Artistic and Pedagogical Interventions
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How to live with visual excess?

In my presentation I will elaborate the question of visual excess, not as a recent or an old problem, but as something ever-present.

Everything that is visually present to us seems to outstrip and go beyond what can be grasped at one's with a single glance. There is always that what is present but absent. In other words, as the world shows up in my visual experience, I also show up for myself, for example as a potential source of movement, skill, insight and interest which actually is only reference for my perceptual experience.

To deal with this surplus we tend to slip into somewhat idiosyncratic behavior. My examples are from history of colonialism, advertising industry, Werner Herzog’s documentary film about the Chauvet Cave that contains one of the oldest human-painted images yet discovered and from my own experience being a father.

I conclude with critical thoughts on how we tend to favor seeing, because we believe that it gives us a personal choice, and lets us be active and “know” in advance or afterwards what is or was happening. Since no area of sensibility originates in us, but in the world, this is wishful thinking. This convention supports the illusion, that there would be some basic natural level of vision that don’t need criticism to become understood.