MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY

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Thomas Demand

Press Packet

Ferguson, Russell and Thomas Demand. "Paper, Scissors, Camera..." *Financial Times Magazine*, November 17/18, 2018, pp. 46-51.

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FT Weekend Magazine

'Tribute', 2011

PAPER, SCISSORS, CAMERA...

The German artist Thomas Demand makes fragile models of everyday objects and environments, then photographs them to create images that are familiar yet unnervingly strange. He talks to the curator and critic *Russell Ferguson* about how it all began

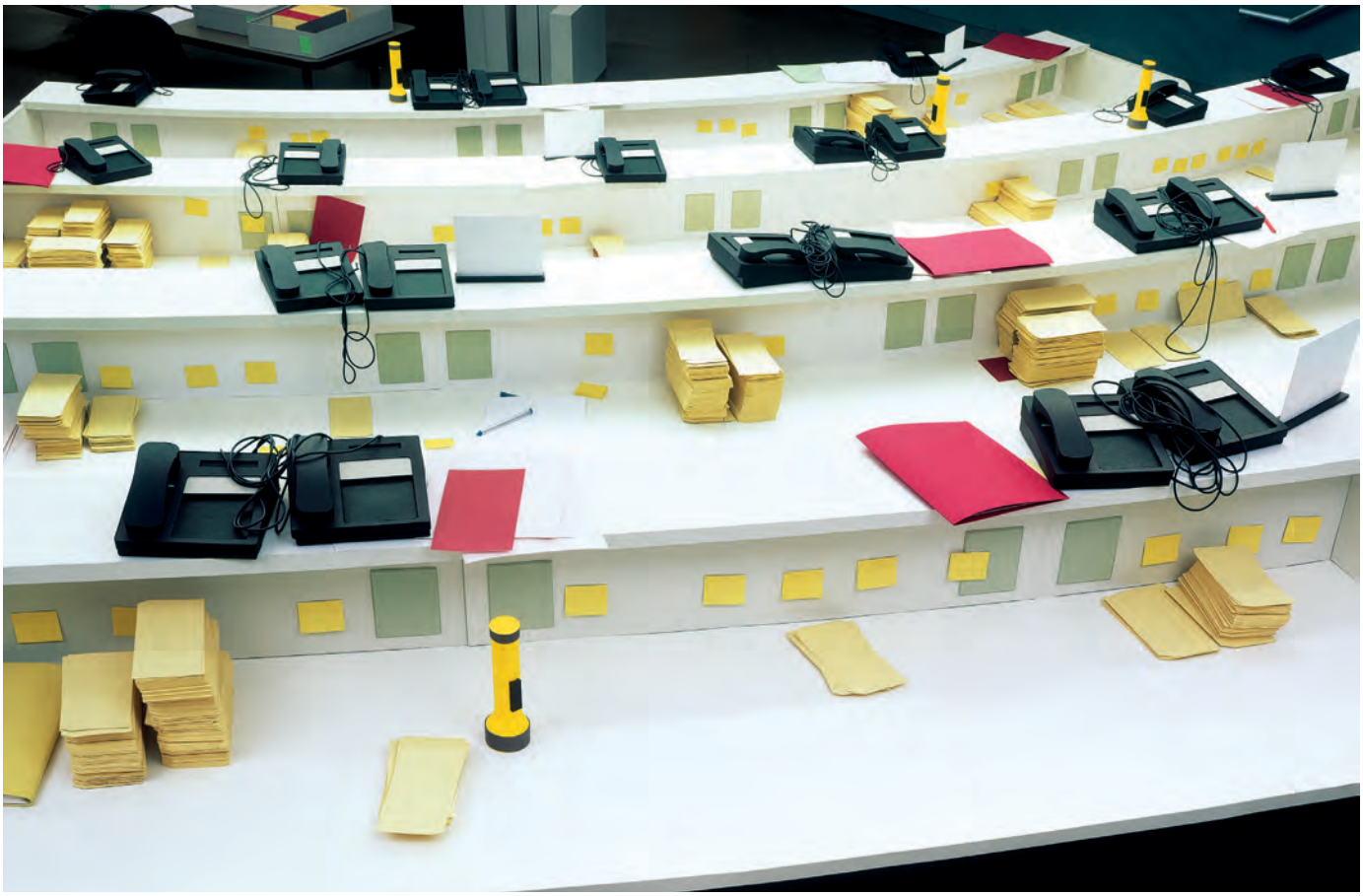
RUSSELL FERGUSON Let's begin at the beginning. Why did you decide to become an artist?

THOMAS DEMAND I actually never considered anything else. My mother was an art teacher. My father was an artist who taught. He wanted to be a painter, but at that time in Germany you couldn't make a living as an artist. But art was always around me.

RF I've always thought that in German art schools it's a one-to-one relationship, that you are "a student of so-and-so".

TD No, they put you in a class immediately, and I was one of the leftovers. Like, "This guy clearly has talent, but I don't want him." So I found myself in the most unpopular class. I stayed for one year and then realised I had to get out. I got an old Opel and I drove through Germany to Hamburg and Düsseldorf and Berlin, and I saw different professors. In Düsseldorf I saw [the artist] Fritz Schwegler, who said, "Well, maybe come back and show me what you've done in like six weeks." I did that, and he accepted me in his class. When I got to [*Kunstakademie*] Düsseldorf, I just swore to myself that I was going to make it as an artist, and I never took another job again. Things there were much more professional. The students had tough battles with each other but they weren't personal; it was about the art. It was quite competitive in that sense.

Ferguson, Russell and Thomas Demand. "Paper, Scissors, Camera..." *Financial Times Magazine*, November 17/18, 2018, pp. 46-51.



'Poll', 2001

RF Is that when you started to move toward sculpture?

TD The one thing I didn't have any clue about was sculpture. I had never made one; I was never interested in it. A lot of people in my class were making sculpture. I was starting completely from scratch, but it was healthy because I started out making very basic things, just trying out volumes and geometric shapes. They were somewhere between representation and abstraction. It was about, "At what point does something become 'something', and at what point is it still just a 'blob?'" I wasn't sure if I wanted to keep making sculptures, so I made them as cheaply as possible. That's how I started making things out of paper — because I didn't want to store them and I didn't want to keep them.

RF Something that came into play in your work quite early is a reluctance to embrace the sense of a model as a miniature version of something in the real world. Can you talk about that a little bit?

TD Even if my sculptures weren't very convincing and didn't last very long, I wanted them to be taken seriously as objects — at that point I wasn't photographing them. I thought, if I make an object that's too neat, or appeals to your sense of prettiness or cuteness, it would be a failure, because it would get stuck in craftsmanship. Scaling things into miniature automatically "cute-ifies" them. So when I started making objects, I just thought, I really need to know what I'm talking about. I made things that I knew from my own experience. I tried to keep the bar as low as possible. Making it monumental would have been taking it beyond my own limits again.

RF After this, you went to Goldsmiths. Why did you decide to go to school in England?

TD I was in Paris on a grant for a year and it reminded me of Munich — the same palette of problems. It was a very different format at Goldsmiths. You had to be able to make

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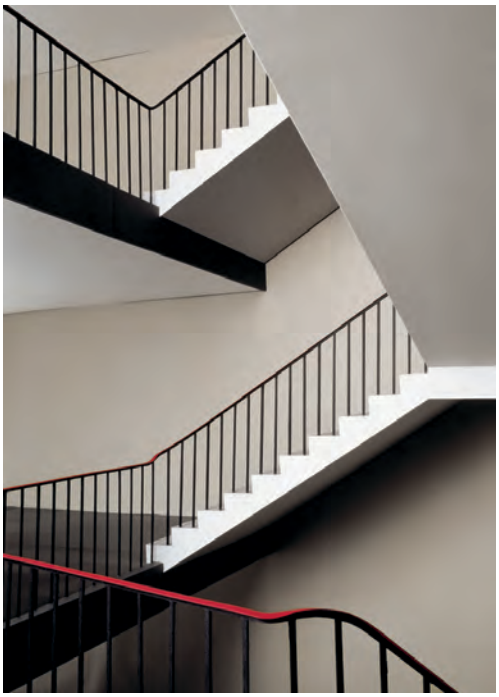
'Kontrollraum/Control Room', 2011



'Treppenhaus/Staircase', 1995

'Sprungturm/Diving Board', 1994

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a case for what you were trying to do, and describe what you expected the audience to see. I hadn't been exposed to that language at all. It was also the beginning of the art world in London at the time, just a couple of years after *Freeze*, the show Damien Hirst curated [in 1988]. It was all about British art — it wasn't about German art at all. You would actually be at a disadvantage as a German, because "German art" meant [Anselm] Kiefer and [Georg] Baselitz. I was really thrown into the deep end there, as a German.

RF Were you still making sculpture?

TD I made sculptures, but I couldn't just take on the Düsseldorf rhetoric of, "Oh, this is like an object, you know what I mean — *wink wink*?" It needed to be much clearer and probably much more individual, subjective. At that time I started photographing stuff before I threw it away, which was basically because my teacher told me that I should.

RF This was mainly for documentation?

