

Linning. A Mining Excursion

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Abstract of

The Memory of Future Material

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[...] Birgit Schuh is concerned with a similar tightrope walk between aesthetic attraction and scientific relevance in her long-term project, “Triangulierung” (“Triangulation”), which follows the trail of early land surveyors. In her relief, “Topografie Triangulierung” (“Topography Triangulation”) (2014), she designs a map of the triangulation stations in the former kingdom of Saxony, which offers an empirical reconstruction of the terrain. However, she alienates the factual impression of a chart, not only by accentuating the existing network with color but also by choosing a novel wooden composite, which has been treated with a watery paint to give it a wavy distortion, as a background. With the artistic adoption of drawn landscape space, she reconstructs its real transformations in an allegorical way, not least through conceptual interventions. The occupation of nature by civilization can be more clearly perceived aboveground than in the shaft – here, we must only think of Josef Koudelka’s critical report from the Bohemian coalfields, “Black Triangle” (1990–1994).

In the end, however, what happens underground, in the dark, is nothing different; measurement of the site and acquisition of the territory is followed by its expedient, irreversible reformation. Fully an artist, Birgit Schuh discovers a fascinating process of creative shaping in the applied sciences, which call for artistic responses. Her artographically and scientifically inspired works therefore omit obvious, civilization-critical gestures and leave those interpretations to the viewer. For this reason, her simultaneously creative and investigatory procedures are more reminiscent of the inquisitive enthusiasm of Novalis, the young poet and student of mining – such as when she translates mineral forms into three-dimensional cardboard objects and then showcases them along with wooden educational models from the study of crystals. [...]