

HANS-CHRISTIAN SCHINK
Photographs 1980 to 2010

MKM Küppersmühle Museum of Modern Art
July 1 – October 3, 2011

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"The best present of my life was most probably the simple role-film camera I received for my seventh birthday", recalls Hans-Christian Schink, one of Germany's leading contemporary photographers. The works by the Erfurt-born photographer, who today lives in Leipzig and who regularly travels the globe to create his photo-series, are represented in public and private collections worldwide. His photographs are also on view in the MKM's presentation of the Ströher Collection since many years.

The MKM is now showing the most comprehensive exhibition to date of works by Hans-Christian Schink whose oeuvre has wielded a crucial impact on German photography. Approximately 100 large-format works afford an illuminating insight into his output until the present day, and impressively chart the development of his own distinct artistic signature.

Schink began his study of photography at the renowned Academy of Visual Arts in Leipzig where he was a master-class student from 1991 to 1993. From the very outset Schink worked with series. A key thrust of his oeuvre is his exploration of the transition between the urban and the rural, nature and culture and architectural intervention in the landscape. He finds his motifs both in his immediate environs, initially in eastern Germany, and also on his carefully planned journeys across the world, from North Korea, via the USA to the Antarctic. A further pre-occupation is the photographic rendering of light phenomena and moods.

For the first time, the MKM is exhibiting a selection of small-format black-white photos from the early 1980s, together with the first colour photographs from the artist's student days. Schink initially focused both on daily scenes in the cities of Leipzig, Erfurt and Halle, and on the abstract visual quality of architectural detail. During his studies he discovered colour photography and began working with a large-format camera, initially in the series "Leipziger Bäder" ("Leipzig Baths", 1988), whose empty, dilapidated interiors bear poignant witness to a by-gone age. Since this time, people in his pictures exist merely as traces of their intervention in the environment.

The artist first commanded worldwide attention with the series "Verkehrsprojekte Deutsche Einheit" ("Traffic Projects German Unity", 1995-2003). Here he addressed the radical transformation of the landscape through the expansion of the motorway and rail network in eastern Germany.

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The series "Wände" ("Walls", 1995-2003) explored the question of how authentic the representation of reality is. Schink took frontal shots of the prefabricated architecture of unpretentious commercial buildings and melded them into almost abstract colour-fields. Merely the narrow borders adumbrate what we are seeing. To find his motifs, the artist embarks on journeys beyond the confines of Europe, taking him to countries such as Brazil, Japan, Cambodia, North Korea, Peru, the USA or Vietnam. His main objective is not the representation of exotic motifs, but the portrayal of the interface and the dialogue between anthropogenic structures and the natural landscape.

The award-winning series "1h" (2002-2010) unites diverse aspects of his oeuvre: the interest in natural phenomena and light situations and his reflection on the possibilities of depicting reality through the medium of photography. Schink photographs the sun at various locations throughout the world, using exposure times of one hour. Together, the over-exposure and light intensity conjure a spectre which cannot be perceived by the human eye and which only becomes visible as a solarisation when captured by analogue photography: a black sunbeam, surrounded by a glowing corona. The resulting images render visible an unreal depiction of reality and confront the viewer with a Nature suspended between imagination and representation.

**Cooperation between the MKM and the Klassik Stiftung Weimar / Neues Museum
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Curator: Simone Förster +++ **Catalogue:** 180 pp. / Hatje Cantz / 38,50,- EUR (Museum)

Images: www.museum-kueppersmuehle.de/press (free download for press purposes)

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