

SLEEPER

ANDREAS ALBRECHTSEN & OTAVIO SCHIPPER

September 21 - October 26, 2019





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Text by Art historian, mag.art. Lotte Møller

History resembles photography in that it is, among other things, a means of alienation.

Siegfried Kracauer¹

"Give me a place to stand, and I shall move the earth." With this statement, the ancient Greek mathematician and physicist Archimedes described the concept of an 'Archimedean point' — a fixed point of reference or hypothetical vantage point. SPECTA's exhibition *Sleeper*, which presents works by Andreas Albrectsen and Otavio Schipper, takes as its theme precisely this question of viewpoints, sight and perspective — in particular, that which the Danish historian Søren Mørch has called 'railway vision'². According to Mørch, 'railway vision' — or the 'modern eye' — emerges with the invention of the railway and photography. In particular, the new speed of railway travel afforded a radically new view of the landscape, in which the foreground blurs and the horizon appears as a visual constant, a fixed point of reference.

As the title emphasizes, it is precisely the railroad and the lines of the landscape that are important common denominators in this exhibition, while the two artists employ their own independent means of expression and media. The artists not only share a common cultural viewpoint (Schipper is Brazilian with European roots and Albrectsen is half Danish, half Brazilian) but also a common artistic strategy. This has made it possible to create an exhibition where the individual works interact with each other in a dizzying game of associations — toying with concepts such as history, perspective, perception, tracks, memory, constants, infrastructure, communication, modernity, rationality and subjectivity. Both artists work with the shifts of meaning that occur when found objects are isolated, processed and reinserted into new temporal and spatial contexts.

Albrectsen presents two groups of work. The first consists of three frottage-drawings based on film strips of photographic negatives from a trip to the Brazilian railway town of Paranapiacabia, located to the southeast of Sao Paulo. Paranapiacabia is Tupi Native American for 'a place to view the sea', and the railway was built with the purpose of transporting coffee beans from the mountains to the coast by the British-owned Sao Paulo Railway Company. The city was built in the mid-1800s by Jeremy Bentham in a Victorian style that included a copy of Big Ben. The railroad had only a short period of glory, however, and was finally decommissioned during the 1970s. Now it stands as a dilapidated memorial to an era of transatlantic trade and industry. The frottage-drawings do not show the content of the negatives. They focus on the morphological characteristics of the film strips, which display some similarities to railroad tracks. The film strips thus appear to be 'containers' for a latent travel narrative. Albrectsen's other group of works consists of two larger charcoal and pencil drawings on paper. These works are based on snapshots of rainbows found on social media — snapshots taken on the go through car windows. Albrectsen's slow method of working, where he works across the image stroke by stroke, stands in strong contrast to the 'instant' media from which the subject matter originates. The black and white of the drawings distances them further from their motif, with one of them even appearing as a photographic negative depicting a black rainbow — a kind of de-masking of nature's spectacle or a glance into another dimension.

Otavio Schipper's installation *La Ciotat* can be described as something in-between a materialized coordinate system, a physics experiment, a painting by de Chirico and the Flying Dutchman. The work consists of a piece of train track placed horizontally on the floor with railway nails cast all around, a vertical iron bar attached to the track as a 'mast', a long silver chain connecting the mast to the wall and a pair of *pince-nez* -presented with embossed dollar coins from 1890 as lenses. The title refers to one of the first films in history, by the Lumière brothers — *L'arrivée d'un train en gare de La Ciotat* — which shows a train arriving at the La Ciotat railway station. The film has become legendary because of the allegedly violent effect it had on cinema-goers of the time, who were overwhelmed by the film's 'realism'. In addition, Schipper shows other smaller works such as the wall installation *The Modern Eye*. This work consists of a pair of antique eyeglasses and a silver chain which, as a medium that appears to be something between an eyeglass cord and a telegraph wire, connects a wall-mounted series of old, handmade electrical insulators.

Otavio Schipper has a background in physics, and his works are often inspired by Einstein's thought experiments involving both trains and elevators — experiments that laid the basis for his theories of relativity. Similarly, Schipper's works can also be described as thought experiments, albeit in a materialized form. In his installations, he stages a selection of 'constants' (i.e., things that come from an earlier 'analogue' era, such as telephone poles, train tracks and telegraph machines) in various combinations and contexts, thereby constructing an alphabet of things.

1. Siegfried Kracauer, *History. The Last Things Before the Last*, Princeton 2014, p. 5

2. Søren Mørch, *Vældige ting - 63 fortællinger om verden, som den er*, Kbh. 2009, pp. 51-59

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Installationview

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**Otavio Schipper***The Modern Eye*, 2019

ceramic insulators (original), silver chain, two pairs of glasses

dim. variable

unique

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Andreas Albrechtsen

Untitled (#arcoiris), 2019

charcoal on cotton paper

146 x 114 cm (150,7 x 118 cm incl. frame)

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Installationview

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ANDREAS ALBRECTSEN & OTAVIO SCHIPPER

