

INTERVIEW

“I see myself as a cartographer”

Benedikt Ziegler



After an artist’s residency on a ship in the Arctic Ocean in 2014, the Zurich-based artist Sandra Kühne has now arrived in Saudi Arabia on the artists-in-labs residency programme. She will spend three months in a marine biology lab at Kaust, Saudi Arabia’s main technical university, near Jeddah.

What interests you about marine science?

It is a multidisciplinary field of research combining diverse areas such as biology,

ecology and oceanography. I’m interested in exchanging knowledge with the research scientists. I want to discuss similarities and differences in the ways we visualise data and map space, as well as ephemeral phenomena such as ocean currents.

Why Saudi Arabia?

Because of the Red Sea Research Center at Kaust and their research on coral reefs, which constitute one of the most diverse ecosystems in the world. They are very fragile and consist of a community of interdependent species. I’m interested in observing and understanding this complexity and vulnerability. Focusing on coral reefs, I will look for ways to show themes of interaction, balance and symbiosis through my art.

What is the link between marine science and your art?

I believe that art and science are related in terms of developing ideas, observation methods, work processes, visualisation and model-making. I imply methods of cartography in my artistic research and practice. I see myself as a cartographer, collector, writer, translator and discoverer. I explore strategies in mapping both real spaces and spaces of language. In my cut-outs and installations, which are mainly made from paper, I translate two-dimensionality into three-dimensionality. I’m creating and presenting drawings and maps as objects in space, where lines lose their balance: they shift and change their shape just like the world’s fragile ecosystems are changing.