



RAY 2015

Fotografieprojekte
Frankfurt/RheinMain

Exhibition guide

Imagine Reality

20/06 – 20/09/2015

Fotografie Forum Frankfurt
Museum Angewandte Kunst
MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst

www.ray2015.de



In Reality

From June to September the Rhine/Main region once again celebrates the medium of photography with this unique collaboration: in its second edition the triennial RAY 2015 Fotografieprojekte Frankfurt/RheinMain presents outstanding positions of contemporary photography. In a central exhibition and nine partner projects 12 institutions as well as 35 artists from 15 nations dedicate themselves to images of subjective and staged realities with the theme IMAGINE REALITY. With this, RAY 2015 does not only combine the extraordinary quality of the regional collections and institutions, but also strengthens them through the support of exhibitions and artists' new productions.

For the exhibition IMAGINE REALITY 28 artists were selected, which use fragments of reality as their source to create imaginary and visionary worlds. Their images lead into a world in which reality and fiction, facts and illusion are inseparably woven together. The photographic means used are as multifarious as the history of photography and reflect the transformation of the medium.

Imagine

Exhibition venues and artists

Fotografie Forum Frankfurt ⁰⁴⁻⁰⁷

Sophie Calle, Klaus Elle, Lucas Foglia, Cinthia Marcelle, Maix Mayer, Sanaz Mazinani, Hans Op de Beeck, Kathrin Sonntag, Anoeck Steketee.

Museum Angewandte Kunst ⁰⁸⁻¹³

Sonja Braas, Barbara Breitenfellner, David Claerbout, Jonas Dahlberg, Jan Paul Evers, Joan Fontcuberta, Beate Gütschow, Barbara Kasten, Abelardo Morell, Viviane Sassen, John Stezaker, Jan Tichy, Wolfgang Zurborn.

MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst ¹⁴⁻¹⁷

David Claerbout, Cristina De Middel, Klaus Elle, João Maria Gusmão & Pedro Paiva, Annette Kelm, Yamini Nayar, Miguel Rio Branco, Simon Starling.

Fotografie Forum Frankfurt

Sophie Calle b. 1965, lives in Paris

The topics of blindness and memory have interested Sophie Calle since the 1980's. In the series, *La Dernière Image* (2010) she based her photos on stories told by blind people recalling their last moments of sight that she then translated into images. These “last images” are shown together with portraits of the blind people and a text panel telling their story. Sophie Calle reconstructs a reality – as it could have been – thereby calling into question the traditional photographic criteria of truth.

Klaus Elle b. 1954, lives in Hamburg

For the photography series, *Ich war Sigi* (2012), exhibited here for the first time, the artist transposes his own photographs with images from the last roll of film of his deceased father-in-law, Sigi. Together, the images and text describe an abstract and very poetic story about families, relationships, German history and people.

Lucas Foglia b. 1983, lives in San Francisco

The work in the series, *Frontcountry* (2006 – 2013), is the result of photographic expeditions into the “backlands” of the US-American West. The transition from farming to the mining industry provide the starting point of the photographs. Foglia's images tell a tale of loneliness, forlornness and physical violence, but not in the sense of a reportage. The American photographer's interest lies in the seemingly surreal scenery in which fragments of reality shine through.

Cinthia Marcelle b.1974, lives in Belo Horizonte

The Brazilian artist

Cinthia Marcelle stages actions in public spaces for her video works. With the use of performative strategies, she creates symbolic images. The focus of her work is the examination of social-political aspects of our living environment. In *Cruzada (The Crusade; 2010)*, four marching bands meet at an intersection. The initial dissonance of their music develops into a harmonic unity. Marcelle is referring here to the colonial history that caused the ethnical mixing of the Brazilian population.

In the video, *O Século (The Century; 2011)*, the observer looks at an empty, asphalt street. Objects flying into the image from the right, land in the left half of the image, swirling up smoke and dust. At the end, the sequence is repeated again, but this time mirror-inverted. Marcelle creates an absurd cycle of destruction and makes an historical image available, where every attack is met with a counterattack, every reaction is followed by a counter-reaction.

Maix Mayer b.1960, lives in Leipzig

The video work, *Das Restreale (2010/2015)*, takes the observer along on a journey to a small town in the Taiwanese province by night. Maix Mayer presents fragments of reality that he photographed in the midst of a New Year's celebration and condenses into a chronicle of an infernal atmosphere of fire, light and pyrotechnics. It is left to the observer to recall their own memories of media images in order to interpret the events as a folk festival, exotic ritual or a civil war.

