

Württembergischer Kunstverein Stuttgart



Bettina Lockemann. Contact Zones

January 30 – April 11, 2010

Press Release

Press Conference: Friday, January 29, 2010, 11 am



From the series *Undetermined Terrain*, 2009

An exhibition by
Württembergischer Kunstverein

Curators
Hans D. Christ, Iris Dressler

Introduction

From January 30 to April 11, 2010 the Württembergischer Kunstverein will be showing the first comprehensive solo exhibition by Cologne artist Bettina Lockemann (born 1971).

With their unspectacular gesturing, Lockemann's works particularly stand out within contemporary photographic art. The high pictorial quality, the complexity of content, and the precise conceptualization characterizing her works attest to a well-reflected treatment of both the aesthetic and theoretical parameters of photography.

In her elaborate series, the artist pursues various explorative questions relevant to society. She pinpoints urban situations, global structures, constructions of the other, politically defined spaces, or scenarios of control and surveillance. Here, the investigation of relations between image and reality always takes center stage: Which projections and expectations tend to influence our perception of reality? In what ways are these projections inscribed in pictures? Or rather, how can these projections be undermined by pictures?

Lockemann avails herself of documentary aesthetics, that is, of a pictorial language that we are tempted to interpret as a neutral and veritable representation of reality, even while being aware of its malleability. It is precisely from this point that the artist sets off to consciously mislead the viewer, as is apparent, for instance, in the series **Code Orange** (2003). This series shows black-and-white photographs of the streets of Washington, D.C. and New York City where the vacuity of interchangeable urban situations intersects with allusions to surveillance and control. Views of blockades, vans, helicopters, and persons are arranged in such a way as to imbue the viewer with a sense of experiencing secretive conspiratorial operations—or a Hollywood film set.

Thematized in the photo series **Contact Zone** (2008), shot in Japan, is the scrutiny of the other. Here, in lieu of confronting the viewer with documentation in keeping with conceptions of the other, Lockemann instead evokes one's own culture, which is easily overlooked when focusing upon that which is unfamiliar.

In most of her works, Lockemann is surveying public urban spaces. The series **EP/2006/K** (2006–2007), in contrast, was captured in interior spaces: in the hallways, conference rooms, or office spaces at the European Parliament in Brussels. Although—or precisely because—the photographs depict the inside of the administrative apparatus, they reveal and illustrate its impenetrability.

The artist's most recent project, **Undetermined Terrain** (2009), came to life over the course of several different visits to Istanbul and Ankara. At the fore of her urban excursions in Turkey was a desire to explore the vestiges of change as well as the question of the presence, or absence, of tangible boundaries between Asia and Europe. Here, the eye trained on urban structures is frequently shifted through the emergence of people, vehicles, or buildings.

In addition to photographs, the exhibition is also introducing several video works by the artist, including **Border Patrol** (2001), a work comprised of three projections in which various border zones—in the sense of invisible borderlines and urban interspaces—are pictorially circumscribed.

Many of Lockemann's images portray vacuous, interchangeable urban landscapes where the few visible people appear as were they mere staffage. Yet the artist is not only intent on showing modern cities in their facelessness. She moreover brings the faceless into play as a screen of projection, thus exposing images to be read.

The Artist

After pursuing professional training in photography, Bettina Lockemann attended the Academy of Visual Arts in Leipzig from 1994 to 1999. In 1995 she founded the Büro für Bildangelegenheiten (Office for Image Affairs) together with Elisabeth Neudörfl. In 2007 she completed her dissertation, entitled *Das Fremde sehen* (Seeing the Other), which takes up the European view on Japan in contemporary artistic documentary photography (published by Transcript Verlag publishers in Bielefeld). Since 2007 she has been teaching artistic photography and art theory at institutions of higher education in Stuttgart (Merz Academy, Stuttgart State Academy of Art and Design), Leipzig, and Zurich.

Lockemann's works have been exhibited at various venues, including the Nederlands Foto Instituut in Rotterdam (2002), the Fotomuseum Winterthur (2001), and as part of the International Photo Triennale in Esslingen (2004) and the International Photo Biennale in Rotterdam (2000). She has been the recipient of numerous scholarships and awards, two of which being a German Institute for Japanese Studies Scholarship (2006, Japan) and a Fulbright Scholarship (2003, USA).

Press release and Press pictures

<http://www.wkv-stuttgart.de/en/press/2010>

Contact Press

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Opening

Friday, January 29, 2010, 7 pm

Address

Württembergischer Kunstverein Stuttgart
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Hours

Tue, Thu - Sun: 11 am – 6 pm, Wed: 11 am – 8 pm

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Works in the Exhibition (Selection)

Undetermined Terrain, 2009

Series of 90 color photographs



The photo series *Undetermined Terrain* was created during various visits by the artist to Istanbul, the ancient Ottoman capital, and to Ankara, the modern Turkish capital. Here the point of departure was the issue of the visibility of border lines between Europe and Asia as well as of the urban, social, economic, and political transformations distinguishing the past one hundred years. The photographs deeply penetrate the urban spaces and approximate both familiar and extraneous facets. At the same time, the gaze of the viewer is repeatedly obscured, hampering any possibility of a view/overview. As such, situations characterized by transition and transformation are continually present. Yet the question of what is actually happening—and where it is leading—remains open.

