truth and the divine. In his Residual Light project, Nicolaisen provides a new twist to Plato's famous cave allegory, with an alternative ending. Even shadow worlds can be infiltrated by light you only need to look for it. Residual Light manifests a hybrid of documentary photography and the art of light manipulation, in a uniquely modern sense.

Prof. Klaus Honnef, Art Journalist and Curator

Born in 1939 in Tilsit. 1965–70 Managing Editor at the Aachener Nachrichten, 1970–74 Director of the Westphalian Art Association, Münster; 1974–2000 Chief Officer Exhibition Rheinische Landesmuseum Bonn. 1972 and 1977, one of the organizers of documenta 5 and 6 in Kassel, where his photography appeared for the first time in the name of art. Through his publications and exhibitions, Klaus Honnef has firmly established photography in the European art scene. Prof. emeritus for Theory of Photography in Kassel, from 1986–2009 also a visiting professor and lecturer at German universities and colleges. Since 2000, he has been an independent curator and writer. He has curated more than 500 exhibitions worldwide, is the author of numerous books on art and photography, most recently *Network Diary* (Cologne, 2015). He was awarded the Chevalier de l'ordre des arts et des lettres of the French Republic. In 2011, he received the Culture Prize of the German Society for Photography.

IMAGES OF WONDER, PENSIVENESS AND PERSISTENCE

Daniel Blochwitz

When considering the meaning of Nicolaisen's images, common categories of attribution fail. This is what makes it easier to express what his pictures are not, rather than what they are. They bear an astounding resemblance to photographs, but only to the kind that develop thanks to natural light. They are recordings, made from the distinctive point of view of their author, utilizing the specific capabilities of the bellows camera. So light is not their only creative factor. They distinguish themselves from light paintings as they are produced without the use of artificial light sources. The epoch we have entered recently is said to be fundamentally defined by the way humans have impacted and shaped our planet's appearance and conditions, its material and energy cycles. We have literally moved mountains. And there is no doubt, no matter how remote of a place we find ourselves on this planet, we can always detect signs that show how we have effected its natural make up. One can observe manifestations of human activity everywhere and find traces of its effects anywhere. Thus, we named this age—somewhat immodestly but also not really in our “honor”—after ourselves: Anthropocene.

Yet, with this new era and the threat its defining conditions pose, even for our own survival, also comes the realization of how short-lived our existence has been in relation to the history of the planet, our solar system and the universe. On the grand scale of cosmic time, we might be the equivalent of a meteor impact. A few thousand years of civilization and nothing to show for, if the worst case scenario proves to be where we are heading right now.

Breaking it down to human scale, one could compare it with every human's struggle to come to terms with the finite nature of our existence as conscious beings and the meaning of our own life, realizing that most of us will be forgotten within a generation or two. Our assumed legacy negligible. Yes, life on earth goes on. Our blue marble will keep revolving around the sun - indifferent to our existence or absence. Although we have changed this planet lastingly, in relation to deep time the presence of our species has barely registered in the universe.

In other words, if one looks at the long exposure of earth's history, human history has been a mere blur and simply disappears in the depth of time. To relate it to photography, as we have learned as early as with the first reliably dated photograph of people by Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre, if we firmly affix a camera, point it at a busy street scene and then expose its light-sensitive image carrier for a long time, the resulting picture will blur the moving human beings into invisibility (except, of course, for those standing absolutely still for the time of exposure). Meaning, if we think of our life-time as a blur of existence in this world, then the disappearing act of a long-exposure photograph becomes its perfect metaphor. Only if we narrow the shutter speed on our camera or the time frame of our historical observation, will we be able to step (back) into the picture and become discernible.

Bernd Nicolaisen has experimented with this relationship between photographic timespans and geological time in most of his work. Because nothing is harder to envision than the finiteness of our lives and the absolute infinity of time and outer space, Nicolaisen not only makes the unimaginable tangible, but he also interweaves quasi-scientific questions with those that are almost philosophical in nature. He is a time traveller with a camera. For example, by simply photographing the gnarly wood of some of the oldest trees on earth (Cycle Wood, 2005-2008), found in the White Mountains, he shows how relative the idea of chance is: each of the multi-millennial-old trees has been marked by lightening at some point. What we normally would consider one of the rarest natural phenomena becomes a routine occurrence, once we free our sense of time from the constraints of the human lifespan.

In his early work, *Restlicht* (2004-2015), published in a photo book under the same title by Hatje Cantz (2015), Nicolaisen has taken us into some glaciers on Iceland and in the Swiss Alps. In works, like *Pilgrim* (2016 / 2018 3D Resin), deep inside the cavernous underbellies of this so-called eternal ice, he has captured the momentarily light of the low-standing sun, but also what has been trapped inside the ice itself for thousand years: air bubbles and volcanic ash. The ice provides us with a picture of what “has been”, to apply Roland Barthes' notion of photography (ça-a-été).

Yet, when the photographer returned to the glaciers a few years later, the spots where he had taken images of the ice were now exposed to the sky due to our warming planet: the ice melted, the air bubbles released into the current atmosphere, and the volcanic ash washed away. It makes one think how fast we have developed from a merely capable species to one that has such detrimental effects.

