



**CLEMENS VON  
WEDEMEYER  
FOUND FOOTAGE  
(THE FOURTH WALL)  
2008–2010**

**KOW  
BRUNNENSTR 9 D-10119 BERLIN  
+49 30 311 66 770  
GALLERY@KOW-BERLIN.COM**

Commissioned by The Barbican Art Gallery London (The Curve) and extended for KOW Berlin, Clemens von Wedemeyer's "The Fourth Wall" explores a controversial historical incident involving the discovery of a group of contemporary cavemen: the Tasaday, a tribe found in the Philippine rain forest in 1971. The 26 members of this tribe were suggested to still be living in a static Stone Age, unaware of the modern world. However, in the eighties, doubt arose as to the authenticity of their primitive existence, which was soon suspected to be a hoax. Unquestionably, the news coverage and the photos of these "peaceful savages" have shaped the Philippines' image in the international media, much to the pleasure of Ferdinand Marcos, whose government discouraged any serious anthropological research within the country, while remaining ever eager to pander to the media. Through his nine films and interviews, von Wedemeyer delves into the authenticity of the Tasaday story. If it was in fact genuine, had this tribe fallen prey to hungry western journalists? Or was this a deception staged to divert attention away from Marco's regime? "The Fourth Wall" is an investigation into notions of representation and belief. Yet the collection of work also looks into the short time span of a "first contact"—be it the first contact between anthropologists and an isolated group of individuals, or between the visitors and the works in an exhibition.



Text: Alexander Koch

Google (Belayam Tasaday), photo: John Nance, 1971, digital print, 112 x 88 cm

The „Found Footage“ installation consists of the following elements:

Found Footage (The Fourth Wall), 2008-09  
digital video, 4:3, colour, sound, 31 min

Tasaday looking out of their cave  
photo: John Nance, 1971, wallpaper, ink jet print, dimensions variable

How to Re-establish the Truth About the Tasaday? Interview with John Nance, 2008  
video, 4:3, colour, sound, 55 min

Wikipedia, 2010  
digital print on MDF, 178 x 79 cm

Google (Belayam Tasaday)  
photo: John Nance, 1971  
framed digital print, 112 x 88 cm

Tasaday watch themselves  
photo: John Nance, 1988  
framed digital print, 112 x 165 cm

First contact - film material 4. Newspaper, 2010



Tasaday watch themselves, photo: John Nance, 1988, digital print, 112 x 165 cm

Exhibition view "Clemens von Wedemeyer – The Fourth Wall", KOW BERLIN, 2010



The notion of the "Fourth Wall" refers to a theatrical concept popularized by French philosopher Denis Diderot ("Discours sur la poésie dramatique", 1758). He purported that an imaginary divide exists between stage and audience, enabling actors to portray fictional work as if it were true to life, and in turn, providing the audience with a window into an actual event, creating a sense of intimate voyeurism, rather than an interactive experience. In his exhibition, von Wedemeyer, using the Tasaday people as his vehicle, applies the concept of the "Fourth Wall" to anthropology as well as to photography and film—disciplines and media that have authorized themselves to adequately and authentically describe humankind and the conditions of life. This power, too, is further edified by the assumption of a "Fourth Wall": a wall that is built upon not only the audience's desire for an illusion of reality, but also the intentions of art and social sciences to deliver such an illusion.

As an excerpt from the Fourth Wall project, von Wedemeyer has assembled a set of elements focusing specifically on the relationship between the concrete documentation and the fictional power of images surrounding the Tasaday case. The selected works include his "Found Footage" film, a carefully compiled selection of found material ranging from news reports and feature films to anthropological documentaries; von Wedemeyer's interview with John Nance, in which the photographer and writer expresses his irritation resulting from the hoax hypothesis declassifying his own work as inauthentic; as well as further images and a fragment of the ongoing Wikipedia discussion around the Tasaday.



Text: Alexander Koch

How to Re-establish the Truth About the Tasaday? Interview with John Nance, 2008

Wikipedia, 2010, digital print on MDF  
178 x 79 cm



Tasaday looking out of their cave, photo: John Nance, 1971, wallpaper, 454.5 x 295 cm

Credit Line

Found Footage (The Fourth Wall)  
2008-2009

Digital video, 4:3, colour, sound, 31 min

Editor: Janina Herhoffer, Clemens von  
Wedemeyer

Speaker: Stephen Jacob

Sound Editor: Thomas Wallmann

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Clemens von Wedemeyer was born in 1974 in Göttingen, Germany. He lives and works in Berlin. Between 1996 and 1998 he studies photography and media at the Fachhochschule Bielefeld. In 1998 he transfers to the HGB Academy of Visual Arts Leipzig and graduates from Astrid Kleins' class in 2002, followed by a master in 2005. In the same year he receives the Kunstpreis der Böttcherstrasse in Bremen. In 2006 he wins the German competition at Internationale Kurzfilmtage Oberhausen as well as the Karl-Schmidt-Rottluff-Stipendium. Wedemeyer exhibits at the Moscow Biennial in 2005 and at the Berlin Biennial in 2006. In 2008 he participates in Skulptur Projekte Münster. Solo exhibitions include Kölnischer Kunstverein and MoMA PS1, New York, in 2006, the Barbican Art Centre London in 2009 and the Frankfurter Kunstverein in 2011.



First contact - film material 4. Newspaper, 2010

Found Footage (The Fourth Wall), 2008–2009  
Digital video, 4:3, colour, sound, 31 min,  
exhibition view KOW BERLIN, 2010