TD It was only for documentation. The original idea was that I would only keep around 20 objects, a mixture between the best objects and the latest objects. And my professor said, "You should really photograph them before you throw them away." For one very intelligent reason: because otherwise I wouldn't know if I was making any progress on them.

RF But even though your pictures began exclusively as documentation of sculptures, then the possibility emerged that the thing you're making is really the photograph. Let's talk about an early work, "Sprungturm/Diving Board" (1994). This is kind of exceptional in your work, in that it's not to scale.

TD This is a smallish model because the studio was so small. I couldn't do it 1:1 or I probably would have ended up in the *Guinness Book of World Records*.

RF It is a colour photograph of an object, but it's close to monochrome. Was that part of its appeal?

Detail from the video 'Pacific Sun', 2012

'Junior Suite', 2012

'I started photographing stuff before I threw it away because my teacher told me I should, [so I] would know if I was making progress'

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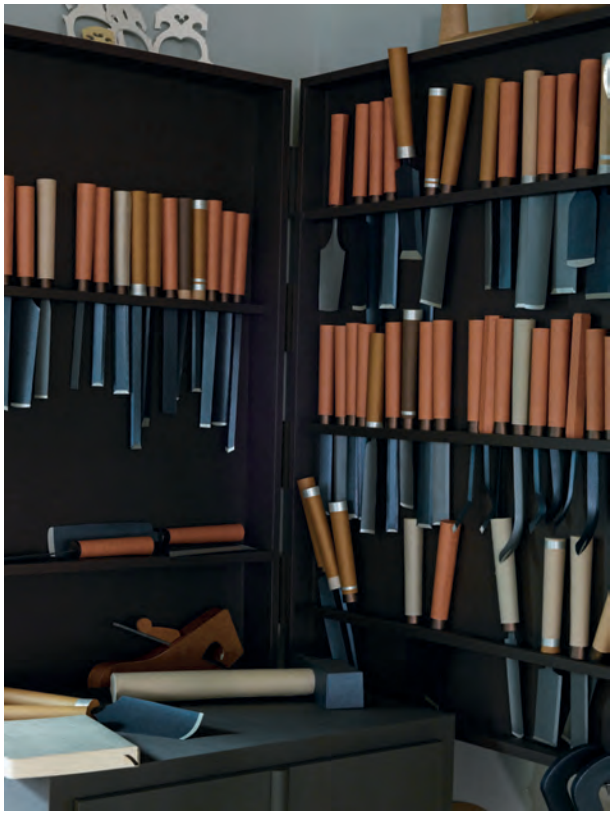

'Werkstatt/Workshop', 2017

'Gangway', 2001

TD Absolutely. It had this connotation of a black-and-white picture. And, of course, as a German in London, this carries a quasi-fascistic connotation.

RF It has quite a Bauhaus feeling to it, but it also has some Berlin Olympics feel. Is this a step up in ambition? That while making a cardboard sculpture you can also take on — "problematic" is an understatement — issues of aesthetics and German history, or the history of photography in Germany?

TD I just realised that those pictures for me are my own, even if they're also part of the public consciousness. So your memory intersects with the collective memory.

RF You told me once that this diving board is the diving board from the pool where you learnt to swim. So it's a personal memory, but it also evokes a kind of public history of representation?

TD Absolutely. As an artist, you have to align your own memories with what these memories mean for someone else. It started with the simple idea that we all have pictures in our head. Do we have these pictures in our head already, or do we construct them when we talk about those things? Obviously, we don't have pictures in our head. It's always a reconstruction. Hence the method of reconstruction and the odd mistake in my pictures. Because I may remember a thing differently than it really was.

RF A lot of the early works, like "Brennerautobahn" (1994), or "Fabrik" (1994), are still large things that you made on a small scale.

TD Yes, on the table top. After London, I went to Amsterdam, to the Rijksakademie, where I had a much bigger studio. And then, in New York I was incredibly lucky because my studio was in a massive building. That's where I made "Corridor" (1995).

RF So it was built life-size?

TD It's life-size, yes. In America, for the first time, I found cardboard that was big enough to make something this large.

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RF Can we talk about your first film, *Tunnel* (1999)? It's the tunnel in Paris that Princess Diana was driving through when the car crashed?

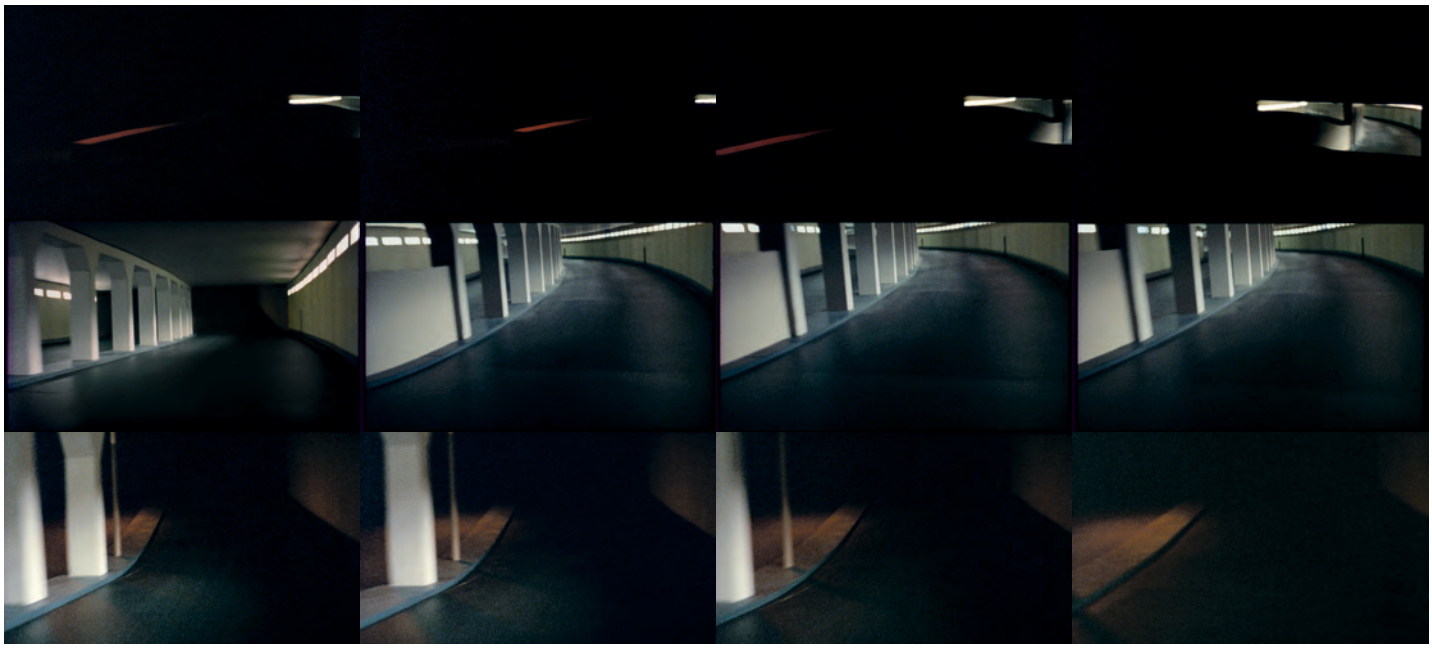
TD In the beginning, it came from a completely different idea. I noticed that the discussion of my work was focusing on whether photography "lies" or not — that was in 1998, when digital photography was just about to take over everything. I found it a very limiting way of talking about pictures. I thought, OK, I need to do something to emphasise other aspects of my practice than just, "How real does it look?" And for me, the moment when you stand in a studio and something is built is a very peculiar one. You experience the fragility of everything, much more than you notice it on the picture. You know that you cannot sit on the chair, and you cannot use these things as things. But they still, to some extent, do what they're supposed to do. And I just wanted to get more of that feeling of, like, you're standing in the studio in this environment. So I thought, OK, if I move the camera through the space, rather than have it provide like a window on to the space, that would probably redirect the perception of the work. So the most natural thing was, of course, to move through spaces that are built for being moved through, like a tunnel. I had already developed the idea of making a movie of a succession of different tunnels, morphing into each other. About three months later, Lady Di died, so it wasn't originally about that event, but at some point it was inevitably about her.

RF In 2009 you had a major show at the Neue Nationalgalerie in Berlin, for which you made five new works that all dealt directly with the weight of German history. Was making [your next series] "The Dailies" — these very simple, everyday objects — a way of taking some of that pressure off?

TD Yes, for me it was. For the Nationalgalerie show I had to admit that there are narratives you might want to know in order to understand many of the pictures, which is something I had sort of been denying for 20 years.

RF Did it feel then transgressive to make such apparently inconsequential images?

TD Well, it felt like an exercise in modesty. I kept thinking, is this enough? I gave myself certain rules. It should never take longer than a week to make a "Daily", instead of occupying me for three months, or three years. And I should



From the film 'Tunnel', 1999

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be able to do it myself, without having like an army of people supporting me. And the authorial perspective should be that of a *flâneur* — something you would see when you pass by on a street or while travelling. Starting from there, a lot of "The Dailies" came to me because I saw things and I thought, oh, that would be a good one, just by walking around. For me, the narrative is the picture itself. It's not something you have to explain, or assume, or imagine. Rather, the reason for the picture is in the picture itself.