In yet another series (Strata of Pilbara, 2019-2021), Nicolaisen photographed some of the oldest surface rock formations, found in Australia, which are subject to scientific research dedicated to questions regarding the origin of life on Earth. But rather than just relying on photography, Nicolaisen also sought to relate to the "larger picture" by taking inspiration from the place itself, its material, topography and nature. In this role, he interpreted what he found and experienced on location, working with minerals and pigments on glass plates, something he calls Stratagrams. They move away from the pure photographic image and are rather intended to make visible what exists and takes place hidden in the depths of the earth, all the possible colors, shapes, structures and processes.

The Stratagram combines aspects of painting and photography. The artist Nicolaisen is interested in the relationships between the elements and how an image can be created through the direct action of adhesion and cohesion. The materials and chemicals used react very differently to each other. He seeks to consciously control and subjectively influence their pictorial effect - but in a processual way and thus not as directly as in painting. The emerging filigree, very natural-looking forms and structures owe their shape to random processes and reactions. They take us on a kind of „pictorial journey“ through richly detailed „landscapes“ that, at first glance, do indeed resemble aerial photographs. The image is created by physical and chemical processes that are staged analog on glass plates and then digitized. The stratagram, or „chemical image,“ consists of, among other things, water, oxides, methanol, copper, gold and silver pigments, local earths and material samples, some of which came from the boreholes at North Pole Dome in the Pilbara (Australia). These natural elements create the actual spatial depth effect of the painting and thus a fascinating world outside of human experience. This is wonderfully manifested in a work like Strata of Pilbara (2019 / Lightbox 2022). The subconscious mind permeates this image as we look at it, opening up spaces to our perception and setting our imagination free.

Nicolaisen has applied this dual practice of photography and artistic interpretation first in project Comet in Deep Space (2018). For this project he had teamed up with the European Space Agency to transport us deep into space - onto the dusty surface of the unusually shaped comet 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko. Having circled through our solar system for millions of years, the comet has been discovered and eventually also recorded up-close by humans between 2014 and 2016, when the ESA Rosetta Mission had joined the comet's orbit around the sun, and stayed with it observing its activity rise and decline. Translating data into photographic images, like in Head of 67P - ESA/Rosetta Mission, #10 (2018), Bernd Nicolaisen makes visible what no human eye has seen in situ. And (probably) never will. In a second step, titled Chury out of Horizon (2019), the photographer Nicolaisen becomes the artist, moving one step further into the realm of the imagination. For this end, he created different silhouettes from the original ESA model of the comet. Using these as outlines, he then applied a range of earthly elements—that can be assumed to be found also in outer space—in order to artistically interpret the information of the technical images and create fictitious "surface" images of 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko.

Bernd Nicolaisen constantly pushes and expands the boundaries of photography, working with partners like Adam Lowe and his team of experts of Factum Arte in Madrid in order to find innovative ways to translate his images and imagination into suitable forms. These can range from standard photographic prints via tableaux and light boxes all the way to various elaborate and labor-intensive 3D relief objects, like Rhythms of the Heart (2008 / 3D in Alabaster, 2022). In the end, what we are looking at in Bernd Nicolaisen's art consists of images far removed from anything that could be called straight photography, even if they may have started out as such. Sometimes they still read as photography, but consistently play with indexical representation. Yet, his images are also never truly abstract, because what they depict is always firmly rooted in the world and the artist's wonder, respect and concern for it. It takes time and the willingness to engage with the work in order to unpack and appreciate its generous and expansive meaning/s. Thus, the best way to describe Bend Nicolaisen's artistic practice may be: He thinks through photography about the world and our place within. In other words, his work is unquenchable curiosity and applied philosophy.

Daniel Blochwitz (* 1973 / D)

studied in the USA and graduated from the University of Florida with a Master of Fine Arts in photography in 2003. During his studies he taught photography independently for several semesters and curated his first exhibition together with Professor Barbara Jo Revelle. After graduation, he went to New York to complete the Whitney Museum's Postgraduate Independent Study Program. From 2005 he worked for various galleries, initially in New York and later as director of the Edwynn Houk gallery in Zurich, which specializes in photography. Blochwitz has been self-employed in photography since 2015 and works as a freelance curator, lecturer and consultant in Zurich.

COMET IN DEEP SPACE

„HEAD OF 67P - ESA/ROSETTA MISSION“, 2018

In collaboration with the MiARD project, led by the University of Bern, and the Max Planck Institute for Solar System Research of Göttingen, Bernd Nicolaisen has developed his two series „Head of 67P - ESA/ Rosetta Mission“ und „Chury out of Horizon“. The works revolve around mysterious places that have never been seen before, places more than 400 million km away from planet Earth. Within this seemingly abstract visual world, new perspectives on comet 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko reveal themselves to the viewers. The large-format pictures in 3D print- and tableaux-formats incorporate two different work series.