Sanaz Mazinani b. 1978, lives in San Francisco and Toronto

Like the pop artists, Thomas Bayrle and Peter Roehr in the 1960s, the Iranian-born artist Sanaz Mazinani is also concerned with recurring symbols in mainstream media. The artist is primarily interested in conflicts, insurgency and our bodies in the world today. She downloads photos with real news value from the internet and transforms them into elements of psychedelic geometric compositions. The images are mirrored, paired, duplicated and so formed into patterns reminiscent of textile designs or decorative Islamic elements.

Hans Op de Beeck b. 1969, lives in Brussels

In, *Staging Silence (2)* (2013), the Belgian media artist, Hans Op de Beeck carries out all possible forms of construction and deconstruction by means of changing settings in front of a running camera. A black and white tableaux of ordinary material and miniature objects follow each other successively. The dynamic of the sequence is supported by the music by the British composer Scanner. The resulting interiors represent stages for possible narratives. At the same time, they refer to the artist's several different memories of actual existing public places – although estranged from reality and strongly abstracted scenarios.

Kathrin Sonntag b.1981, lives in Berlin

Kathrin Sonntag developed the work, *This Was Tomorrow Once* (2015) for RAY 2015. Here she once again places image and space in a confusing relationship to each other. The viewers ask themselves the question: where does the room end and where does the image begin? They can also get involved in the game of the artist: to see the future already in the present. A complex chronological sequence of events coupled with common objects that form partly two, and then three dimensional components of the installation. Thus evading the contexts of our familiar reality and inviting the observer to a journey of discovery.

Anoek Steketee b.1974, lives in Amsterdam

The photojournalist visited amusement parks for example in Iraq, Lebanon, Ruanda and the U.S.A. Despite very different cultural and political contexts, the parks all have several things in common: people from all walks of society immerse themselves into a world of fantasy and fairy tales. In her series, *Dream City* (2006 – 2010), Anoek Steketee stages consistently dark documentary images that contradict the bright, colorful aesthetic of the parks.

Museum Angewandte Kunst

Sonja Braas b. 1968, lives in New York

With the group of works, *The Passage* (2009 – 2011) the German born artist, Sonja Braas moves between reality and fiction. She consciously questions the authentic character of photography, by her succession of 52 analogue photographs that seemingly document a trip on the open sea, but really don't – as she created them in her studio. The promise of time behind the 52 images as an equivalent of the weeks in a year cannot be held. This construction of reality removes familiar parameters that allow us a clear allocation of time and space.

Barbara Breitenfellner b. 1969, lives in Berlin

With her new work, *Traum einer Installation aus einem Hund und verschiedenen schiefen Ebenen. Ich schaute durch eine Glasscheibe in ein Zimmer. Braun-rosa Tapete + Teppichboden. Ein ganz seltsam beleuchteter Kubus, den ich als Fotografie sah. Dann verließen wir das leere Haus* (*Dream of an installation of a dog and different slanted levels. I looked through a glass pane into a room. Brown-pink wall paper + carpet. A very strangely illuminated cube that I saw as photography. Then we left the empty house, 2015*) that she created for the exhibit, IMAGINE REALITY the Austrian born artist, Barbara Breitenfellner once again transfers an entry from her diary of dreams to an expansive installation. Seen, invented and remembered, together with a work from a collection of the Museum Angewandte Kunst, a porcelain dog (Chinese Dog, Meissen 1730 – 1740, Inv. No. 15481), allow her dream protocol to become reality.

David Claerbout b. 1969, lives in Antwerp and Berlin

The video work, *Travel* (1996 – 2013) takes the viewer almost imperceptibly from a park, over a dark European forest to a tropical rainforest. Only when the camera takes a bird's-eye view, it is revealed that the dream-like, unspoiled landscape is actually a little forest clearing in the middle of some fields. The journey is accompanied by a composition by Éric Breton from the 1980s. The stress-releasing, soothing effect of the synthesizer tones finds its synesthetic counterpart in *Travel*, a reassuring and disconcerting computer animated visual world.

Jonas Dahlberg b. 1970, lives in Stockholm

Jonas Dahlberg calls attention to the relational and constructed character of space as well as subjectivity and awareness with the video work, *Three Rooms* (2008). The three monitors correspond to three miniature rooms of a domestic environment; a bedroom, a living room and a dining room. The furniture recreated from wax for the film shoot, dissolves completely during the 27 minute sequence that only has one camera setting. It melts slowly and disappears. Only the room is left – a reference to the process of the dissolution of an environment, of loss and a demonstration that awareness and knowledge are dependent upon time.

