

Tora Bora – The Unknown Masterpiece (Where is OBL hiding?)

By tackling the question Where is Osama bin Laden hiding?

Sven Kalden reaches directly into the center of an area oscillating between fiction and reality. In his model of Tora Bora, he gives shape to the mythical cave complex: That cave fortress located in the white mountains and shrouded in legends. Shortly after the start of the Afghanistan war, sketches and detailed reports of unknown origin appeared, preparing legendary and speculative terrain for the audience. Apparently, both the CIA and the Saudi Arabian bin Laden Group were involved in the development of these caves as a shelter and refuge for the mujahideen, at the time fighting against the Soviet presence. This would explain the knowledge that the USA had regarding the internal structure of these caves. It's therefore even more surprising that this site, well known by the Americans, was supposedly chosen by bin Laden and Al Qaeda as their shelter. In Sven Kalden's 4 x 4 m wide model, this peculiar mixture of fiction, legend and reality is artistically translated in the rough material of MDF boards. Visitors can plunge into the legendary story through this perfectly crafted architectural model.

If one briefly forgets the actual context, one can almost imagine being in a Natural History or Archaeology Museum, in which the ways of life of foreign cultures is brought closer to the viewer through the use of such models.

Matthias Reichelt, Global Fight Club, Meinblau Berlin, Destillery 38, 2011