RF Do you still consider yourself a sculptor?

TD Like 80 per cent of what I do is concerned with the object — trying to find a way to make a new object, like a violin, for instance, which is such a distinct thing. Photography is not easy for me because I never learnt it.

I feel like I'm still learning. Five times a year I make a photograph. But the rest of the year I just make sculptures. And it is still important for me that most of the things I photograph are actually creating a space or a room or a small corner of the world, rather than just being a surface.

This is an edited extract of an extended interview that took place in 2017 and 2018 in the artist's studio in Los Angeles, published in "Thomas Demand: The Complete Papers", published this month by MACK

'Do we have pictures in our head already, or do we construct them when we talk about those things? Obviously, it's always a reconstruction'

'Daily #10', 2009

'Daily #2', 2008

'Daily #9', 2009

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AnOther Magazine

474—475

ART PROJECT

THOMAS DEMAND
in conversation with
Elizabeth Diller

WORDS **SOPHIE BEW**

Models offer an idealistic rendering of reality – a streamlined and simplified replica. Their purpose is to communicate or represent something else: a place, an object, an idea or a social structure. For two decades, models have been a key concern of the contemporary artist Thomas Demand; photography is another. The son of two painters and the grandson of an architect, Demand first exhibited his work at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, in 1996, in the gallery's annual ensemble photography show, New Photography 12. He has since been the subject of solo shows at MoMA again, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Fondazione Prada, Milan, and the Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin.

Demand focuses on ideas of reality, beginning his process with a found photograph depicting a space or object of social significance. These span the archives of Nazi-propaganda film-maker Leni Riefenstahl; the room-service table holding Whitney Houston's last meal at the Beverly Hilton the night she died [a photograph that circulated widely online before her funeral]; the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant control room, days after the 2011 tsunami; the Baader-Meinhof Group's unexploded rocket launcher – a souvenir of an unfulfilled attack on the Federal Prosecutor's Office, organised in 1977. From such pictures, Demand sculpts life-sized models using carefully folded paper and card. He then photographs them on a Swiss-made Sinar – a large-format camera with a telescopic lens – after which the sculpture is destroyed and its two-dimensional simulation remains. Meticulous and uncanny, these images are at once hyper-real and hyper-strange, both confirming and disrupting our understanding of events. They operate as impressions of our collective realities and histories, refracted thrice – twice through the photographic lens, a piece of apparatus that has come to define our daily lives since its invention in the 19th century.

Demand's Model Studies, however, appear to depart from this, his usual practice. Turning his lens on architects' models, rather than his own, he investigates the space between conception and realisation. These abstract and textural series zoom in on often discarded and disregarded models – miniature imaginings of building designs that bear the marks of craft, hope, indecision and exploration. In fact, three-dimensional space has always framed Demand's vision: he studied sculpture, not photography, under professor Fritz Schwegler, alongside Katharina Fritsch, Thomas Schütte and Gregor Schneider. His works have been girdled by architecture – by construction – ever since.

Here, he discusses the third in this series with award-winning architect Elizabeth Diller. Diller, who co-founded studio Diller Scofidio + Renfro [DS+R], is responsible for the visionary designs of the pending City of London concert hall, New York's transformative High Line, and the forthcoming expansion of MoMA; she was the only architect to land a place in Time magazine's 100 for 2018. Having entered the exhibition space as a conceptual artist – incidentally one of her first artworks, Para-site, was shown at that same museum she is now physically extending – she bridges Demand's two worlds expertly, and lends a keen eye to the artist's hitherto unseen series.

Bew, Sophie, Elizabeth Diller, and Thomas Demand. "Art Project: Thomas Demand in Conversation with Elizabeth Diller." *AnOther Magazine*, Autumn-Winter 2018, pp. 474-85.

MODEL STUDIES III © THOMAS DEMAND, VG BILD-KUNST, BONN / DACS, LONDON

BLOCKS II, 2018, FRAMED PIGMENT PRINT, 83×110 CM

Bew, Sophie, Elizabeth Diller, and Thomas Demand. "Art Project: Thomas Demand in Conversation with Elizabeth Diller." *AnOther Magazine*, Autumn-Winter 2018, pp. 474-85.

CUBES, 2018, FRAMED PIGMENT PRINT, 83×110 CM

Bew, Sophie, Elizabeth Diller, and Thomas Demand. "Art Project: Thomas Demand in Conversation with Elizabeth Diller." *AnOther Magazine*, Autumn-Winter 2018, pp. 474-85.

BOXES, 2018, FRAMED PIGMENT PRINT, 83×110 CM

Bew, Sophie, Elizabeth Diller, and Thomas Demand. "Art Project: Thomas Demand in Conversation with Elizabeth Diller." *AnOther Magazine*, Autumn-Winter 2018, pp. 474-85.

Elizabeth Diller

So, this is the first time that people are going to be introduced to this work?

Thomas Demand

Yes. This is the third in a series, but it started when I first went to the Getty Research Institute [Los Angeles], as a scholar – there wasn't any material that I could work with, but they had this nondescript extra storage space outside in the Valley, where they held the crates of John Lautner's office, among other bulky holdings. He always threw everything away, except those that didn't get built. So when they cleaned the office, they had 12 of these really run-down, tiny little objects – you can't show them, they're way too fragile.

He wasn't a great draughtsman so he'd make a model, give it to his staff, and they'd make a drawing of it. But he would change the look of the building on the model itself – not the drawing – so they were interesting for me because they're not full representation, they're not to be presented to the client, they're for the creative process. They add value, they add insight, they add knowledge – they produce knowledge. That's what I was after in these models.

Were you already interested in Lautner's buildings?

Not at all, and actually all the architects I know thought he was a bad architect. In the beginning I couldn't really deal with his architecture because it's so convoluted and there are too many ideas going on at the same time. And then a friend of mine quipped, "The movie world was really fascinated by him," and I thought, "That's interesting!" And I realised why, because when you pan, the camera can follow a person through the architecture in a Lautner building. The backdrop changes – if you move the camera from left to right, you definitely don't end up in the same architecture that you started in.

There's a phenomenon – his buildings are very present in Hollywood films, and they're always owned by the villains.

Huh. I didn't even realise that.

Yeah, it's a pretty systematic modernist critique. But coming back to Lautner's models, so you found this archive ...

So these 12 crates – it's a huge procedure to open them because of the protocol, but every other week I had an afternoon with one of them. It took me a year to get my photographs together. I hadn't planned to make pictures for the wall, I just thought, "Let's have a look and see where this leads me." I looked at them as objects and not as representations of buildings. And that's what's great about them never having been built – you can't really compare them with the real buildings. At the same time they are very hectic and very anti my model. My model is always this kind of utopian composition, as if – if time would stand still and there were no traces of anything, no writing, nothing – everything was kind of an abstract idea. And these ones are abstract but they're not utopian and they are filled with markings, or clues to the people who've ripped them apart and then reglued them, made notes for the architect, made notes of where the trees would go and stuff. And I like that complete opposite to my own model – that's what I saw in them. It's probably the most photographic project that I've ever done.

Maybe they're not so different – I mean, they look different, but they're both by-products of the process, of which the model itself is not the end product.

Exactly. The next step was I didn't want to leave the Lautners alone, I thought they had become so monumental that it becomes too much about Lautner, about why I think Lautner's great or not great. And I was going to Japan anyway for a project and was going to visit the SANAA studio.[1] It's a relatively small company – about 35 to 40 people – and they all come from different places. Most of them are American, German or Swiss and the other half are Japanese. But the Japanese people don't speak very good English – or they don't want to speak English – so the whole office communicates with models. The first time I went, [Kazuyo] Sejima showed me around and there were heaps and heaps of models sitting around on top of each other. They're all made with office-printer paper – really flimsy – rarely bigger than an A4 sheet. So she picks this opera house up and the whole heap falls down, then she rummages around for something else, and it was so amazingly charming to just see her playing with these objects. Then I realised that by leaving it there – the opera house they never won, which never got built – it stays around, literally, physically. I liked the idea of something that may never see the light of day becoming part of the conversation. It's really beautiful.

But there's another role that paper, or the model, plays in that communication. The whiteness, or the lightness, often affects the colour of the buildings – or the lack of colour – with Sejima. And much of it comes from making these kind of really cheap, office-printer-paper models. The whiteness is really very beautiful. Once, she took me on a tour of her buildings in Japan, and in some, the roof was hanging

MODEL STUDIES III, 2018, RESEARCH STILLS, ALL COURTESY OF THE HOLLEIN FAMILY ARCHIVE

1 The Tokyo-based architecture firm SANAA was co-founded by Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa.

Bew, Sophie, Elizabeth Diller, and Thomas Demand. "Art Project: Thomas Demand in Conversation with Elizabeth Diller." *AnOther Magazine*, Autumn-Winter 2018, pp. 474-85.

down – sagging – and me, being German, I think a building has to be solid and last for ever, so I said, "Well, that's really sad that it's sagging," and she said, "No we built it like that especially because we liked it on the model!"