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Andreas Albrectsen

Untitled (Paranapiacaba), 2019

graphite on polyester film

168,3 x 14,5 cm framed

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Otavio Schipper

The Last Nail, 2019

polished bronze with silver coated railway nail

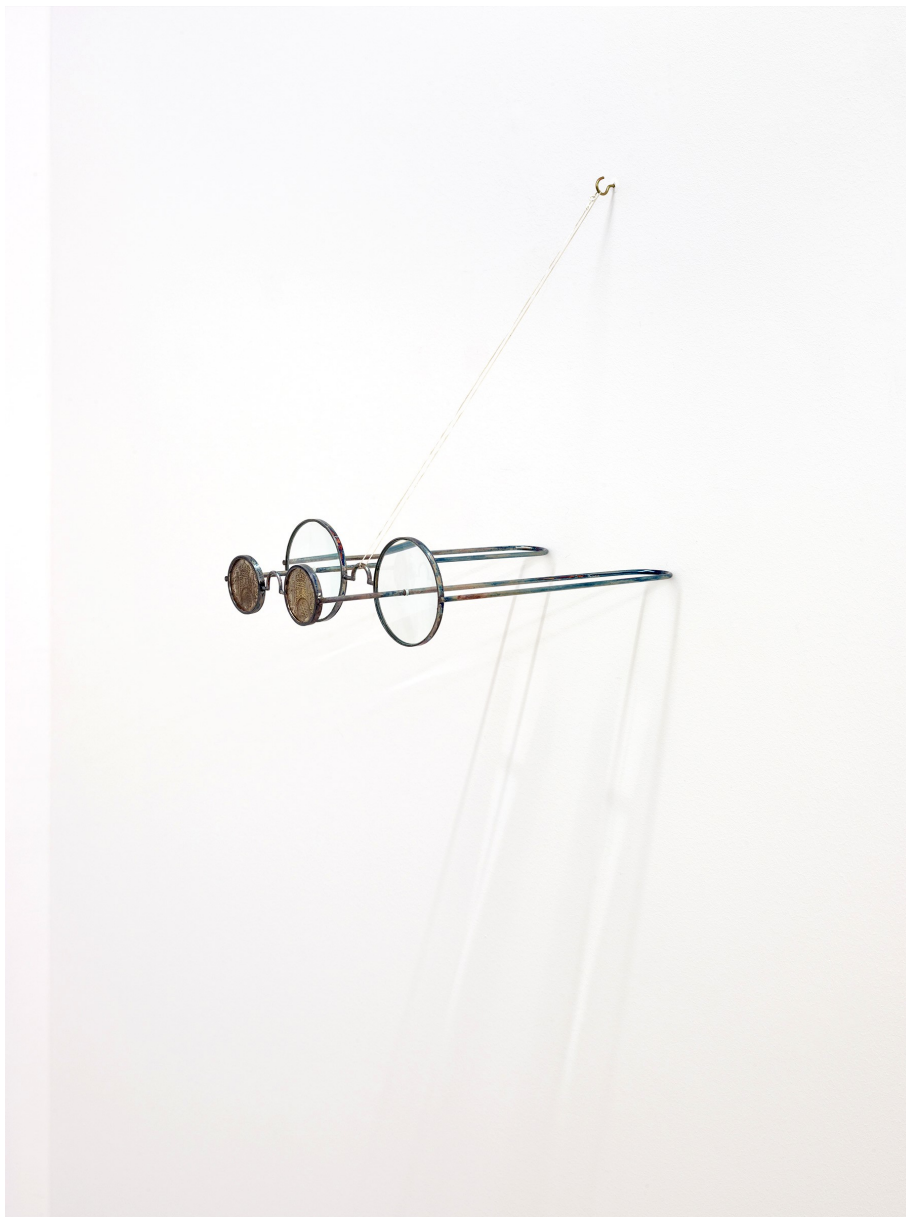
ca. 18,5 x 42, 5 x 50 cm

ed. 1/3 + 1 ap

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Otavio Schipper

Eyeglasses for Ernst Lanzer, 2019

silver, coins, lenses

10 x 20 x 30 cm

ed. AP/last (af 3 + 1 AP)

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**Otávio Schipper***Small Eyeglasses for Ernst Lanzer, 2019*

silver, lenses

5 x 15 x 12 cm

ed. 2AP/last (af 10 + 2 AP)

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Installationview

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Andreas Albrectsen

Untitled (negative #rainbow), 2019

graphite pencil on cotton paper

146 x 114 cm (framed 150,7 x 118 cm)

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Otávio Schipper

La Ciotat, 2019

installation: iron, railway nails, silver chain, glasses, coins

dim. variable

unique

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Installationview

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**Andreas Albrectsen***Untitled (Paranapiacaba)*, 2019 (Left)

graphite on polyester film

15,5 x 168,3 cm (framed)

Andreas Albrectsen*Untitled (Paranapiacaba)*, 2019 (Right)

graphite on polyester film

15,5 x 168,3 cm (framed)



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**Otavio Schipper***Óculos duplo (double eyeglasses), 2019*

silver, coins and lenses

15 x 20 x 50 cm

ed. 1/3 + 1 AP

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Otavio Schipper
Mental Chronometry, 2019
 metronome, silver chain, glasses
 68 x 10 x 4 cm
 unique



Otavio Schipper
Blue Eyes, 2019
 ceramic insulator (original), silver chain, glasses
 dim. variable
 unique

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**Otávio Schipper***Sleeper*, 2019

original railway nails, silver coated and oxidated, ed. 50

original railway nails, silver coated, ed. 50

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ANDREAS ALBRECTSEN & OTAVIO SCHIPPER

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Andreas Albrectsen

Untitled (Olhos #1), 2017

graphite pencil on cotton paper

36 x 55 cm + frame