The Whole Earth: California and the Disappearance of the Outside

Posted on June 21, 2013

HKW, Berlin: 26 April – 1 July 2013. The exhibition is one of the first to explore the history of the photograph of the ‘blue planet,’ and reflects in a comprehensive way the power of the Whole Earth Catalog, the analog predecessor of Google (Steve Jobs). It was published in 1968 for the first time by Stewart Brand, who later coined the term personal computer: a compendium of useful utensils for the planetary future, it used the image of the whole planet for its cover. The Whole Earth takes up the historic moment of what was later called the ‘Californian ideology’: an alliance between hippie culture and cybernetics, nature romanticism and technology worshippers, psychedelia and computer culture. In this exhibition, curators Diedrich Diedrichsen and Anselm Franke explore these countercultures in California of the 1960s and 1970s: with visual and audio documents, historical and contemporary artistic contributions. They reflect various impulses from politics, ideology, and popular culture for an environmentalist movement and the rise of a digital network culture.

How have political conflict lines been neutralized? How did ecology and cybernetics lead to the system and self-management of the capitalist network society?


All images: Installation view © Jacob Hoff / Haus der Kulturen der Welt