Jan Paul Evers b.1982, lives in Cologne

Jan Paul Evers' work is made as he repeatedly photographs already existing images with an analogue camera. Every image is unique – contrary to the characteristic of the photographic medium that sets itself apart from other media by its reproducibility. In the darkroom, Evers creates “Light Artwork” par excellence. The play with light, shadows, chemicals and the time factor produce the effects. Grained structures on paper, delicate blurs, and sharp edges complete the impact of the photographically sculptured artworks.

Joan Fontcuberta b.1955, lives in Barcelona

During his expeditions as a hunter and collector of photographs, Joan Fontcuberta combines fiction with reality. His project, *Sputnik* (1997 – 2015) documents the life of the Soviet cosmonaut, Ivan Istochnikov. The newly created installation for IMAGINE REALITY shows the spectacular achievements of the protagonist through prints and objects. It allows the viewer to immerse themselves in the era of the cold war and early space travel.

Beate Gütschow b.1970, lives in Berlin

The themes in the three works of the series *#S* (2009) appear as an urban dystopia that can neither be placed in time nor space. They are based on analog photographs of actual, existing constructions that the artist took in many different places. Out of up to one hundred photos, Gütschow assembles new, seemingly unreal architecture on the computer, of which every factor of recognition has been removed.

The work 52.52779/13.3656 refers to the geographic coordinates of the place that is explored in the images. It is also the result of an extensive research process and the subsequent assemblage of different elements to a new unity. Beate Gütschow concerns herself with the history of her apartment building in Berlin and by using elements of drawing adds details that aren't there anymore. Gütschow's new series is presented for the first time in this exhibition.

Barbara Kasten b. 1936, lives in Chicago

In her work, Barbara Kasten addresses the essential moment between abstraction and objectivity. With the series, *Architectural Sites*, Kasten began in the 1980s to focus on well known, public buildings. However, she distorts the architectural images through the use of mirrors and light effects. Kasten describes herself as a sculptor-architect that adapts existing spatial situations in a post-modern sense and reassembles them into two-dimensional images.

Abelardo Morell b. 1948, lives in Boston

For the series *Tent Camera – Image on Ground* (2010 – 2012), Morell connects space and surfaces by projecting a three dimensional image with a specially developed camera obscura onto the ground. In his photographs, the elements of subject (space) and ground (surface) merge to form a new unity. With his tent camera, he photographs familiar city sights, such as the Brooklyn Bridge in New York or famous American landscapes like Yosemite-National Park.

Viviane Sassen b.1972, lives in Amsterdam

Vibrant colors often define

Viviane Sassen's photographs that are mainly shot in Africa and South America. Black forms as dark as the night, shadowed patterns of leaves or faces in the shade are contrasted with intense colors. It is noticeable that almost consistently throughout her work the people photographed are anonymous, which make her images even more mysterious. The photographs shown here are from the series, *Parasomnia* (2010), which means "unexpected awakening" or "Sleepwalker", and also from *Umbra* (2014), which is Latin for "shadow".

John Stezaker b.1949, lives in London

The collages of John Stezaker are made up of collected objects from the 1940s and 1950s and transport early signs of modern media and mass culture to the present. With the deliberate and radical use of sharply cropped images that overlap edges, the original photograph is dissolved, resulting in a new visual compound of motifs that were originally alien towards each other. Surrealistic practice and dreamlike nostalgia with a hint of Hollywood flow together here into the traditional image genre of the portrait.

Jan Tichy b. 1974, lives in Chicago

Jan Tichy works within collections and museums, and was specifically commissioned with a new production for IMAGINE REALITY. The Czech artist chose to work with the Grunelius collection of the Museum Angewandte Kunst. He created an accessible installation that takes travel photographs from 1898 as well as objects as its starting point in order to illustrate the important role of time in the photographic process.

Wolfgang Zurborn b. 1956, lives in Cologne

Wolfgang Zurborn creates the compositions for his photographic realities from color, form and light. Proportions are suspended, the world appears as a collage in the eye of the photographer. Zurborn records stimuli that would otherwise be lost in the chaotic bustle of the city. For the series *Catch* (1999 – 2007) or *dressur real* (1986 – 2000), he searched for unusual angles and documented disorienting details of reality.

MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst Frankfurt am Main

David Claerbout b. 1969, lives in Antwerp and Berlin

In the video work, *Radio Piece (Hongkong)* (2015) the viewer follows an uninterrupted camera tracking shot that begins in a Zen garden and ends in the Kowloon Walled City, a slum-like residential high-rise in Hong Kong, that was torn down in 1993. The film shows a crossover between imagined and real space. The soundtrack, recorded with a special process, places the viewer in the center of events. With this work, Claerbout examines the growing disappearance of living space as well as the retreat to a world that only exists in our imagination.