Head of 67P - ESA/ Rosetta Mission“ „Analog Echo“

The work is based from the ESA/Rosetta mission, the three-dimensional finger print of 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko. The analogue reproduction technique leads to a three-dimensional effect in the pictures, giving them a spatiality and a mystical glow. The effect is achieved by transforming digital data into an analog image and reinterpreting with 3D technology. (Océ elevated print on aluminium)

The first steps: Viewing the existing data of the ESA. (Mission start: March 2, 2004, mission end with absence of the Rosetta probe and landing on 67P / Tschurjumow-Gerasimenko was on September 30, 2016. The data size of the transferred image material: 1,748 × 1,748 pixels, file size: 1.09 MB, MIME type: image / jpeg)

Next steps: Combining individual images into mosaic images. Some panorama pictures from the series „Head of 67P“ consist partly of more than 20 individual pictures. For each comet pass of the probe around the comet, serial images could be made from different heights. This was followed by the selection of the images, the definition of the cut-outs and the processing of the material for the composition of the image. This data was then developed on slide film. Then the reproduction was carried out with analog optics for the newly defined surface structure and a „glow“. This reproduction is carried out on high-resolution, digital data carriers in preparation for further processing into 3D relief images. On this basis of high-resolution data, the tonality of the image was converted into a 3D relief using the process of “image noise”, giving it a three-dimensional shape. (Developed process: Adam Lowe, Factum Arte, Madrid) These data serve as the basis for 3D printing, the method for elevated prints. Layer by layer, the relief structure is developed from the data. (Application of the layers) In various test series, the tonality was then defined and printed as image information on the reflux. The challenge in this process is the range.

PROJECT TEAM

Dr. Holger Sierks, Max Planck Institute for Solar System Research, Göttingen, D

Prof. Nicolas Thomas, PD Dr. Martin Rubin, Physics Institute - University of Bern, CH

Dr. James Whitby, Amanuensis GmbH, Leandro von Werra, Bern, CH

MiARD Project: This project was (partially) funded by the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) under contract number 16.0008-2 and the EU's Horizon 2020 program contract number 649660.

Work: Head of 67P - ESA /Rosetta Mission, #10, 2018

3D Océ elevated print on aluminium, 120 x 120 x 5 cm

Océ print on aluminium by Factum Arte, Madrid

Copyright: Bernd Nicolaisen based on the Rosetta / OSIRIS cameras,

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COMET IN DEEP SPACE

„CHURY OUT OF HORIZON - ESA/ROSETTA MISSION“, 2018

„67P Abstractions“

The silhouettes of an ESA model of 67P formed the basis for this work. In order to display the surfaces, different material were used that reacted through an interplay of adhesion and cohesion. Among others through water, methanol, oxides, different pigments and powders. This leads to associations similar to the material and structures existing on the comet, which include and emphasise the effect of the tableaux.

The Max Planck Institute in Göttingen used the scientifically collected data to create the 3D shape of the comet 67P / Churyumov-Gerasimenko in the form of a dummy. The views of the different silhouettes of this dummy formed the basis of this series. The different shooting angles give very different shapes. The goal: To interpret the surfaces of the comet within a scientifically known and researched form. Empty space is created within this silhouette. Based on the visible, real structures of the comet, completely new surfaces and views are created in the series "Chury out of Horizon". For the abstract representation of these surfaces, materials were used that react to one another through adhesion and cohesion. I.a. with water, methanol, oxides, various pigments and powders. These combinations of materials create connections that incorporate, reinterpret and reinforce the subjective effect of the picture panels in an interplay with the materials and structures explored on the comet.

This chemogram gives an idea of real structures from the „Head of 67P“ series and, according to the ESA, visually indicates parallels to surface structures on Mars. BN: „Random chemical compounds result in my fingerprint in the view of comet 67P“. These structures, colors and shapes are produced on a glass plate. Shapes are the comet's silhouettes. These glass plates are then reproduced using a system of light guidance and high-resolution photography and are the basis for further processing in the 3D relief images of this series. On the basis of the high-resolution data, the tonality of the image is converted into a 3D relief with a process of „image noise“ and then modeled on this basis. (Procedure: Adam Lowe, Factum Arte, Madrid). These data then serve as the basis for 3D printing, the method for elevated prints. In various work steps, layer by layer from the 3D data material from Factum Arte is transferred to the relief structure. (Application of the layers) In various test series, the tonality is then defined and printed on the Relief.

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Work: Chury out of Horizon - ESA /Rosetta Mission, #202, 2018

3D Océ elevated print on aluminium, 120 x 150 x 5 cm

Océ print on aluminium by Factum Arte, Madrid Factum Arte, Madrid

Copyright: Bernd Nicolaisen based on the Rosetta / OSIRIS cameras,

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METEOR IMPACT

STRATA OF PILBARA, 2019-2022

Daniel Blochwitz

If we cannot see certain things directly or can observe processes directly because they take place over very long periods of time or in inaccessible places, but our curiosity is fascinated by them and wants to make them visible, then the visual imagination of the artist is required. The desire to know and the desire to art unite here to create artistic interpretations of scientific questions. Only the artist is in the privileged position of being able to make claims without scientific proof and to be able to fill white areas in an imaginative way. On the one hand, as an artist who works with the medium of photography, a very precise instrument is available to make things visible. But it also has its limitations. This is where Bernd starts with strategies that expand photography and artistic form finding.

PHOTOGRAPHS

His project "Strata of Pilbara" is also about scientific investigations and their artistic interpretations in the context of the relativity of our concept and understanding of time. The previous and underlying groups of works on ancient tree wood or thousand-year-old glacier ice, for example, provided the basis for this work. This time the focus of Nicolaisen's photographs is on the earth's crust and deals with the surfaces and structures of some of the oldest rock formations on our planet. As in the previous works, Bernd makes use of the shallow incident light of the morning and evening sun, and can work out surface differences as small as millimeters. Light and shadow re-place our precise sense of touch and enable rock structures to be experienced in photography. Combined with the illustration of found rock and mineral colors, a very precise picture of the materiality of the rocks is created.