This third part of the series is on Hans Hollein – he's dead, obviously, but I had the opportunity to look into his bequest before it got thrown away. His kids let me in to see all the overflowing spaces he had filled over the decades. Formally, the work is very dated – it has these kind of rainbow colours, for instance. So it's not about beauty, whereas with SANAA, that is about beauty, contemporary beauty, and about representing the feeling of how you want to live. These are old models, they're from years ago and you just know that nobody would make them any more, but there is a certain spark of freshness in this that is not retro – it's just very raw.

That's what I am actually looking for in these models. Where the model itself plays a role in forming the ideas. The creative process of getting somewhere, or getting nowhere. And this is not about the digitisation of the office – I know that most architectural offices don't use models very often now. I think part of my interest in the making of a model is the making of the model with my hands. I was wondering whether you feel that. Going through the books on DS+R, there are not many models in there, but I have the feeling that much of your exhibition work would have used models …

Well …

No?

Actually, we do make a lot of models.

But you never show them?

We don't really celebrate them. But for the Reviewing the Slow House project,[2] we specifically made models that were new manifestations of the same idea. The model was not on its way to anything, it was the thing itself. After the building, they become a representation of, or the embodiment of, the idea. But the traditional way to think about a model is that you build it for a client, for them to understand what you're doing.

And also, I think that the regular model is about impressing your client.

Yes, but there's something about miniatures, or miniaturisation, that is very appealing and very universal in a way. It's not so easy for a lot of people to look at two-dimensional representations – except perspective and renderings, which everyone fears is propaganda. The model on the other hand stands for an objective view of the thing, so that you, as a client, can actually see it any way you want, from whatever perspective you want. I don't think much has changed there, although architects have added more tools to their repertoire – digital modelling and VR, even. We use models in all sorts of different ways. But I think the way you're talking about models is very much the way we still work – things you can't accomplish through other technologies. By cutting things, putting pieces of cardboard together with tape or glue, you can start to see the relationships between them. Whereas in digital modelling, you basically have to find the coordinates, to extract the entire process and then bring it back to some kind of version of representation. So I still think the latter allows you to think fast, but I also find that models are disposable and I don't feel that kind of pressure.

Would you say there is a degree of coincidence there? Can a coincidence come from the model and go back into the design process? Is it a two-way process?

It is two-way. In my training I laboured over drawings and models. Drawings are basics – you know how to look at them. But with a model, you can circle it, turn it upside down, crush it, or deliberately misread it. That ability to misread it actually produces something else – you get a little bit of understanding of behaviour and performance. That's why the story about Sejima is interesting – the sag came out of the paper, and then it was reproduced in a three-dimensional, solid way that's permanent. I think that models are not going anywhere, but what's interesting are new tools such as three-dimensional printing – you tell the printer what you want, you leave it overnight, you come down in the morning and the elves have made it.

It's a little bit like drawing in three dimensions, no?

Yeah, it's a weird process that doesn't resemble the construction of an idea. It's very much a kind of mould, or a product, of a concept. It doesn't serve the same purpose as the models that you're talking about, which are like action paintings or feedback.

Yes, they're feedback in the sense that you learn, you realise it's not working. Whereas on a computer everything is so shiny it all looks good in the first place. With a model the failure is so much more visible. Whenever I do something on a computer it's always so linear in terms of where it will end up. You never make a detour.

2 Desiring Eye: Reviewing the Slow House, 1989, the conceptual design by Diller Scofidio + Renfro – "conceived as a passage, a door that leads to a window … a physical entry to an optical departure" – existed only as a multimedia installation [a series of models] exhibited at Toto Gallery Ma, Tokyo, Le Magasin, Grenoble, and Arc en Rêve, Bordeaux.

Bew, Sophie, Elizabeth Diller, and Thomas Demand. "Art Project: Thomas Demand in Conversation with Elizabeth Diller." *AnOther Magazine*, Autumn-Winter 2018, pp. 474-85.

Coming back to the trilogy, do you think of it as a trilogy? Or do you think of it as a series?

No, it's just that I can't always make models. When I started The Dailies,[3] I wanted to do something more like a poem, or a haiku, rather than a novel. As a parallel idea, a writer can also write about a post office and how that works, and it could be an interesting piece of writing, even if it's not fictional. And in this case, the models are not fictional but they emphasise the notion of thinking by hand. In a sense they're also not figurative. The work that I'm most known for is very representational. I find it interesting to work with architecture that is not about building, but about the process and how you find the form, and how you use the form, which I think is equally important.

So, I'm curious about Hollein. He is this very particular figure of architecture, not that well known, not popular. He was part of a certain moment in the Sixties, when he was a rebel, but he continues to be unusual and interesting in lots of different ways.

Well, first of all he was instrumental in architectural modernism, for Schindler, Neutra, et cetera. There are a couple of things in early Hollein that are really interesting, like the collages, for example. Just amazing. There's this scale and incredible freedom of thought. His Monument to Victims of the Holocaust[4] is just outrageous. If I were to do that today I would probably be crucified. The blow-up office [designed in 1969] – a plastic bottle that you sit inside. They're amazing and inspiring, especially if you look at the work of Raumlabor and other nomadic concepts lately.

But he called a lot of that work his artwork, he didn't call it architecture.

No, no, it's architecture. He just did whatever he wanted to do, when he got the chance.

His architectural work is not his best work, but the early stuff ...

Like the Retti candle shop in Vienna. The candle shop is just unbelievable – have you ever been in?

No.

It's tiny, it's the size of a toilet. The use of space and mirrors – it's so genius, just fantastic. I really like the creative input. It's baroque, admittedly. I focused on the exhibition designs mostly, stands for the candle company, a room for a museum.

He came at a certain moment when postmodernism arose in architecture. His work was really radical and independent, and then all of a sudden he does a building and it's axial, it's symmetrical, has the features you'd expect. But then, your work on the models – there are three different kinds of model and three different types of response, from what I'm seeing. With Hollein, it's not in the empathetic way that you shot the Lautner. There, one feels the abjectness, those sort of memories that are unrecoupable – you don't know what they stand for, and you lose sense of it. I think with SANAA, you really see a process – the multiplicity of the process. There's something very much about real time.

Your approach to those photos, you were left with the boxes, you had to figure out what they were, you decoded them, you figured out which ones represented Hollein. It was much more archaeological. With Lautner, you're just seeing it as it is, this material.

And its well-processed material. I'm seeing this in a crate that costs probably $4,000 to make earthquake-safe and trying to get these alive again. And trying to get something out that is not seen because the Getty doesn't process mistakes and ruptures, that's not why they keep it. They just keep it because they can't throw it away. The Holleins are rather on the edge of disappearing, it's stuff left in overfilled apartments.

This is the problem with making archives, there's all this knowledge that is going to keep accruing – we're going to run out of space. We're very sentimental about these things, maybe there's some kind of belief that they're going to be worth something. There's a sort of cultural need for some institution to represent them.

'Cultural need' is a good term to use because I think the model is a completely underexposed cultural need. We always talk about iconoclasm, we talk about pictures replacing text. The internet completely depends on pictures now – text is actually in the way, and shouldn't be more than 280 characters. What's really behind that is we model our world

3 The Dailies is an ongoing series of photographs of models based on iPhone photos. They portray quotidian daily scenes: details of fences, rubbish, sinks – domestic ephemera that catches the artist's eye.

4 Hollein's design – a vast concrete structure resembling an inverted train carriage monumentalised on the road – was never realised, but its graphic depiction, drawn in 1963, is held at MoMA.

Bew, Sophie, Elizabeth Diller, and Thomas Demand. "Art Project: Thomas Demand in Conversation with Elizabeth Diller." *AnOther Magazine*, Autumn-Winter 2018, pp. 474-85.

because it's too complex to understand it. Retirement funds – they work with models, demographic models. The weather forecast is a model. We're making models all the time because we need to, to represent our sense of reality.

I think there's also a relationship between the object and yourself as a person, and that's why I was asking in the beginning whether your models are for exhibitions, because you don't show models of your works in a show.

You rarely make models for exhibition purposes, you make models for other reasons, but also everything you do and everything you make – at whatever scale – has to have an official relationship. At the same time, you've talked about loss in models, about the space between image and subject. In the cases of Model Studies you have said that you were drawn to what gets lost between the model and the building, between those initial intentions and the practicality of the building itself. I guess, with architecture, there's the loss of a big idea when it's translated into a bunch of processes, into budgets. Is there a different kind of loss that takes place in the journey from the vision of a thing – of a real space that you understand from photos, or from being there – to a model, then to a photo? Again, it's translation, translation, translation – do you look at that as a loss? How would you put that?

It's actually the game. It's what I'm after, I'm after the mini mistake, the copy mistake. Because I'm not trying to make something that looks like the real thing. I'm trying to retell this story with my own experiences. Like with Kitchen,[5] I've never been inside Saddam Hussein's kitchen but I know that he has the same Tupperware as I do at home. The way we read the world is through what we know to be in the world – we have a pretty good overview of the western consuming world, and what configures a kitchen, what configures a bedroom, what configures the light coming through a window. That's not only because we have a kitchen at home, it's because we've seen a thousand kitchens in pictures. I'm not trying to make the kitchen authentic, I'm trying to get an abstract idea of it. We all have a kitchen in our head – if we talk about a kitchen, we both know what that is. If I say, "Now imagine the kitchen of Saddam Hussein," you'll go through your inner archive, to find whether you have any memories of that. However, it's a construction – a complete construction. We don't have pictures in our head – the construction happens from the moment I mention it, or you see my picture. You just construct something yourself. That's what we see, and there's a lot of loss in there, because otherwise you would go bonkers, you need to leave a lot of information behind.

