

Mario Pfeifer

1.7.–3.8.20

Mario Pfeifer founds his artistic projects on specific cultural situations. Lengthy expeditions and visits enable him to explore different communities, cultures and places, and this provides the material for his work. He investigates the socio-political background, adding cross-cultural references. His installations combine documentary footage with music and a sci-fi video aesthetic. Themes include different forms of racism, civilisational inequalities and the one-way relationship between humans and nature.

“Corpo Fechado”, 2016, 40:07 min.

Illustrated by Catholicism, Spiritism and Candomblé, this film centres on the diversity of religious practice and the social and historical framework to this in São Paulo, Brazil.

In three self-contained episodes Mario Pfeifer depicts religious objects and their protagonists: Christovão Chrystal, a healer who draws on supernatural powers; Tata Katuvengeci, a Candomblé leader in the tradition of Bantu culture from Congolese Angola; and Makumba Cyber, a post-religious manifesto in digital form. These episodes are woven together by interludes documenting the economic aspects of the different faiths.

Wide religious diversity is still a distinctive feature of life in Brazil. When colonial Portuguese rule began in the 15th century, Catholicism was imposed by force and a number of South American indigenous cultures died out. When African countries were colonised in the following century and the slave trade arrived, other faiths spread across Brazil. The “corpo fechado” (unbreakable body) is a religious ritual in Candomblé designed to shield the body from evil.

Biography

Mario Pfeifer (*1981, Dresden) studied art at California Institute of the Arts; UdK, Berlin; HGB, Leipzig and the Städelschule, Frankfurt am Main. Biennials to date: Marrakesh (2011), Montevideo (2015), Mercosul (2018), Berlin (2018) and Innsbruck (2020). His work has been shown at the Folkwang Museum in Essen (2020), The Power Plant in Toronto (2019), GfZK in Leipzig (2016), Fotomuseum Winterthur (2015), the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes in Santiago de Chile (2014), Khoj in New Delhi (2013) and international film festivals. Pfeifer has held bursaries from Fulbright and the DAAD and is currently Resident Artist at the Goethe Institute's Vila Sul in Salvador da Bahia, Brazil. He lives and works in Dresden and Berlin.

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