It is exciting that geological time periods are juxtaposed with photographic time spans and that together they create image abstractions of naturally created and shaped rocks that are scientifically explainable and can be assigned accordingly.

STRATAGRAMS

The works in the second series, the „Stratagrams“, move even further in the direction of artistic interpretation of the geological traces found on site. They depart from the straight photographic image and instead are intended to visualize what normally exists and takes place in the depth of the earth, all those possible colors, forms, textures, and processes.

The „Stratagrams“ combines aspects of painting and photography. BN: „I am interested in the relationships between the elements and how the interaction of adhesion and cohesion generates an image.“ The materials and chemicals used react most differently with one another. Nicolaisen can deliberately direct and subjectively influence their visual effect - but in a process-like manner and thus not as immediate as in painting and without any representational intention. The resulting intricate, natural-looking forms and textures owe their gestalt to random processes and reactions.

This results in extreme, highly detailed densities and definitions in a kind of „visual journey“, which at first glance bears a resemblance to aerial photographs. The image is created through physical and chemical processes, which are staged analogously on glass plates and then digitized. The „stratagrams“, the „chemical image“, consists of water, oxides, methanol, copper, gold and silver pigments, local soils and powders from the boreholes at the North Pole Dome in Pilbara. These natural elements create the actual three-dimensional effect of the picture and a fascinating world outside my own experience. The subconscious penetrates this image upon viewing, thus opening spaces for fantasy and setting our imagination free.

Daniel Blochwitz (* 1973 / D)

studied in the USA and graduated from the University of Florida with a Master of Fine Arts in photography in 2003. During his studies he taught photography independently for several semesters and curated his first exhibition together with Professor Barbara Jo Revelle. After graduation, he went to New York to complete the Whitney Museum's Postgraduate Independent Study Program. From 2005 he worked for various galleries, initially in New York and later as director of the Edwynn Houk gallery in Zurich, which specializes in photography. Blochwitz has been self-employed in photography since 2015 and works as a freelance curator, lecturer and consultant in Zurich.

WOOD - TRANSFORMATIVE POWER

INSIDE OUT – WHITE MOUNTAINS, 2005-2022

Daniel Blochwitz

Man is facing great upheavals. We are fundamentally changing the world around us and are developing such a transformative power that we have even founded a new age: the Anthropocene. The world of images is also changing significantly and extremely rapidly. Here we are at the end of an analogue and material era, where images came out of the box, and are now entering a digital and immaterial era, where our images are calculated by some kind of mirror with a capture button.

Bernd Nicolaisen accompanies both upheavals in his photographs. With great curiosity, he uses the camera to look for places in this world that manifest themselves in geological time dimensions, where people and their development become almost invisible in fast motion. In a way, all that's left is a before and an after. This shows how indifferent our planet and the universe is to our existence. However, what we do with this opportunity is in our hands.

Between 2005 and 2009 Bernd Nicolaisen photographed 4000 year old mountain pines in the remote mountains of the Sierra Nevada with a plate camera on 8x10 inch black and white negative film. The tedious hike with heavy luggage to the hard-to-find trees in the White Mountains and the extensive photographic work on site were part of the process. It has something meditative and awe-inspiring, yes, also quite performative. This is not about topicality and not about the decisive moment in the sense of Henri Cartier Bresson. Bernd Nicolaisen is looking for enduring traces that were there long before him and will be there long after him

The black markings that criss-cross the ancient wood of the pine trees are proof that time and probability are relative terms: every tree here has been struck by lightning at least once in its lifetime. In terms of human lifetimes or even photographic exposure times, this is almost unimaginable. And yet it is exactly what Bernd Nicolaisen manages to make representable in the picture by folding the two time levels together.

More than ten years have passed since Nicolaisen took photographs in the Sierra Nevada. But in this moment of paradigm shift and our changing image culture, he has thought about his earlier work again: in a kind of homage to the analogue process in general and film in particular, he has taken out the negatives again and as such in a new series, Inside Out (2021), reconsidered in today's context.

The wood and its drawing appear different in the negative, alienated. A trained eye can "read" and "translate" this representation. And yet the reversal of the tonal values can also stand as something of its own and in this series it does so quite consciously light trails. The image almost glows from within. Where comparatively little light hit the film, most of the light now penetrates and paints a different picture. The lightest spots often indicate where lightning used to make its way through the wood or where it burned. You can read that allegorically, or simply let yourself be fascinated and enticed by the structures in their abstraction. Removed from reality by at least one degree, the images from Inside Out open up new worlds and other times.

Daniel Blochwitz (* 1973 / D)

studied in the USA and graduated from the University of Florida with a Master of Fine Arts in photography in 2003. During his studies he taught photography independently for several semesters and curated his first exhibition together with Professor Barbara Jo Revelle. After graduation, he went to New York to complete the Whitney Museum's Postgraduate Independent Study Program. From 2005 he worked for various galleries, initially in New York and later as director of the Edwynn Houk gallery in Zurich, which specializes in photography. Blochwitz has been self-employed in photography since 2015 and works as a freelance curator, lecturer and consultant in Zurich.

