

Gosbert Gottmann

Born 1955 in Ortenhöfen, Schwarzwald
Studies 1976-1980 at Universities Mannheim and Heidelberg
1985 Promotion Dr. rer. pol., in Frankfurt
Lives in Frankfurt

Books and Catalogues

"down-town", 1999
"modern sufferings", 2001, Kehrer Verlag, Heidelberg
"Katarina Witt", 2002, powerplay Verlag, Berlin
"warriors", 2004, Kehrer Verlag, Heidelberg



"Modern Sufferings Series" 2001, on Hand Made Paper, 40 x 50 cm



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L.A. Galerie Lothar Albrecht presents:

Gosbert Gottmann "Stop Here"

November 11 to December 31, 2005

You and your friends are cordially invited to the opening on Friday, November 11, at 7 p.m.

Introduction by Meike Behm

The media convey messages. They deliver information, not in a neutral way, but such as to influence and change a culture. In the digital age of the 21st century, the mass medium of television constitutes an essential part in the lives of many people. It serves as a major source of information and especially entertainment. With an ever increasing number and variety of TV channels and programs to choose from, it is becoming more and more difficult to decide for an evening of reading or at the theater instead of in front of the TV set. Since the early 1980s, the competition of commercial channels has motivated German public television to compromise their educational mission for the masses' call for easy entertainment. The mass media can affect the contents of a culture, but they are also able—in a worst-case scenario—to turn it into an un-culture. Gosbert Gottmann's photographs of his latest series "Stop Here" are made of images of a number of Formula-1 car races shown on live tele-

vision. This includes film stills from the races themselves and from the commercial breaks shown during the races—images, in other words, that are ubiquitous in the context of documenting a sports event. This kind of reporting satisfies man's inherent, instinctive need for freedom as well as excitement. The viewer at home can imagine himself sitting in the racing car and be carried away in the delirious state of high velocity; entertainment and excitement are brought right onto his easy chair. Gosbert Gottmann's way of manipulating his pictures, his choice of scenes and the perspectives from which he shows events taking place both at the center of attention and behind the scenes all result from a critical view towards the possibilities of the media to manipulate the masses. The takes chosen are digitally processed so as to make space, time and place appear unreal. Through blurrings and distortions, objects seem dematerialized. Some of the photographs are dominated by the red color

PREVIEW

L. A. GALERIE, FRANKFURT

- "Heimat", Peter Bialobrzski, January 19 until February 25, 2006
- "Under the Sign of Scorpio", Tracey Moffatt, March 3 until April 1, 2006

ART FAIRS

Art Cologne, Cologne
February 9 until February 13, 2006

EXHIBITIONS

Oliver Boberg
- "Post-Modellismus", Krinzinger Art Projekte, Vienna, Austria
September 28 until November 26, 2005
- "Multiple Räume (3)" Film-Illusion und Imagination in der Kunst, Kunsthalle, Baden-Baden, Germany
October 8 until December 4, 2005

Tracey Moffatt
- "Woman/Women", Palazzo Strozzi, Florence, Italy
September 23 until January 31, 2006
- "Helden Heute—Heros a Jamais", CentrePasqueArt Biel—Bienne, Switzerland, October 2 until November 27, 2005
- "(H)istory", Kunstmuseum, Thun, Switzerland
October 6 until December 4, 2005

Gosbert Gottmann
- "Helden Heute—Heros a Jamais",
CentrePasqueArt Biel—Bienne, Switzerland,
October 2 until November 27, 2005

New publications
Peter Bialobrezski, "Heimat", Hatje Cantz Verlag, Germany
Tajji Matsue "In-between", EU-Japan Fest Japan Comitee, Japan
Mabel Palacin, "6", Cru-Edicion, Spain

Gallery newsletter

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L.A.Galerie-Frankfurt@t-online.de

L. A. GALERIE, BEIJING
No 319., Cao Chang di, Cui Ge Zhuang Village, East End Art
Chaoyang District, Da Shanzi 71# Mail Box,
Beijing 100015, P.R. China
phone: 0086-10 64325093, 64325073
info@la-gallery-beijing.com
www.la-gallery-beijing.com

Concept and design: www.rottmann-peter-lang.de



"Stop Here Series" 2004, C-Print 60 x 80 cm



"Stop Here Series" 2005, C-Print 60 x 80 cm



L. A. Galerie Lothar Albrecht
Domstrasse 6 - II. floor - 60311 Frankfurt - Tues-Fri 12.00-19.00, Sat 11.00-16.00
phone: +49-69-28 86 87 - fax: +49-69-28 09 12 - l.a.galerie-frankfurt@t-online.de - www.lagalerie.de



"Stop Here Series" 2005, C-Print 60 x 80 cm

of Ferrari (the car maker that Michael Schumacher is affiliated with). In Gottmann's manipulated version, however, the red no longer serves as a vitalizing color within a variety of other shades; surrounded by dark tones, the striking color rather seems threatening and is suggestive of fire.

