

THOMAS DEMAND

16 March - 11 May 2018

Where is memory? There is often talk of fading, as if the images were to lose colour and then shape under the sun of the following days and years! Are photographs not currently the primary basis for our memories of personal and historical events? The images distributed in the media comprise a collective wealth of memory, even if it is now losing its shape due to information overload. Photographs now cause an extreme reduction of reality, as all senses other than vision are suppressed. It is not possible to associate any noise, smell, body or surface with the photographic reproduction of a reality. Thomas Demand approaches third-party images, most of which are already familiar to us through publications, by reproducing the situations captured in the photographs in their actual size. To achieve this, he uses paper in various thicknesses, with various surface textures and in various colours. The reconstructed situation thus provides a fragile space of memory that loses the weight of the physical and instead works with mere appearance. This initial step of transferring a photograph to a new space is substantiated through illumination, which allows the rediscovered matrix to begin to "breathe". The camera lens is the focus on which all preparatory work concentrates. The only goal of creating this image is the reappropriated photograph in its colour and mood of lighting. Afterwards, the paper superstructures disappear.

The viewer sometimes feels that the images Thomas Demand produces are familiar without being able to say exactly why. The viewer is struck by a swathe of memories of the past, of lived moods, inapprehensible, as Marcel Proust describes in his "research" into the flavour and smell of a madeleine cake, and yet with a strong presence. In Demand's images, fragments of memory merge into a new present. The invisible becomes visible, as no image is what it represents. The created reproduction has no physical resemblance to the actual original image whatsoever. Instead of physicality and three-dimensionality, there is a juxtaposition of coloured surfaces. Each of the colours and shapes harbours a sensation that can evoke memories. An experienced reality becomes perceptible through the act of looking. Thomas Demand's revealing of the process behind which his images become images means that his photographs enter the consciousness differently. We, the viewers, run the risk that behind every object depicted there is something hidden, perhaps even something for which there is no equivalent in reality. Thomas Demand's images therefore far exceed the status of a reproduction. They can also be seen as metaphors for the fragility of our imagination.

Curated by Helmut Friedel

Born in 1964 in Munich, Thomas Demand is a German artist known for his large-scale photographs, depicting motives from mass-media images or from his personal archive reconstructed in life size from paper and cardboard. Through his work, he strives to overturn the notion of photography as an inevitably objective or truthful medium, exploring the gap between reality and its representation.

Demand grew up in Munich and, from 1987 to 1992, attended both the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich and the Düsseldorf Art Academy before receiving a master's degree in fine arts from Goldsmiths' College in 1994 in London. He initially focused on sculpture, using photography to document his paper and cardboard reconstructions. In 1990, however, photography and sculpture traded places in his artistic process; the photograph became the artwork.

Many of his works impart an architectural understanding of spaces, and his interest in architecture and models led to various collaborations with architects such as Caruso St. John, David Chipperfield, Rem Koolhaas and SANAA either in relation to the architects practice, questions of installation or for actual architectural projects.

Demand showed his work at major museums and galleries worldwide. His solo exhibitions include shows at the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth (2016), DHC Art Center, Montréal (2013), National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne (2012), the Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo (2012), Kaldor Public Arts Project #25, Sydney (2012), Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam (2010), Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin (2009), MUMOK, Vienna (2009), the Fondazione Prada, Venice (2007), the Serpentine Gallery, London (2006), the Museum of Modern Art, New York (2005) the Kunsthaus Bregenz (2004) and a survey at the Fondation Cartier in Paris (2001). He represented Germany at the 26th Sao Paulo Biennale (2004). His most recent project was the widely acclaimed exhibition "The Boat is Leaking. The Captain Lied.", with Alexander Kluge and Anna Viebrock at Fondazione Prada in Venice.

His work also was included in 4 iterations of the Venice Architecture Biennale and recently featured at the 2nd Chicago Architecture Biennale. On several occasions, he curated shows, including 'L'Image Volée' at the Fondazione Prada, Milan (2016), 'Model Studies' at the Graham Foundation, Chicago (2013), 'La carte d'après nature' at the Nouveau Musée National de Monaco (2010) and a contribution to the 13th Venice Architecture Biennale 'Common Ground' (2012).

His work is represented in numerous museums and collections including the Museum of Modern Art, New York, The Guggenheim Museum, New York, Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), Los Angeles, the Centre Pompidou, Paris and the Tate Modern, London.

He lives and works in Berlin and Los Angeles.