Work: Dragon, Inside Out White Mountains, 2007-2022

Alabaster, Aluminium and black ink

100 x 80 x 4 cm, 30 kg

Process: Data from 8x10 Inch negative, transformed into 3D. Numerically controlled milled alabaster adhered to an aluminium distribution plate with a rear hanging clip. The stone surface is dyed with black ink to obtain the grey scale and does not have any protective treatment. By Factum Arte Madrid, 2022

Work: Rhythm of the heart, Inside Out White Mountains, 2008-2022

Gesso Aluminium Print

100 x 80 x 2.5 cm, 5 kg

Process: Data from 8x10 Inch negative. High range colour pigment layers on gesso coated aluminium panels. Finished with a microcrystalline wax with an ultraviolet protective filter. By Factum Arte Madrid, 2022

OXIDATION PROCESS OF WATER

IRON WATER ENGADINE, 2021

In the project "Iron Water Engadine" Bernd Nicolaisen is investigating the effects of oxidation processes and microalgae on stone structures, triggered and supported by escaping iron water.

In the Lower Engadine in Switzerland, the mineral water springs from the slate rock deep inside the earth. The so called "sour water" dissolves various elements in the rock through which it flows, such as magnesium, sodium, potassium, calcium, sulfate and iron. After several years, or even decades, the water comes to the surface of the earth as mineral water. During this time, the water was enriched with iron, which is essential for human life in small quantities as a trace element.

Here, when the water emerges from the earth, exciting processes begin, triggered by microscopic organisms, which are the starting points for my new series of works. Iron is also an important part of the chemical building blocks of cells and contributes to algae growth. Microalgae use the light energy of daylight to oxidize water through photosynthesis. In the iron-rich water, these algae cover the rock surfaces and form colored deposits in lemon yellow, dark yellow, orange to red-brown shades.

These organisms, invisible to our eyes, are part of nature, which not only stand for the color intensive shine in the iron water, but also make the basis of life visible to us. Fascinating transformations that inspire me to create my own pictures.

Similar to the lava sediments in the glacier ice of the project "Restlicht", such color, shape and structure giving connections of the elements form, the basis for my photographic abstractions.

Work: Iron Water Engadin, #533, 2020, CH
Archivpigmentprint, 167 x 137 x 5,2 cm
mounted on a Tableaux-System, dibond, wood

INSIDE THE GLACIER - EXPOSURE TIME

Andrea Henkens

Glaciers, volcanoes, and caverns: the Swiss photographer Bernd Nicolaisen compiled unique images of these features of the landscape in the pictures he took in Iceland between 2004 and 2015. He paid special attention to the Breiðamerkurjökull, a glacial lobe of the Vatnajökull located in the southeast of the country; a place he visited several times and observed extensively. Much time was spent on capturing aspects of the glacier with an eight-by-ten-inch large-format camera. His photography, initially in analogue before progressing to digital, requires a lot of time and effort to “transform what is basic into what is unique.”¹ The focus, however, is not only on the time it takes to produce his photographs, but also on expressing the phenomenon of time itself photographically. There is nothing in nature more suitable for this than glaciers: they are thousands of years old, yet their ice diminishes continuously, reminding us of our own frailty and the inevitable transience of nature.

The pictures, such as *Blue Light Waves*, 2014 depict nature in a seemingly untouched and magical way, and often appear to be images from a remote planet, showing places of solitude, silence, melancholia, and even spirituality. In the absence of man and beast, we witness fascinating and bizarre natural landscapes. The appeal of each picture is emphasized by extreme and unusual lighting conditions. The compositions reveal fine nuances of color in monochromatic tones, modulating from ice-blue to gray. The crepuscular light and the same fine details are frequently featured repeatedly. In this way the photographer explores and articulates the structure and surface of glaciers and ice, to visualize them in a simultaneously expressive and documentary style.

Metamorphosis: On the Road to the Third Dimension

Nicolaisen is obsessed with the search for perfect (residual) light for his images. The appearance of seemingly unreal lighting effects is partly due to the limited lighting conditions onsite. The humid weather often experienced around freezing point can add to this quality. Conditions generally allow for approximately six hours of photography each day. Ideally, the sky should be cloudless, to refract the light as powerfully as possible. This transparency effect is supported by lava sediments embedded in the ice. They help give the images a third dimension which Swiss glaciers do not generally provide. Due to their earlier formation and different embedded sediments, they appear to be somewhat two dimensional and milky in comparison, as in *Code*, 2009. In Iceland the sediments help to create a metamorphosis, the light effect transforming the photographs' two-dimensional plane into a third dimension of depth and architectural structure.

Memory: Past and Present

Photography usually records a moment in the past. It should be seen as a memory, taken not for “a ‘copy’ of reality, but for an emanation of past reality,” as Roland Barthes writes in his *Reflections on Photography*.² This approach becomes visible in Nicolaisen's photography: past and present become one.

A similar approach can be found in the work of Hiroshi Sugimoto: his seascapes are, as he describes them, “equally divided between sky and sea, because these elements have been in motion ever since their emergence.”³ They differ only as a result of varying conditions of light and weather, representing the repetitive rhythm of nature.