So the space between is what I'm after. I love fictional literature for that, for the speed of imagination that develops. If you read a good book, you're imagining what the characters look like. At the same time, I always have to keep it very clear that it's a modern mock-up, and that this of course isn't in the real photograph, I'm putting something in that replaces the authenticity of the original, in a sense.

That's a beautiful thought – the loss is actually, I think, the gain. The extraction is the process and that's something that gets into the essence of something, and allows it to be interpretable.

Yeah, that's exactly everything. It needs to be open enough, because then I don't need a label on my work in 50 years, explaining it. Of course, there can be a label because we all share stories and you can always find out what a certain painting is about if you don't see it yourself. But in the end, the work I do has to have a life on its own. If it's too close to what it's supposed to represent, it doesn't fly.

Model Series III will be exhibited at Sprüth Magers, Berlin, from November 15, 2018, until January 17, 2019

5 Kitchen, 2004, is a C-print photograph of Demand's own paper reconstruction of the kitchen in Saddam Hussein's hideaway in Tikrit, Iraq.

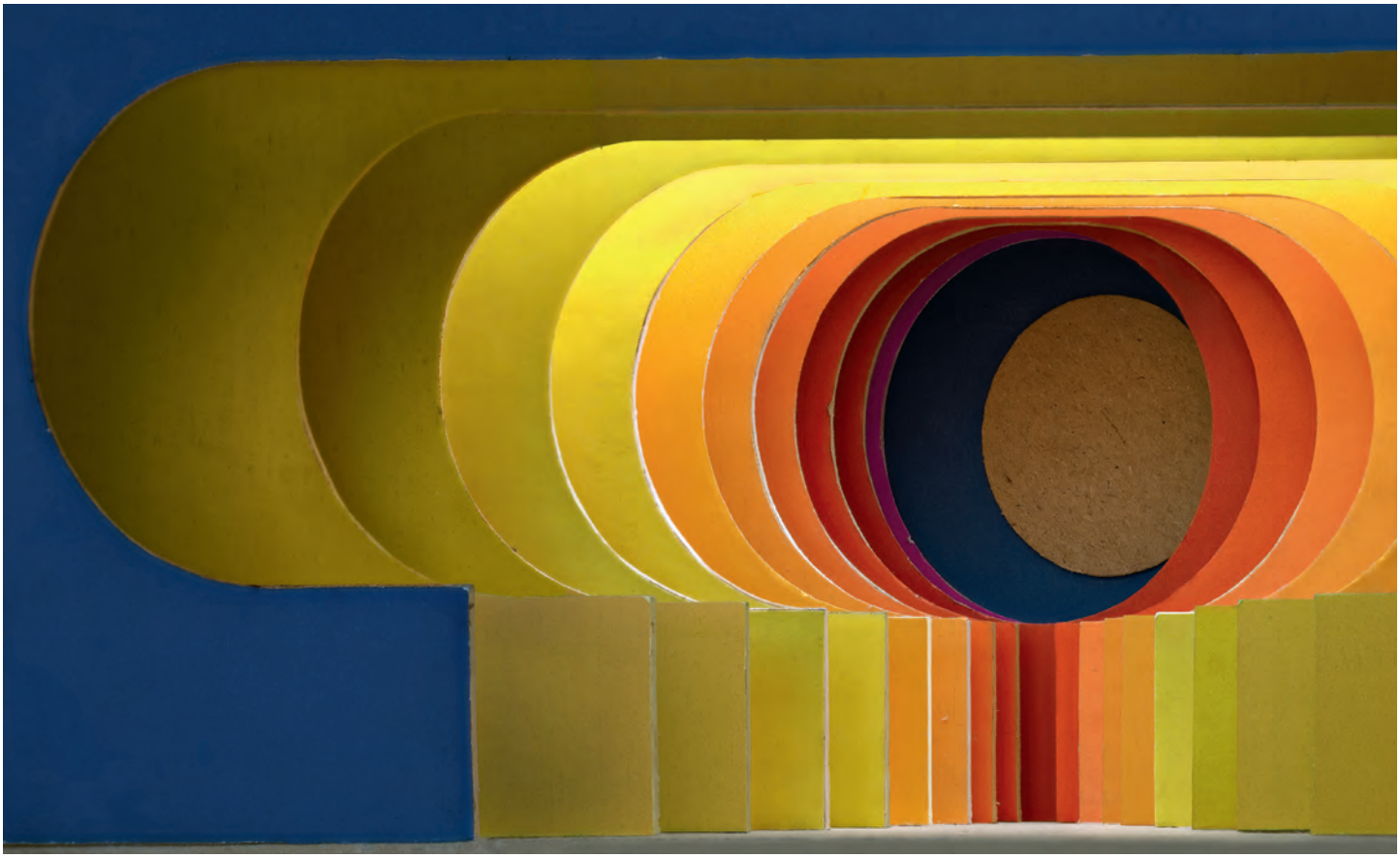
Bew, Sophie, Elizabeth Diller, and Thomas Demand. "Art Project: Thomas Demand in Conversation with Elizabeth Diller." *AnOther Magazine*, Autumn-Winter 2018, pp. 474-85.

XX, 2018, FRAMED PIGMENT PRINT, 83×98 CM

Bew, Sophie, Elizabeth Diller, and Thomas Demand. "Art Project: Thomas Demand in Conversation with Elizabeth Diller." *AnOther Magazine*, Autumn-Winter 2018, pp. 474-85.

CHUTE, 2018, FRAMED PIGMENT PRINT, 83×110 CM

Bew, Sophie, Elizabeth Diller, and Thomas Demand. "Art Project: Thomas Demand in Conversation with Elizabeth Diller." *AnOther Magazine*, Autumn-Winter 2018, pp. 474-85.



RAINBOW, 2018, FRAMED PIGMENT PRINT, 84×136 CM

Bew, Sophie, Elizabeth Diller, and Thomas Demand. "Art Project: Thomas Demand in Conversation with Elizabeth Diller." *AnOther Magazine*, Autumn-Winter 2018, pp. 474-85.

The New York Times

THOMAS DEMAND

Through April 7. Matthew Marks, 523 West 24th Street, Manhattan; 212-243-0200, matthewmarks.com.

Thomas Demand is a hybrid photographer. He trained as a sculptor and is best known for making cardboard and paper models of momentous events and politically charged sites — the meager kitchen in Saddam Hussein's last hide-out in Iraq or the nuclear power plant in Fukushima, Japan — and photographing them to look deceptively realistic. In his current show at Matthew Marks, however, Mr. Demand shifts his primary focus to recreating photographs taken with his cellphone.

In the front gallery the walls are covered with gray wallpaper depicting school or workplace lockers (overtones, perhaps inadvertently, of American school shootings). Two videos shown on monitors suspended from the ceiling and a handful of photographs reproduce saccharine or banal subjects that Mr. Demand photographed with his cellphone: a red bow tied to a fence, a box with electrical wiring, blinking stoplights and balloons attached to a plastic clip. In the rear gallery are three large photographs in Mr. Demand's recognizable style, depicting the ruins of an unidentified bombardment, the interior of a barracks tent and the warmly lit workshop of a Bavarian violin maker — all near-perfectly sculpted in cardboard and paper and photographed.

THOMAS DEMAND/ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NEW YORK - VG BILD-KUNST, BONN; MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY

The cellphone-derived works, titled "Dailies," are not as dramatic or captivating as the historical scenes. And yet, they accurately depict the present, merging Mr. Demand's anesthetized aesthetic with a world in which people are attached to their smartphones, capturing images they will never look at again. In this sense, Mr. Demand memorializes the banal and the forgotten with the same painstaking care he gives to more charged moments in history and suffuses the "Dailies" with an uncanny absurdity and pathos.

MARTHA SCHWENDENER

Schwendener, Martha. "Thomas Demand," *The New York Times*. March 16, 2018, p. C12.

THE BROOKLYN RAIL
CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON ARTS, POLITICS, AND CULTURE

ARTSEEN

MARCH 5TH, 2018

THOMAS DEMAND

by Louis Block

MATTHEW MARKS | FEBRUARY 17 – APRIL 7, 2018

Thomas Demand, *Tent*, 2016. C-print mounted on Diasec, 86 5/8 × 118 1/4 inches. Courtesy Matthew Marks.

There is a moment near the end of Peter Weir's 1998 *The Truman Show* where Truman, played by Jim Carrey, reaches the end of the built environment that has trapped him for his entire life—an infinite wall painted sky blue with airbrushed, puffy clouds. The wall's artificial nature is revealed slowly: its soft plaster texture, the shimmers of light bouncing off its base, the unconvincing patterning of its clouds. Reaching towards the surface, Truman's hand casts an angled shadow on the sky. With these details, our brains stutter—the illusion is revealed. It is this immeasurable space between visual belief and betrayal that Thomas Demand mines in his intricate photographs. For his new show at Matthew Marks, Demand combines stills, animations, and sound to consider the textures themselves of experience.

