

## Galerie Rüdiger Schöttle

Candida Höfer

### Libraries

Feb 19, 2016 – April 16, 2016

Opening: Thursday, February 18, 2016, 7 pm – 9 pm



*Benediktinerstift Admont III 2014*

C-Print, 180 x 200.4 cm

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For over 30 years Galerie Rüdiger Schöttle has enjoyed a close relationship with Candida Höfer. The artist is known for her objective, focused portrayal of cultural sites such as opera houses, churches, palaces, and libraries.

In this year's solo exhibition, we are excited to present her latest photographs of Late Baroque monastic libraries in Austria, marking the first time these photographs are shown in Germany. The idea to include these libraries in her oeuvre was born two years ago during Candida Höfer's exhibition "Düsseldorf" at the Landesgalerie Linz in Upper Austria. In a typical manner, the new images show spaces of knowledge and education, halls that are representative of earthly and heavenly power, devoid of people and from the central perspective. Viewing these large-format works not only lets one experience the colorful and dynamic interplay of architecture, sculpture and painting or the theatrical distribution of light in the Baroque period, but also captures, in a quasi-allegorical image, the source of knowledge on which our contemporary view of the world is based.

The monastic libraries photographed by Candida Höfer count among the most important cultural heritage sites of Late Baroque art and architecture. They house early manuscripts, incunabula, bibles, and an inventory of books arranged according to scientific subject matter. The Enlightenment concept of embracing education and science also comes to bear in the library's décor. The ceiling frescos of Bartolomeo Altomonte, for instance, which are found in the library halls of Admont Abbey and St. Florian Monastery, depict the stages of human knowledge from thought and speech to the sciences and divine revelation. The triumphal ceiling frescos at Melk Abbey and Altenburg Abbey, created by the renowned Austrian painter Paul Troger, also illustrate the marriage of virtue and science under the auspices of religion. Altenburg even has a crypt underneath its library, which in this case serves purely as a place of meditation about death. The wall paintings were made by students of Paul Troger, who adhered to an unconventional iconography of death, resulting in a unique example of grotesque Baroque art. With her monumental photographs, Candida Höfer reminds viewers of these comprehensive works of art, and transfers them into a contemporary medium.

Candida Höfer (born 1944 in Eberswalde) counts among the most important members of the Düsseldorfer Fotoschule. She studied under Bernd and Hilla Becher at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf from 1976 to 1982. Her works are exhibited internationally and today are part of some of the most important collections worldwide.

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