Nicolaisen's glacial pictures feature an analogue rhythm of light and time based on the internal experience of the artist. He perceives landscape not only visually but also emotionally. Nicolaisen has developed a consistent photographic perception which turns the surface of a landscape into a designed and reduced image without losing touch with the original motif. Nicolaisen's conceptual approach connects his work to the subjective photography of Minor White or Otto Steinert, as he photographically defines the ever-variegating motifs of glaciers and ice.

Landscape Photography as Medium of Self-Perception

Nicolaisen's work appeals to the spectator's imagination. Visual acuity is heightened by the transformation of crystalline shapes and structures. In his conceptual design of natural forms, human intervention rarely, if ever, becomes apparent. No humans, creatures, or signs of civilization are portrayed, so that the sublime, wild, and pristine qualities in the grandiose nature of glaciers, arctic sea, and mountain ranges can be appreciated. Abstract shapes invite the spectator to behold and linger, as in *Black Pearl*, 2008.

¹ „Not quick consumption, but decelerated reception is the foreground ... it's about experiencing the world based on one's vision.“ ⁴

Nothing is staged, yet the images achieve a virtually radiant magic. On the one hand, they suggest approachability; on the other hand, they appear alienated, desolate, forbidding, and almost unreal. They show the magnitude and majestic dignity of glaciers, composed into seemingly uneventful panels of stillness and calm. Monochrome tones and detailed surface structures appear, sometimes in captivating colors, ranging from surreal deep blue to shiny turquoise and sometimes fine hues of gray. Spectacular formations and the smallest lines and shapes are visible, and tiny details appear as ornaments in the high resolution and perfect quality of the pictures, which Nicolaisen develops and prints himself. His focus is essentially on the image; it is not documentation in the scientific sense that is of interest, but the subjective dimension of the artist which simultaneously serves as a documentary record. His images are poetic and painterly rather than political.

Contemporary photographers evidently find a special appeal in the discipline of landscape photography. Many devote themselves to it as a retreat and idyll, using it as an opportunity to pay homage to natural beauty. We see jungles featured in the works of Thomas Ruff, mountains with Axel Hütte, the forest with Jitka Hanzlová, and the fjords and icebergs of Olaf Otto Becker, to name but a few. In the age of lost or disappearing landscapes, destroyed and endangered regions, photography sharpens our visual awareness of these changes.⁵ This transforms Nicolaisen's images, in addition to all their artistic qualities, into a heartfelt plea to preserve and protect nature.

Dr. Andrea Henkens, Art Historian and Author

Born in 1971 in Husum. Doctoral studies in Art History in Kiel and Leipzig with research stays in New York and San Francisco (DAAD scholarship holder); 2002–12 Editorial Board of the magazine *art*; 2012 founding of *kunst | text | konzepte*; diverse essays, scientific articles, exhibition concepts, and press- work for artists; Dr. Henkens's main focus is photography.

¹ Interview with Bernd Nicolaisen in Hamburg, March 8, 2015.

² Roland Barthes, *Die helle Kammer. Bemerkungen zur Photographie*, Frankfurt am Main 1989, S. 99.

³ Hans Belting, "Hiroshi Sugimoto. Der Spiegel der Zeit," in: *Der Blick hinter Duchamps Tür. Kunst und Perspektive bei Duchamp, Sugimoto, Jeff Wall* (Cologne, 2009), p. 94.

⁴ Thomas Weski, "Grausam und zärtlich," in: Emma Dexter and Thomas Weski, eds., *Cruel and tender. Zärtlich und grausam—Fotografie und das Wirkliche*, exh. cat. Museum Ludwig (Cologne, 2003), p. 24.

⁵ See Nadine Barth, ed., *Verschwindende Landschaften. Letzte Bilder einer verschwindenden Welt* (Cologne, 2008).

ICE - FROZEN SOURCES OF INSPIRATION

Andreas Staeger

Nicolaisen initiated a new stage of development in his work in 2007. The ice of the Icelandic glaciers has a unique feature: it contains embedded lava but hardly any sediment impurities. The ice of the Alpine glaciers has a consistently milky tone, which is why its structure can develop an almost photographic effect, but only when seen against the light. The glacier in Iceland is crystal clear and, in addition, the distribution of fine lava particles lends a three-dimensional plasticity to the ice. Transparency, color, and lava combine to form a pictorial unity of great dynamic effect.

Instead of only working with lines and structures in a conventional backlit framework, Nicolaisen has radically expanded his spectrum of design for spatial effects, thanks to the use of residual light. With this third dimension, he attempts to create a new visual language using layers of ice. He refers to this as “views of the layers.” He is accompanied and supported by the mountain guide Einar Sigurdsson. This has been a long and friendly cooperation, which has also facilitated observation of the Icelandic glaciers from a new perspective. The photographer gets to know the different moods of the ice as well as its character: when it’s very cold, it appears dull and lackluster; in spring, however, it starts to “sweat,” as it were, and takes on shine and a metallic-plastic appearance. ¹

An outstanding and surprising experience for Nicolaisen has been the discovery of a semi-permanent ice tunnel in Iceland. When meltwater flows down the glacier during the summer, large elongated cavities can develop. Due to the movement of the ice, these shafts generally collapse after a short time. Occasionally, however, they remain intact and rotate in a horizontal position, but are rarely accessible. However, a noteworthy exception is the ice tunnel in the Falljökull Glacier, which he encountered in the winter of 2009. The cavity is situated on one side of an ice wall barely one meter thick. The light conditions inside are unique.