Cristina De Middel b. 1975, lives in Mexico

The latest series of the Spanish photographer, Cristina De Middel, *This Is What Hatred Did* (2014) form a visual adaptation of the Nigerian collection of stories published in 1954, *My Life in The Bush of Ghosts* by Amos Tutola. De Middel's photographs were taken in today's Makoko, the largest slum area in the Bay of Lagos. Inspired by the story of a boy who encounters evil spirits and magic powers, the images take us beyond the documentation of a mystical setting and create a fantastical world.

Klaus Elle b. 1954, lives in Hamburg

Klaus Elle has always used the medium of photography as a spectrum for ontological analysis. In his *Erleuchtungen (Illuminations)* (1986 – 1999), space and the inherent darkness within unleash mysterious discoveries of time and light, investigations of the past and present. Reacting intuitively to the area and its walls, the artist made photographs in abandoned places, using himself and others as models.

João Maria Gusmão & Pedro Paiva

b. 1979 and 1977, live in Lisbon

The starting point in the works of the artist duo, João Maria Gusmão & Pedro Paiva is often found in analogue cinematic and photographic processes of which they use various options in order to explore philosophical, scientific and illusionistic aspects of our awareness. The materials for their film sequences and photographs are physical experiments, processes of nature or supernatural objects, but also very trivial items and activities of everyday life. The exhibition space becomes an alchemist's workshop in which different visual worlds interlace with each other.

Annette Kelm b.1975, lives in Berlin

With her work, Annette Kelm questions the illustrating function of photography and invites the viewer to reconsider their accustomed way of perception. The viewing of images should begin with the “recognition” of a theme. Kelm mainly uses large or middle format cameras in order to capture objects, architecture or people as precisely as possible. In the rational repetitiveness of a subject and the barely recognizable differences in the serially recorded images, the element of the progression of time is revealed. In addition, the lunacy of some objects emerges even more distinctly and references to the conventions of advertising photography are made.

Yamini Nayar b.1975, lives in New York

In Yamini Nayar’s works, the borders between photography, sculpture, collage and painting become blurred. Nayar creates assemblages out of found and discarded materials and pictures. When they are completed, she photographs them. After this process, the sculptured models are destroyed. The photographs serve as their replacement. In her abstract “still lifes”, she creates imaginary, psychologically charged, architectural spaces.

Miguel Rio Branco b. 1946, lives in Rio de Janeiro

The installation, *Entre os olhos o deserto* (*Between the Eyes the Desert*; 1997/2015) consists of a projection of over 400 photographs and ready-mades created on-site. Portraits, abstract places, working hands, and animals flank underwater fauna and barren landscapes. They appear alternatively between two eyes and are rhythmically accentuated by a sound track. This work was originally created for an exhibition along the border of Mexico and the U.S.A. It deals with human desire as much as with the environment.

Simon Starling b. 1967, lives in Berlin and Copenhagen

In *The Nanjing Particles (After Henry Ward, View of C. T. Sampson's Shoe Manufactory, with the Chinese Shoemakers in working Costume, ca. 1875)* (2008) Starling examines the political impact of the historical and current international flow of workers. Out of a historical stereograph from 1875 showing Chinese migrant workers in front of an American shoe factory, he isolated individual silver particles under an electron microscope. He then enlarged the forms of these particles to a millionfold and subsequently reproduced them as stainless steel sculptures in China, which were then transported to the U.S.A.

Duration of the exhibition

20 June – 20 September 2015

Opening hours

Tue – Sun 10 am – 6 pm, Wed 10 am – 8 pm, closed on Mondays

Entrance

RAY Ticket 12 €, reduced 6 €

Regulations for free entry of the Fotografie Forum Frankfurt, Museum Angewandte Kunst and MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst apply.

Admission is free for the members of the Fotografie Forum Frankfurt, Friends of the Museum Angewandte Kunst and Friends of the MMK.

Public guided tours

Wednesdays, 6 pm, Fotografie Forum Frankfurt

Saturdays, 2.30 pm, MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst

Sundays, 3 pm, Museum Angewandte Kunst

Guided tours for groups and schoolchildren can be booked for one of exhibition venues, respectively. For price inquiries and booking please contact the individual venue:

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Exhibition catalogue

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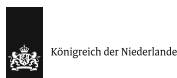
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