For the three works in the gallery's back room, Demand constructed life-like models out of colored paper, recreations of scenes from found photographs, then carefully lit and photographed the models; presented in the gallery as large scale

prints mounted to acrylic. The models are not exhibited, and are destroyed after documentation. This is a mode of working that Demand has been perfecting since the early '90s, one which yields images that are sometimes haunting through their dedication to exploring the interworkings of social and historical memory. These three pieces take their subject matter from disparate sources: a Bavarian violin-maker's studio, a bombed house, and a tent with bunk beds. In this grouping, Demand seems to test all the different directions in which these artificial realities can function—the scenes alternately elicit nostalgia, shock, and uncertainty: is this tent a memory of a childhood summer camp, or the current reality of a refugee?

It is a wind that blows through these pieces, revealing an inherent tension between their materials and their subjects, as it scatters leaves through the flap of the tent, reminding its inhabitants of the fragile nature of their dwelling. In *Ruin* (2017) it sifts through dust and rubble in the bombed-out living room, revealing a sandal, opening a cabinet. In *Workshop* (2017), the wind holds its breath, anticipating the harmonies that tens of violins will send vibrating through its air. Despite all clues of movement and weight, these objects don't really exist—every step in their meticulous recreation is an act of destruction. Every piece of carefully cut paper disintegrates what is being copied; in the end, what we are left with are merely suggestions of former objects. Reading the visual clues, we are equally confident that a certain object is supposed to be a violin, and that it can certainly never be a real violin. The surfaces are too uniform, the edges too clean.

In the gallery's front room, Demand presents a more challenging project. Smaller photographs from his *Dailies* series are on view, produced with the same paper model method, but with imagery sourced this time from Demand's cell phone camera. The scenes are banal: an office exit sign, a torn cushion, an open electrical box, and a ribbon tied to a fence. The colors on these dye-transfer prints are heavily saturated, almost beyond life-like. Compositions here are much more tightly cropped than the other photographs, and allow the eye more time to rest uneasily on their surfaces. Two animations play on suspended screens in the middle of the room, each frame a variation of another paper environment. Balloons attached to colored ribbons float just out of view as leaves scatter past in the background, a walk signal at an intersection blinks on and off, stops, blinks again. An audio track made in collaboration with composer Tyondai Braxton syncs up to the blinking, echoing through the installation like a sonar beep. Time is the uncanny element here—the movements of the balloons are not disjointed, but seem slightly too fast, then slightly too slow, to be believable.

Thomas Demand, *Werkstatt / Workshop*, 2017. C-print mounted on Diasec, 70 7/8 × 122 inches. Courtesy Matthew Marks.

Block, Louis. "Thomas Demand," *The Brooklyn Rail*. March 5, 2018.

Take nothing for granted in this installation—least of all the wallpaper. The entire room is covered in life-size lockers, again printed from photographs of models. There are hundreds of gray lockers, at first glance appearing to be a repeated pattern but which, on close inspection, each display unique characteristics of their own models. As I walked up and down the room, reveling in finding a small dent in one of the sides, or a slightly wider gap in one of the vents, the lockers became as jewel-like and enigmatic as the smaller prints. These containers of the personal and the intimate, in their most minute details—the imperfections that betray their institutional uniformity—begin to take on personalities of their own. In a way, there is more life in them than in the historical recreations.

Walking out of the gallery, I encountered a world enhanced by the unreality I had just experienced. I felt myself noticing details previously unrecorded—the way textures were flattened in shadow, the imperfections in the sidewalk. Demand's work is difficult to look at; it often causes more unease than visual pleasure, but it is the mark of powerful work to be able to alter the viewer's perception long after the works have been abandoned. We are encouraged not to hold the memories of the pieces and their construction in our minds, but rather to learn how memories are built, to question the surfaces of reality down to their thinnest, most fragile components.

CONTRIBUTOR

Louis Block

LOUIS BLOCK is a painter living in Brooklyn, NY. His work has been shown in Baltimore and Philadelphia, and his writing was recently featured in *Full Bleed*.

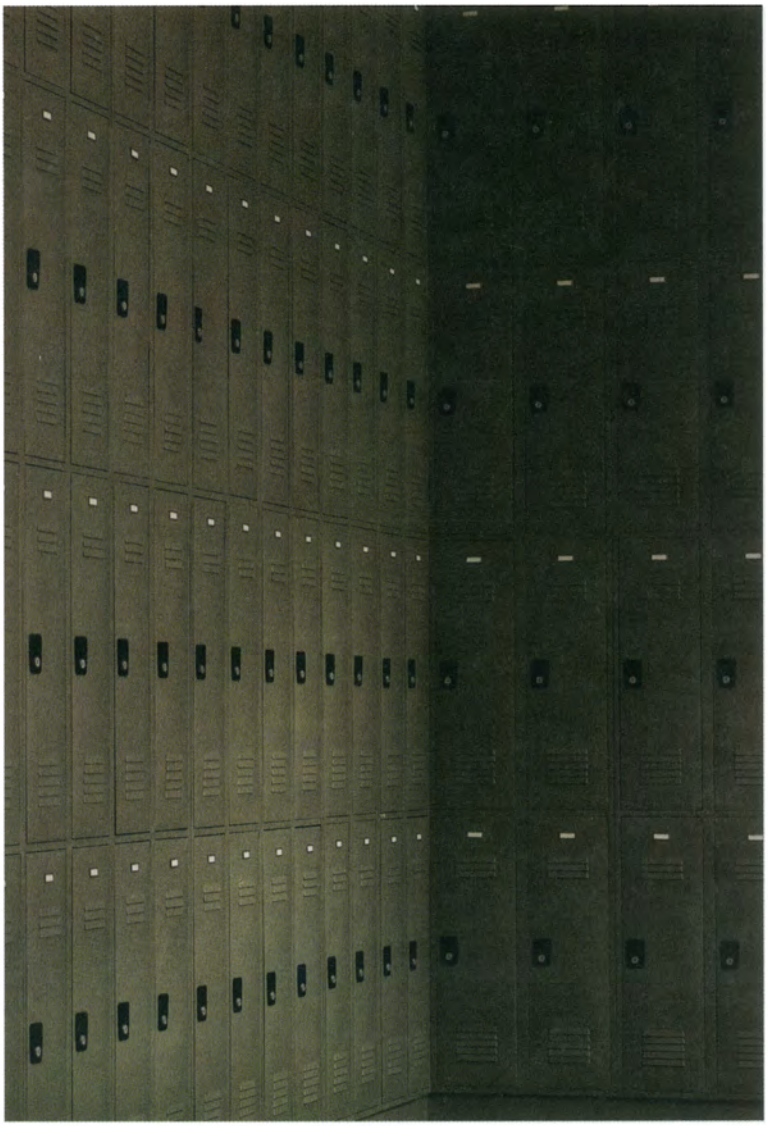
Block, Louis. "Thomas Demand," *The Brooklyn Rail*. March 5, 2018.

M Le magazine du Monde

CARTE BLANCHE À

Thomas Demand.

BUNKER D'HITLER, ATELIER DE MATISSE, BUREAU ANONYME... AVEC SES REPRODUCTIONS EN PAPIER ET À TAILLE RÉELLE DE LIEUX CONNUS OU ANODINS, RÉALISÉES À PARTIR DE PHOTOS DE PRESSE, L'ARTISTE ALLEMAND INTERROGE LE POUVOIR DE L'IMAGE. POUR "M", IL DÉVOILE JUSQU'À FIN MAI DES DÉTAILS INÉDITS DE SES MAQUETTES.



Thomas Demand, VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn/ADAGP, Paris.
Légende de la photo d'après le titre du film d'Alexander Kluge

« L'attaque par le présent du temps qui reste. »

"Carte Blanche à Thomas Demand," *M Le Magazine du Monde*. March 17, 2018, p. 11.

M Le magazine du Monde

CARTE BLANCHE À

Thomas Demand.

BUNKER D'HITLER, ATELIER DE MATISSE, BUREAU ANONYME... AVEC SES REPRODUCTIONS EN PAPIER ET À TAILLE RÉELLE DE LIEUX CONNUS OU ANODINS, RÉALISÉES À PARTIR DE PHOTOS DE PRESSE, L'ARTISTE ALLEMAND INTERROGE LE POUVOIR DE L'IMAGE. POUR "M", IL DÉVOILE JUSQU'À FIN MAI DES DÉTAILS INÉDITS DE SES MAQUETTES.

Les Larges Épaules.