Contact Zone, 2008

Series of 74 photographs, b/w



This photo series came into being during the artist's three-month stay in Japan. In these photographs Lockemann reflects on constructions of the other—and, concretely speaking, on the preconceptions about Asia (specifically Japan) prevalent in Western society—while simultaneously confuting these. Rather than zeroing in on motifs that are perceived as different from a Western perspective, her pictures of urban situations encountered in various Japanese cities instead highlight the opposite, namely, that which reflects the seemingly familiar: such as buildings and building complexes that have been designed or influenced by Western architects.

EP/2006/K., 2006–2007

Series of 28 photographs, b/w



The photographs in this series originated from spaces within the European Parliament in Brussels. In this case, Lockemann was especially interested in the bureaucratic structures of the building and of everyday parliamentary life, the work processes of which remain elusory. Despite the fact that there is much to be observed, the events in general elude interpretation. It is this impenetrability that Lockemann is probing through her work. Serving as inspiration in the process is Franz Kafka, who has underscored in his novels the inaccessibility of bureaucracy for average citizens.

Code Orange, 2003

Series of 80 photographs, b/w



The series *Code Orange* was photographed in 2003 in Washington, D.C. and deals with aspects of securitarianism and surveillance. Although the images reflect a documentary approach, the artist nevertheless stops short of attempting to portray an objective picture but, in fact, is engendering an atmosphere of suspicion and surveillance. Seemingly trivial scenes are charged with meaning and associated into a vague narrative. The photographs impart an ambivalence that leaves the viewer hanging as far as the import of the events is concerned.

Fringes of Utopia, 2001–2002

Series of 55 photographs, b/w



The series *Fringes of Utopia: Observations on West Coast Urbanism* was created between 2001 and 2002 in Los Angeles, Las Vegas, and San Diego. The cities of the U.S. West Coast are often treated as paradigms for the urban development of the future. Yet they in actuality reflect the urban “sprawl” prototype (such as has long since been described by science fiction authors) with their neglectful treatment of natural resources like land, water, and energy, with their favoring of the car for transportation, with the disappearance of public space, and with their unresolved security issues. This work illuminates various elements of such urban development choices and embraces the vacuity and the wide open spaces, the equivalent of which are not to be found in Europe.

CV

See also: <http://www.archivalien.de>

1971 born in Berlin

Awards and Stipends (Choice)

2009 Nachwuchsförderung der Kunststiftung NRW

2006 Stipendium für einen 3-monatigen Japanaufenthalt, Deutsches Institut für Japanstudien Tokyo

2005-07 Graduiertenstipendium der Kunstakademie Stuttgart

2003 Fulbright-Stipendium für ein Visual Culture Tertiary, Amherst College, USA

2001 Stipendium des Kultusministeriums NRW für eine Medienkünstlerin aus Nordrhein-Westfalen

Solo Exhibitions (Choice)

2009 Loris - Galerie für zeitgenössische Kunst, Berlin (September)

2008 Contact Zone, Loris - Galerie für zeitgenössische Kunst, Berlin

2003 Code Orange, GEDOK-Galerie, Stuttgart

2003 Fringes of Utopia, Büro Spors, Berlin

2002 schon mal hier gewesen, Oberwelt e.V., Stuttgart

1999 objects in this mirror may be closer than they appear, Kunstverein Leipzig

Group Exhibitions (Choice)

2009 Innenansichten, Goethe-Institut Santa Cruz, Bolivien *K (Katalog)

2009 Get your Piece of the Cake, Loris - Galerie für zeitgenössische Kunst, Berlin

2008 Heterotopien des Alltags. Junge Berliner Künstler sehen Raum, Videoscreening im Scala, Berlin

2008 1:1, Loris - Galerie für zeitgenössische Kunst, Berlin (mit Ellen Bornkessel)

2008 Innenansichten, Institut Pierre Werner, Luxemburg; Goethe-Institut Washington DC, USA; Goethe-Institut Curitiba, Brasilien; Goethe-Institut Brasília, Brasilien *K

2007 Die beste aller möglichen Welten, Loris - Galerie für zeitgenössische Kunst, Berlin

2007 Innenansichten, Europäisches Parlament, Brüssel, Belgien; Goethe-Institut Kopenhagen, Dänemark; Ex-Convento del Carmen, Guadalajara, Mexiko *K

2007 Sie regieren das Tal, Loris - Galerie für zeitgenössische Kunst, Berlin

2006 Jahresgaben, Württembergischer Kunstverein Stuttgart

2005 2005 Pingyao International Photography Show, Pingyao, China *K

2005 Trial of Power, Kunstraum Kreuzberg/Bethanien, Berlin *K

2005 Verstreute Momente der Konzentration. Urbane und Digitale Räume, Hardware Medienkunstverein, Dortmund *K

2005 Expanded Media, Württembergischer Kunstverein Stuttgart

2004 Recherche - entdeckt! Bildarchive der Unsichtbarkeiten, Internationale Fototriennale Esslingen *K

2002 nicht weit von der wirklichkeit entfernt, Hardware Medienkunstverein, Dortmund *K

2002 Trade. Waren, Wege und Werte im Welthandel heute, Nederlands Foto Instituut, Rotterdam *K

2001 Trade, Fotomuseum Winterthur, Schweiz *K

2001 new ideas - old tricks, Hardware Medienkunstverein, Dortmund *K

2000 Sublime, Künstlerhaus Duende, Rotterdam

2000 Im Strom der City, Mülheimer Medien Meile, Mülheim/Ruhr *K

2000 Spring Opening, suburbia chic, Köln

2000 Positions, Attitudes, Actions, Internationale Foto-Biennale Rotterdam *K