

Galerie Rüdiger Schöttle

Elger Esser, Candida Höfer, Thomas Ruff, Thomas Struth, Chen Wei

Focus on Photography

2 Jul – 4 Sep, 2021

Opening: 1 Jul, 2021



Thomas Ruff, tableau chinois_06 I, 2021, c-print, 185 x 240 cm, Edition of 4. © Thomas Ruff, VG Bild-Kunst Bonn 2021.

Düsseldorf photographic art has been an essential part of the gallery's program for more than 40 years. This exhibition focuses on different work cycles by Elger Esser, Candida Höfer, Thomas Ruff and Thomas Struth who exhibited at the gallery already shortly upon graduation. They have had a decisive influence on the paradigm shift from photography to photo art and are among the best-known photo artists of the present day. In addition, works by the Chinese photo artist Chen Wei from his well-known nightclub cycle are on display. Interesting political and aesthetic juxtapositions have emerged in works that question nature and the human habitat, both in terms of form and content.

For the first time we show works from the new "tableaux chinois" series by Thomas Ruff. This cycle is about the effects of photography on our consciousness, about "arranged reality". Chairman Mao and his happy comrades are shown in monumental photographs, based on reproductions of party publications from the time of Mao. The offset grid and the pixel structures become visible; social realism is exposed to the naked eye. Images that lie so overtly are fascinating to Thomas Ruff.

In contrast, Thomas Struth's "Israel/Palestine" series (2009 – 2014) focuses on a never-ending religious conflict and at the same time points out the contrast between the barren desert landscape, religious beliefs, orthodox thinking, and modern technological development in the same place. The seemingly insoluble Israel-Palestine conflict contrasts with man's efforts to make technological progress for the benefit of humanity. The work "Mount Bental, Golan Heights 2011" shows the breathtaking view of the desert landscape from the Golan Heights, but disturbed by the view of the trench – which transforms this vantage point from a feast for the eyes into a religious-political minefield.

Equally polarising are the staged photographs by Chen Wei: his *mises-en-scène* address human existence with all its yearnings, with all its helplessness. Human bodies, whether present or absent in the picture, are represented in their attempt to escape the conditioning to which they are subjected in society. It is this theme that the artist brings out so well in his *Nightclub Series*. Some of the individuals thirsting for moments of freedom seem, precisely in these places of hopeless yearning, to be torpid and stupefied.

Galerie Rüdiger Schöttle

Candida Höfer is famous for her photographic documentations of places steeped in history. The subjects of her meticulously shot photographs highlight the specific design of places where people gather. Her works stimulate our imagination and at the same time charm us with their sharpness, precision, clarity, neutrality and objectivity. The “grande dame” of photography is represented in the exhibition with two opera houses: the neo-baroque Palais Garnier in Paris and one of the oldest opera houses in Italy, the Teatro della Pergola in Florence.

Elger Esser's large-format landscape photographs are tranquil moments that seem to belong to bygone eras. Time seems to stand still and the viewer's gaze dwells in dreamlike, melancholic landscapes. Detached from both time and place, these scenes of bridges, riverside towns and seacoasts awaken vague memories and daydreams. Water, light and architecture merge into one inseparable unity. The lyrical, pictorial language, full of atmosphere and governed by the classical rules of composition, conveys an overall impression of perfect harmony. The pale, delicate colors heighten the impression of being transported into the past.

**NEU
START
KULTUR**

STIFTUNGKUNSTFONDS

**Amalienstrasse 41 / 80799 Munich
Tue–Fr 11 am–6 pm / Sa noon–4 pm / T +49 89 333 686
info@galerie-schoettle.de
www.galerie-schoettle.de**