

Andersen's

Ulrik Heltoft

'The Voynich Botanical Studies and The Origin of Specimen 52v'

April 20 – June 8, 2013

Dark photographs of bizarre vegetation, a film that follows the hallucinatory trip of a Neanderthal, and a mysterious manuscript of unknown origin.

Ulrik Heltoft's second solo exhibition with Andersen's Contemporary references The Voynich Manuscript, a cryptic text illustrated throughout with apparently imaginary plants, currently housed at the Beinecke Rare Book Library in New Haven, CT.

As in the manuscript, 129 unique representations of non-existing plant life are depicted in Heltoft's latest series of black and white photography. This literal source provides the conceptual framework for his work. However, Heltoft is primarily concerned with the means through which this juxtaposition paradoxically breaches superficial comparisons between the two, both pointing rather towards a parallel, prehistoric mythological state of being.

The exhibition also sets the stage for the premiere of Heltoft's six-minute film, The Origin of Specimen 52v. Commissioned by Statens Kunstfond and DR, as part of the programming for tvKunst, the film is scheduled for broadcast this spring on DRK. The film presents an account of fictive origin for a single Voynich-plant, situated within a prehistoric universe. The Origin of Specimen 52v follows a Neanderthal (played by the artist) staring at his reflection in a frozen pond, looking out over a barren landscape, hallucinating, performing mysterious rituals – and discovering a bizarre plant.

All photographic imagery of the plant life was digitally composed with advanced 3D-programming software in collaboration with Miljohn Ruperto (US). The film was shot with custom-built cameras assembled by the artist. Thus much like a modern-day alchemist, Heltoft creates a highly advanced and visually refined universe out of simply nothing.