Thomas Demand, VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn/ADAGP, Paris

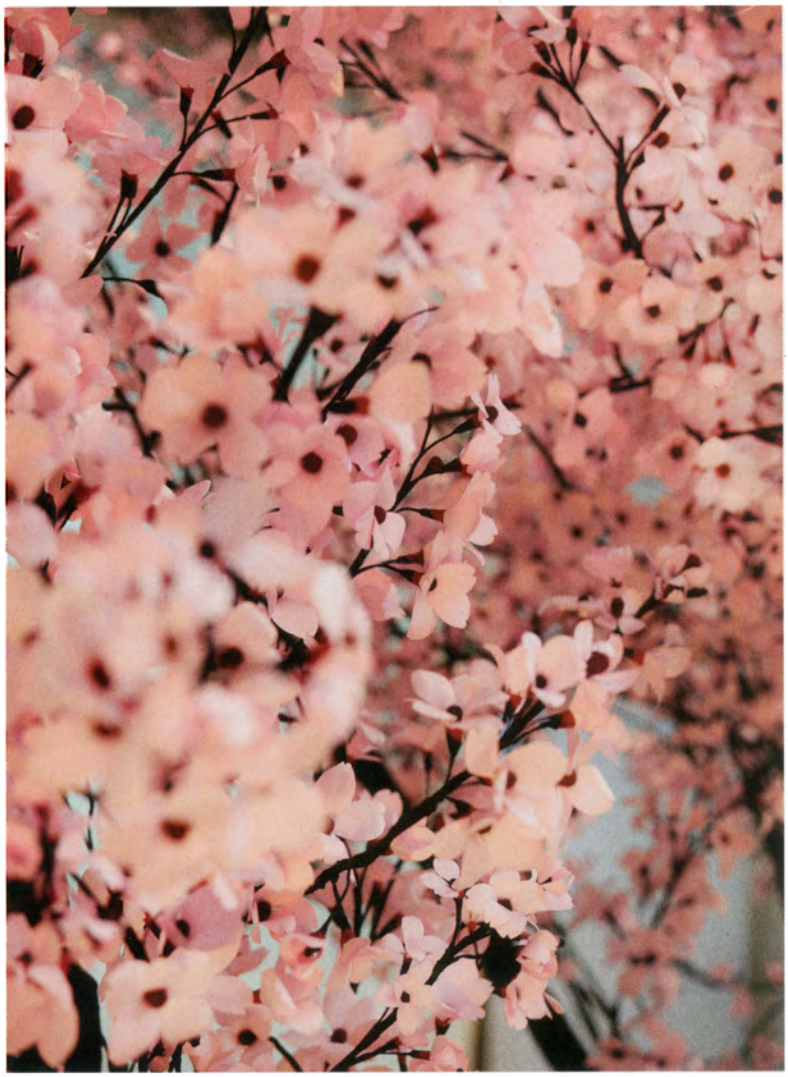
"Carte Blanche à Thomas Demand," *M Le Magazine du Monde*. March 24, 2018, p. 9.

M Le magazine du Monde

CARTE BLANCHE À

Thomas Demand.

BUNKER D'HITLER, ATELIER DE MATISSE, BUREAU ANONYME... AVEC SES REPRODUCTIONS EN PAPIER ET À TAILLE RÉELLE DE LIEUX CONNUS OU ANODINS, RÉALISÉES À PARTIR DE PHOTOS DE PRESSE, L'ARTISTE ALLEMAND INTERROGE LE POUVOIR DE L'IMAGE. POUR "M", IL DÉVOILE JUSQU'À FIN MAI DES DÉTAILS INÉDITS DE SES MAQUETTES.



Les yeux doux.

Thomas Demand, VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn/ADAGP, Paris

"Carte Blanche à Thomas Demand," *M Le Magazine du Monde*. April 7, 2018, p. 15.

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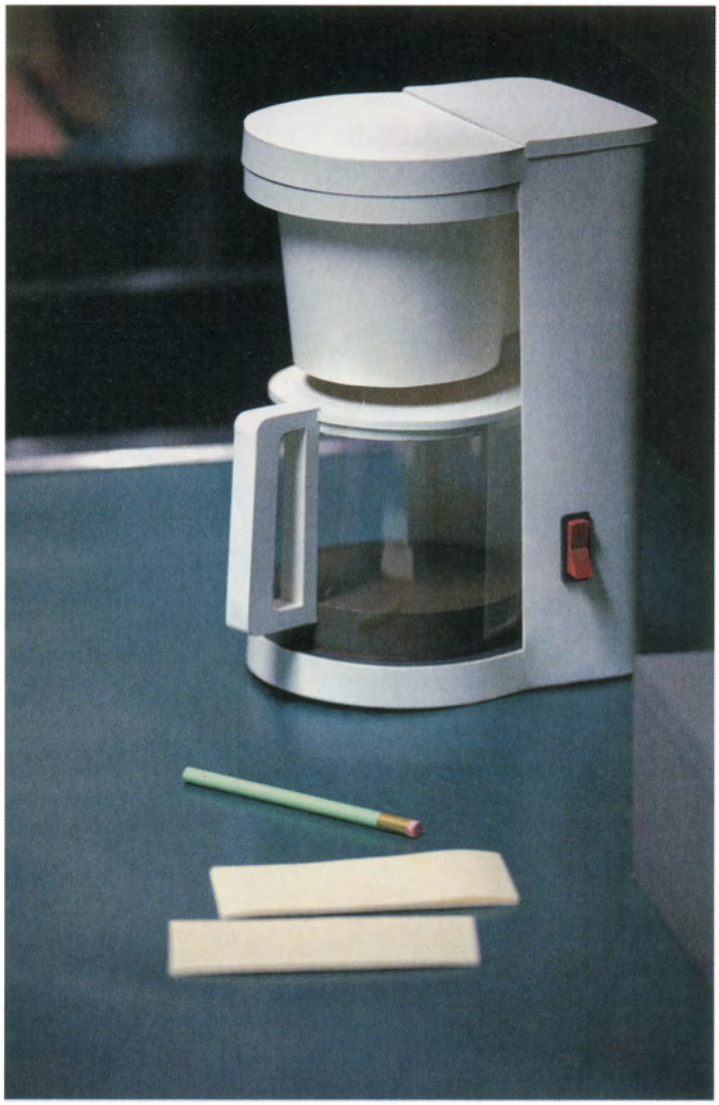

Thomas Demand, VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn/ADAGP, Paris

Le déguisement d'un prince.

"Carte Blanche à Thomas Demand," *M Le Magazine du Monde*. April 14, 2018, p. 7.

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L'usurpateur.

"Carte Blanche à Thomas Demand," *M Le Magazine du Monde*. April 21, 2018, p. 5.

M Le magazine du Monde

CARTE BLANCHE À

Thomas Demand.

BUNKER D'HITLER, ATELIER DE MATISSE, BUREAU ANONYME... AVEC SES REPRODUCTIONS EN PAPIER ET À TAILLE RÉELLE DE LIEUX CONNUS OU ANODINS, RÉALISÉES À PARTIR DE PHOTOS DE PRESSE, L'ARTISTE ALLEMAND INTERROGE LE POUVOIR DE L'IMAGE. POUR "M", IL DÉVOILE JUSQU'À FIN MAI DES DÉTAILS INÉDITS DE SES MAQUETTES.

Panoplie.

"Carte Blanche à Thomas Demand," *M Le Magazine du Monde*. April 28, 2018, p. 7.

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M Le magazine du Monde

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One man's floor is another man's ceiling.

Thomas Demand, VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn/ADAGP, Paris

"Carte Blanche à Thomas Demand," *M Le Magazine du Monde.* May 5, 2018, p. 5.

M Le magazine du Monde

CARTE BLANCHE À

Thomas Demand.

BUNKER D'HITLER, ATELIER DE MATISSE, BUREAU ANONYME... AVEC SES REPRODUCTIONS EN PAPIER ET À TAILLE RÉELLE DE LIEUX CONNUS OU ANODINS, RÉALISÉES À PARTIR DE PHOTOS DE PRESSE, L'ARTISTE ALLEMAND INTERROGE LE POUVOIR DE L'IMAGE. POUR "M", IL DÉVOILE JUSQU'À FIN MAI DES DÉTAILS INÉDITS DE SES MAQUETTES.

Thomas Demand, VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn/ADAGP, Paris

Je dors la nuit.

"Carte Blanche à Thomas Demand," *M Le Magazine du Monde.* May 12, 2018, p. 7.

M Le magazine du Monde

CARTE BLANCHE À

Thomas Demand.

BUNKER D'HITLER, ATELIER DE MATISSE, BUREAU ANONYME... AVEC SES REPRODUCTIONS EN PAPIER ET À TAILLE RÉELLE DE LIEUX CONNUS OU ANODINS, RÉALISÉES À PARTIR DE PHOTOS DE PRESSE, L'ARTISTE ALLEMAND INTERROGE LE POUVOIR DE L'IMAGE. POUR "M", IL DÉVOILE JUSQU'À FIN MAI DES DÉTAILS INÉDITS DE SES MAQUETTES.

Factum brutum.

Thomas Demand, VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn/ADAGP, Paris

"Carte Blanche à Thomas Demand," *M Le Magazine du Monde*. May 19, 2018, p. 7.

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Le réservoir enterré.

Thomas Demand, VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn/ADAGP, Paris

"Carte Blanche à Thomas Demand," *M Le Magazine du Monde.* May 31, 2018, p. 5.