Many of the photographs are like very intense memory flashes that hardly elude the viewer, oscillating somewhere between fascination and terror. In the photographs titled "Stop Here," two males in yellow uniforms stand against a monochrome black background. They dominate the center and are viewed from slightly below. The man in front



"Stop Here Series" 2004, C-Print 60 x 80 cm

stands with his back to the viewer, and yet the viewer cannot identify with him, as the reduced presence of colors and the view from below make it difficult to relate to the picture through this figure. The men's clothing with their massive paddings and their helmets underline this alienating and menacing impression.



"Stop Here Series" 2005, C-Print 60 x 80 cm

In the piece titled "Technical," a man in a white uniform approaches a building. It might stand for the world which the Formula-1 protagonists inhabit on an everyday basis, but the title also reflects on the growing impact of technology in the 21st century, where naturally produced images are doomed to become replaced by digitally processed ones. The line dividing fiction and reality seems to become less and less visible. Speeding cars, seen from a bird's perspective, are but small dots on the racing court and look like satellites. People in racing uniforms against a white background appear to have come from a far-away universe.

Because of their appearance and because the pictures were twice manipulated—once through the perspective of the television camera, then again by Gottmann—, the series "Stop Here" refers to certain aspects described in an essay on "extreme phenomena" by the French thinker Jean Baudrillard, titled "Transparency of the Evil" (1990):

"We are not supposed to profoundly decode what appears on the screen, but to just take it in right away, to work it off immediately, to short-circuit the poles of representation... We are getting closer and closer to the surface of the screen, our eyes are like spread over the picture.

We no longer know of the distance between audience and stage, the stage as we used to know it does not even exist anymore." Pointing to the loss of distance to real-life events, Baudrillard goes as far as to say that because of a dominance of the digital media, the virtual world is threatening to replace the real world.

Gosbert Gottmann touches on this critical aspect by choosing an extremely seductive kind of program, the world of Formula-1, as the subject for his photographs. In a fast-paced age, people are in danger of not only escaping to the superficial entertainment of the mass media, but also losing themselves in them and losing a sense of the advantages of real life, which leads to loss of communication, isolation and stultification. As fascinating as the photographs may be regarding their colors and composition, as terrifying is the message they communicate. "Stop Here" can have a double meaning; isolated from the context of Formula-1 and chosen for the title of the series, it can be read as a general appeal.

The isolation of the individual in the jungle of the big city is the subject of the 2001 series of photographs, "Modern Sufferings." As the title tells us, the series revolves around man and his possibilities of living. With only a limited number of motifs, the photographs depict facades of high-rise buildings in dark brownish shades. Often viewed from below, human beings appear as shadowy figures without identity, if at all. Again, space, time and place do not seem real, everything seems to be a blurred image of reality. Through the use of photographic techniques such as blurring or distortion, the pictures reflect our fast-moving times in which one does not seize the pleasures of the moment anymore. In "Modern Sufferings," Gosbert Gottmann sensitizes us to the causes and results of an alienated life in the urban jungles of our time. The green and brown shades of the series exude coolness and at times deterrence. Some compositions focus on a close-up view of facades of buildings, where the rows of windows are like dark, blank, totally undistinctive eyes. The silhouettes of office buildings, shopping malls and financial districts appear like phantoms of themselves, and the sinister facades tell about today's anonymous urban life. "Stop Here" was about the virtual reality individuals escape to from time to time, causing loneliness and a dearth of social interaction; in a similar way, "Modern Sufferings" refers to suffering in a world where man can no longer determine how to live within his environment, but is controlled by it. Forced to move faster and faster and to work ever harder in order to avoid poverty, he is threatened to lose his identity and live in the shadows.

Be it his skeptical view of the mass media and their power to manipulate cultural behavior—"Stop Here"—, or the enlightening aspect of "Modern Sufferings," pointing to today's big-city rat race—Gosbert Gottmann's photographs reflect phenomena of our times.

Meike Behm

(Translation by Simone Schede)



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