

AUREL SCHEIBLER

Jonathan Bragdon

Landscape

November 30 – February 8, 2014

Opening: Friday, November 29 from 6 pm to 9 pm



les Dents du Midi from southwest, 2013, graphite on paper, 11 1/5 x 30 in.

Berlin – On Friday November 29, Aurel Scheibler opens “Jonathan Bragdon – Landscape”, a solo exhibition dedicated to the drawings of American-born, Amsterdam-based artist Jonathan Bragdon. The exhibition focuses on the two locations which have become veritable habitats of the artist – the Dutch dunes and the Swiss mountains. Further included are works that highlight Bragdon’s ‘Wanderlust’ such as a series of drawings depicting the Pre-Pyrenees in Spain. Supplementary to the landscapes, the exhibition shows a group of “consciousness portraits”, smaller-scale drawings executed by taking inward loops of self-interrogation, evoking in the viewer the sensation of being at once the perceiver and the perceived. “Landscape” runs until Saturday, February 8, 2014. “Jonathan Bragdon – Tekeningen” (“Jonathan Bragdon – Drawings”) appears parallel to the exhibition. Combining texts by Friedrich Block, Ulf Küster and Benjamin Meyer-Krahmer with more than thirty images this publication provides an overview of the most recent developments in Bragdon’s oeuvre.

‘Being the perceiver and the perceived’ is an apt statement, a clear-cut verbalization of the many polarities that are at home not only in Bragdon’s drawings, but also in his life. Sent to the Swiss Alps for a gap year after he had entered a science study program in America, Bragdon, after an encounter with Klee’s work in Bern, became convinced that science is not the only way to truth and chose a new path there and then.

Landscapes and mountains captivate Bragdon and his whereabouts tend to find their way into his art – be they the Dents du Midi or Wannsee, the sloping hills in Costa Rica or the Kennemer dunes. These ‘landscape portraits’ however transcend our classical understanding of the term. Bragdon’s depictions are an intricate interplay between instant seeing and previous knowledge, between rendering the visible abstract and the abstract visible, between the observer becoming landscape and the landscape becoming observer.

His tools and methods – graphite points, lines and shades outlining forms on paper – carry in themselves the potential of a plurality of views. As Ulf Küster writes: “The diversity of points come close to the limitless diversity of what is seen, and even seem to make visible the dynamism of nature ...”

Maybe this is where Bragdon’s own phrase “Drawing is walking along the border of myself”, a three-times-over movement metaphor, fits in best. Drawing, walking, bordering – the activities seem to be never-ending. And yet, it is exactly at this crossroads of the continuously morphing artist and his continuously morphing subject that the drawing emerges – still, contemplative, quiet.

Jonathan Bragdon (b. 1944), a 4th prize winner at the age of fifteen in the National Science Fair, studied Philosophy of Art and Studio Art in Amherst, Massachusetts. On frequent stays in Switzerland and elsewhere in Europe he became engaged with the landscapes he encountered as foils to his inner life, and the resulting dialogues find their way into his meticulously executed drawings. Bragdon’s artistic practice has gradually become more contemplative, as reflected in a parallel series of works, the “consciousness portraits”. Jonathan has been living in Amsterdam for several decades and spends most of his summers in Bex, Switzerland, in close proximity to the Dents du Midi.