This unusual accident of geography is an exceptionally rare find, and Nicolaisen exploited it for one of his most important works: in the Falljökull tunnel, the triptych *The Way*, 2009 emerged. Glacier caves are a hostile, indeed dangerous environment. At the same time, they are fascinating examples of a very unconventional beauty. Unlike an ice climber, Nicolaisen does not perceive the ice as challenging obstacle. Through the eyes of an ice painter, he sees it rather as a source of inspiration. Light rays that strike ice and rebound have become the core of his work and the starting point of the pictorial odysseys from which they arise. They show the juxtaposition of opposing elements—ice and lava—in caves of a thousand years of glacial ice formation. The documentary *Restlicht (Residual Light)* by Christoph Frutiger from 2012 provides a poetic insight into his work. ²

In the Flow of Ephemeral Moments

With his ice photos, Nicolaisen seems to address the intransigence of nature. But the beauty that his images depict is unique and unrepeatable. Although glaciers are sometimes referred to as “eternal ice,” their substance has only an apparent hardness and strength. Ice layers are subjected to a continuous metamorphosis, where they become thinner and thinner until the stories stored within them evaporate forever.

All the varying and ephemeral constellations of ice and light that the photographer captured are now long gone—evaporated and dissolved in the sun of the following summer. The ice structures which he photographed will never be seen in the same form again. For him, this is a form of finitude.

Ice embodies a simple truth. It is solid, stable, associated with eternity—and is still subject to change. Glaciers flow: even if they maintain their external shape, their internal structure changes dramatically. An ice cave visited today will, perhaps, have already collapsed within a week. Nicolaisen’s images are frozen cross-sections from a continuous process of eternal change. With monolithic precision, they document a timelessness that represents snapshots extracted from the eternal flow of ephemeral moments.

The encounter with the translucent walls of ice was an opportunity for Nicolaisen to visually record his specific experience of an incredible cosmos. His photographs are an expression of sympathy for the vulnerability of the world. His images remind you that not only humans and all other living beings are mortal, but the earth itself is subject to constant change and is ultimately fleeting: the lava traces trapped in the ice are evidence of past volcanic processes in which there are enormous creative as well as destructive forces.

Long-Time Observation Requires Silence

The ice images from Iceland are the result of a slow and painstaking creative process. This takes place far from any distractions from human civilization. While the data industry is otherwise ubiquitous and roars on all channels, silence and solitude prevail in the distant Icelandic glacier caves. This distance shapes the photographic process, making waiting possible, which has taken on an almost passionate dimension in Nicolaisen’s work. “Nature forces me to be patient,” he explains. He is thus rewarded with opportunities—in the form of pictorial potential—which are not always available at first glance. While photographing in nature, he often waits without knowing exactly for what. “The waiting does not mean stagnation for me. It’s about waiting for the right light, finding the right detail of the image, and that means, above all, omitting the superfluous.” He orients himself in particular to the instruments and norms of painting: conscious design and reduction to the essentials.

This waiting takes place in an almost ascetic context, namely in the damp coldness and residual light of glacier caves. It emphasizes the immutable. The waiting and stillness, the lack of motion: these are the basis of concentration. So they have the effect of a catalyst that allows the photographer to focus on the essentials in the ice—on the key shapes and structures—from which he creates his work.

Nicolaisen develops carefully staged images of deliberately selected shapes and structures. He acts not by chance, but by his inquiring, deliberative view. Nevertheless, chance plays a significant role in his works. It determines the constellation of ice shapes, light, and lava embeddings, thus making each of the carefully composed pictures a truly unique testimony. While waiting in the ice caves, Nicolaisen practices persistent, highly focused observation. In this process of searching, he makes continuous visual decisions that flow into the design of his perception. With deliberately chosen parameters, he controls the visual language through the choice of position, exposure, and depth of field. He thus practices a quasi-poetic photography similar to that which William Henry Fox Talbot strove for in the mid-nineteenth century. Like Talbot, he isolates shapes that are normally hidden to the eye and employs the camera, to some extent, as a “pencil of nature.” Thus he depicts the world in a new, reduced style and makes a novel contribution to the mission of photography. As Susan Sontag put it, photography can be the unveiling of hidden aspects of reality.³ Nicolaisen’s pictures convey new discoveries by presenting views of the world that were previously unknown.

Contact as the Starting Point of the Visual Journey

When Nicolaisen sits in an ice cave or stands in front of a thousand-year-old tree stump and waits, sometimes something happens which he describes as emotional contact. As a photographer, he allows himself to be “gripped” in the context of personal experiences in nature, which take place in the form of authentic experiences in a timeless, pristine world. What fascinates him are moments of transformation that have the elemental as a starting point. The situations that he finds on his expeditions inspire his images: “I imagine a spiritual idea of how I can depict such nature experiences figuratively.” The implementation of corresponding ideas is a mysterious craft—an uncertain process, with many surprises, that can also occasionally fail.

But there is a strong force that drives the photographer. This is the “quest for the imagined image.” Nicolaisen focuses the outside world through optics onto the matte field. On this platform, he works on his subjects by setting them apart visually from their environment. “We are nothing; what we seek is everything.” Hölderlin’s words have a deep meaning for him. “I seek out what stirs me.” This is evident in his desire to see behind the obvious, to grasp what is compelling in the image and thus make it accessible, to himself and others. The basis of his work is his probing and uncompromising attention to detail.

It results from the combination of a distanced objective view and psychological sensitivity. His landscape photographs can therefore be read as images of inner landscapes. Engagement with the spectator arises from the fact that a supposedly familiar, even mundane substance (ice) appears literally in a different light and is experienced as strange, abstract, and mysterious. In this way, Nicolaisen brings new forms and structures to light and creates his own unique and personal imagery.

Technique and Craftsmanship Employed in Light Painting

Since 2001, Nicolaisen has worked as an artistic photographer. His photographic career began in 1981 in fashion photography. He worked in this field until 2008 and enjoyed international recognition. He received the AIPP (Best Foto) Award in Paris in 1998. There are major differences between these two poles of his photographic work. While fashion photography is characterized by rapid image recording, dense rhythms, and everchanging views, artistic nature photography is sometimes a very long process, involving a great deal of craftsmanship and patience. Nevertheless, the two realms share some important aspects: in both cases, it comes down to finding the beautiful and bringing out the best.

In 2000, the self-taught Nicolaisen grappled intensively with the Zone System of Ansel Adams, and began to integrate it into his working methods. The three pillars of the system—the camera, the negative, the positive—are connected by a clear, methodical-didactical model. In 2001, he produced his large-format works, using eight-by-ten-inch negatives.

The medium of black-and-white photography allowed Nicolaisen to have a specific influence on the creation of his pictures on diverse levels. The shooting, the film development, laboratory work, the mounting of the paper prints—he does everything himself. This allows him to have control of all the processes and thus add a subtle visual balance to his compositions. The time and effort that this artisanal method requires is, however, enormous. The work demands a great deal of attention and requires lots of energy. Thus, the basic idea of Nicolaisen’s work inevitably emerges: reduction to the essentials. It is all done with the finest detail and the highest possible image quality and based on the regulated work processes of the Zone System. This allows photographers to emphasize the details in the finest shades of gray and control the tracing. With high tonality and fine resolution, he brings luminosity into his pictures and thus makes them into unique pieces. The scenes in wood, water, stone, and ice support the sculptural effect of surfaces and structures.

Nicolaisen's works are characterized by a seemingly infinite variety of shades of gray, ranging from the deepest black to the brightest light. This wealth is largely due to the material used. It is not the usual plastic-coated photo paper, but traditional, high-quality, extremely stable Baryta paper.

During a year-long process of development, Nicolaisen perfected his negative and printing techniques. Working with materials and techniques makes him a virtuoso in the interplay with light, in which passion resonates: even in the larger sizes (120 by 150 centimeters), he uses tonality, according to his intended image statement, with purpose and decisiveness. "When enlarging, I interpret the negative and paint with light." Hiroshi Sugimoto is a major source of inspiration to him, with his painstaking and detailed approach to photographic processes.

Since 2007, Nicolaisen has also used color photography. At the beginning, he worked with large-format color slides. In 2010, he made the transition to digital systems in color photography, "If the interaction of detail and tonality works, it ultimately does not matter whether you work with analog or digital technology," he stated. There are two reasons for the transition to color. On one hand, the hues of the ice gain additional differentiation and thereby enhance his ability to work with large spatial depth. On the other hand, color offers a striking invitation to the viewer to engage in a pictorial journey. According to Nicolaisen's assessment, the exchange between a photographic work and the viewer takes place through a combination of confrontation and technical aspects.

The transition to color has a great deal to do with the photographer's wish to increase the spatial presence of the images. For this, he makes use of the light box system that Jeff Wall introduced to artistic photography during the 1970s. For the presentation of his color images, Nicolaisen utilizes, among other things, light boxes updated with LED technology. The method ensures consistently uniform illumination that can also be matched individually to the exhibition venue by means of a dimmer and set to the particular expression of the images being presented. The richness in detail, shine, and depth of the photographs are thus reinforced so that, at the same time, the brightness of the colors is emphasized in their natural beauty. In this way, the images experience increased attraction and the transparency of the ice layers begins to vibrate. At such moments, the viewer experiences a similar experience to that of the photographer during his time in the ice cave: the simple becomes unique.

Andreas Staeger, Journalist

Born in 1961, originally from Lauterbrunnen, Schweiz, Kanton Bern). Studied at the Sekundarlehrant of the University of Bern. Ten years of journalistic work in Lucerne (including editorial direction of the weekend supplement of the Luzerner Zeitung), subsequently trained as a confederate dipl. PR consultant and for thirteen years as a media spokesperson and Managing Director of tourist nonprofit organizations in Bern. Since 2008, private communication consultancy staegertext.com in Brienz with clients, inter alia, in the fields of tourism, medicine, culture, energy production, and flood protection. Specialty: themes at the interfaces between city and countryside and cultural nature.

¹ Interview by Christoph Frutiger with Helgi Björnsson, Research Professor, Institute of Earth Sciences, University of Iceland, Reykjavik (February 12, 2012).

² Christoph Frutiger, documentary film „Restlicht“, 2012

³ Susan Sontag, Über Fotografie. München, 1978.