Art in America

VENICE

"THE BOAT IS LEAKING. THE CAPTAIN LIED."

Fondazione Prada

ON VIEW THROUGH NOV. 26

An ambitious collaborative project filling three floors of the Fondazione Prada in the eighteenth-century Palazzo Ca' Corner della Regina on the Grand Canal, "The Boat is Leaking. The Captain Lied" weaves the work of German artists Thomas Demand, Alexander Kluge, and Anna Viebrock into a single immersive experience. On view in a series of interconnected spaces designed to evoke either nautical settings or a low-rent hostel, video projections and photographs suggest anxious meditations on memory, aging, and looming catastrophe. The show's title, a lyric borrowed from Leonard Cohen's "Everybody Knows," suggests the ominous tone pervading the exhibition.

Curator Udo Kittleman, who organized the project, describes the show in the catalogue as a "transmedia" experiment, as it merges the work of artists from three distinct creative fields. Demand's large-scale photos—shots of detailed models of interior spaces that the artist constructs from colored paper—are most familiar to American viewers. Kluge is one of the pioneers of the New German Cinema of the 1960s. A selection of his films shown on large and small screens placed throughout the exhibition constitutes something of a career retrospective. Completing the trio, Viebrock is a designer of theatrical sets and costumes. Her lighting and exhibition design are key to the exhibition's quirky dramatic effects. The three have been friends for years, but this is their first collaboration.

To help focus the show and inspire his collaborators, Demand sent them a reproduction of a work by Italian painter Angelo Morbelli, *Giorni . . . ultimi!* (Last . . . Days!, 1882–83), that depicts a large open room of a Milan hostel for the elderly, with downtrodden men crowding long benches and desks. (The original canvas hangs in the exhibition.) According to the curator, Kluge and Viebrock interpreted the scene as an image of retired sailors, as the room somewhat resembles a ship's dining hall. With finely honed trompe l'oeil murals, Viebrock painstakingly transformed one of the ornate palace's grandest rooms into the modest open space depicted in the Morbelli painting. Providing one of the show's most stunning moments, the space features portal windows along one wall and long benches and desks in the middle, which are outfitted with small video monitors showing Kluge films. A tall, narrow smokestack appears to rise along one side of the room. Visitors can sit on the benches, just like the characters in the Morbelli painting, thus participating directly in the show's theatrical premise.

View of the exhibition "The Boat is Leaking. The Captain Lied," 2017, at the Fondazione Prada.

A number of Kluge's films are character studies, such as *The Soft Light of Makeup* (2007), which presents a fictional sequence of actors' screen tests. These films complement Demand's photos and videos, which portray public spaces and industrial interiors devoid of figures. A particularly unnerving area of the exhibition features several works by Demand inspired by the control room at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. His photograph of the re-created space, *The Skala Computer in Chernobyl* (2017), is accompanied by a video documentary about the 1986 disaster at the plant and an installation of video players and other electronic components from the era. Elsewhere, Demand returns to the theme of hopelessness in the face of disaster with *Pacific Sun*, a riveting 2012 video loop, based on images from a ship's security camera, showing shifting furniture and objects on a cruise-ship deck during a violent storm in the Tasman Sea. "The Boat is Leaking. The Captain Lied" challenges visitors by casting them as the principal players in a melodrama that seems right for today—full of unsettling, ambiguous images of calamity with few glimmers of hope.

—David Ebony

Ebony, David. "'The Boat is Leaking. The Captain Lied.'" *Art in America*. November 2017, p. 117.

Mousse Magazine

CONVERSATIONS

"The Boat is Leaking. The Captain Lied" at Fondazione Prada, Venice

Udo Kittelmann interviewed by Giovanna Manzotti

Giovanna Manzotti: Let's start by talking about the show's title, which reminds me immediately of something very urgent, a dangerous moment between situations where the possibility of escaping is like a faint light. Who was the Captain? What happened to that Boat? And are there any direct or metaphorical references to the complexity of the world we live in?

Udo Kittelmann: I don't think that there is just one captain; we might all be captains, and the shipwreck metaphor as a conception of the world is a cultural trope. The works of the protagonists of this project—Thomas Demand, Alexander Kluge, and Anna Viebrock—often deal with things and events that evoke how the world is constituted…in their very different ways, of course. A worldview is visualized that can metaphorically be described as in constant danger of shipwreck, and must therefore be continually rescued from this state of emergency. The history of mankind can generally be said to consist of an infinite series of hazards brought about by natural phenomena, and by catastrophes caused by human vices and follies—leading, according to Montaigne, first to adversity and finally to the "universal shipwreck of the world." All three artists weave a richly depicted panorama in excerpts and scenes that describe a world caught up between storms and calm, threats and hopes, standstill and transitions, and truths and falsehoods. Maritime motifs, with their exuberant metaphorical fecundity, remained our intellectual and structural anchor throughout the process of our project. Thus was born some time ago the title of our exhibition, *The Boat is Leaking. The Captain Lied.*

Kittelmann, Udo and Giovanna Manzotti. "'The Boat is Leaking. The Captain Lied.' at Fondazione Prada, Venice," *Mousse Magazine*. December 15, 2017.

GM: The exhibition will feature works by three German artists: the photographer Thomas Demand, the writer and director Alexander Kluge, and the set and costume designer Anna Viebrock. The press release underlines the fact that they know one other personally, and that they have often exchanged ideas and opinions throughout their successful careers. You have also defined their artistic joint efforts for this project as a "symbiotic collaboration." Could you speak about the initial idea of this collective exhibition project? When did it start?

UK: All this started with a postcard of a painting by the Italian artist Angelo Morbelli (1853-1919), which Thomas Demand sent to the collaborators. Its title is *Giorni ultimi!* The painting dates from 1883, and shows old men sitting on rows of benches at long narrow tables, similar to school or church seats. Each of the faces portrayed is inscribed with the traces left by life—by the duration, the stretch of time that disposes over life by consuming it. This painting by Morbelli is part of a series of images of the Pio Albergo Trivulzio in Milan, one of the first retirement homes in Italy. It makes us feel close to an original moment in life and simply touches. It is no longer possible in retrospect to reconstruct exactly how it came about, but we all misinterpreted the work, believing that the old men in Morbelli's *Giorni ultimi!* were all retired seamen, now spending their final years together in the retirement home. This was a misunderstanding, an error in navigation, to keep to our maritime metaphor; it had certain consequences. An idea—albeit a false one—an image, a metaphor took shape as the crucial aspect of our exhibition project; a mistake gave birth to a maiden voyage, rich in thoughts and ideas. A special meaning was attributed right from the start to Morbelli's painting of the Pio Albergo Trivulzio, which in the further course led to an exhibition of this group of works within our project.

GM: Considering the interaction between different artistic forms of expression, the setup of the exhibition is supposed to be a multi-layered environment, where photographic and film works, as well as spatial settings and other artworks, will flow into the same image spaces. How have you worked with the artists (and the artists together) to conceive the display of the three storeys? How is the exhibition organized in the historical architectural structure of the venetian venue Ca' Corner della Regina?

UK: The palazzo is beautiful and grand; it is a pleasure roaming through the corridors and rooms and catching everywhere traces of bygone times. Exuberantly sensual forms of a plastic, painterly, and architectural nature can be found everywhere. But a single glance from the balcony snatches one back abruptly into the bustling racket of the year 2017.

Kittelmann, Udo and Giovanna Manzotti. "'The Boat is Leaking. The Captain Lied.' at Fondazione Prada, Venice," *Mousse Magazine*. December 15, 2017.

In addition to taking into account the intrinsic value of the individual artistic contributions by Thomas Demand, Alexander Kluge, and Anna Viebrock, we also positioned the objects (photography, film, and architecture) in relation to each other in such a way that each could be reconstructed and interpreted as both an object in its own right, outside the original context, as well as an integral part of its intended environment, i.e. the exhibition. Demand, Kluge, and Viebrock all requisition the content of their works from the over-abundant repertoire of imagery that is produced every second of every day by today's hypermodern world. Or, to put it another way: They see the world as an assortment of potential photographic images. What they all have in common is that they formulate their respective works—whether photography, film, or stage design—based on found, researched media images or self-made photographs. All of the authors acted here as image makers, creating a joint picture of the world on-site in Venice, thereby rejecting the entrenched subdivisions of the arts—not just by trying to replace and expand on them but also by closely aligning them with each other as a chain of visual and thematic correspondences or constellations. In short: Everything is acting or reacting more or less with everything else. In the process, the formal and thematic references do not at any time constitute a finished system, but rather draft an open system of infinite cross-references. And the observer is always in the picture here, including in the literal sense.

GM: Can you try to imagine how the general atmosphere would be? I'm thinking about a space of encounters ready to collapse in terms of time and space; but at the same time, it is a space able to work itself out.

Kittelmann, Udo and Giovanna Manzotti. "'The Boat is Leaking. The Captain Lied.' at Fondazione Prada, Venice," *Mousse Magazine*. December 15, 2017.

UK: The viewer will walk through the Venezian Palace with its columns, representative staircases, paintings, and plaster decorations. The architecture plays its own role in our project. Though while walking through the house, the visitor leaves it repeatedly to enter built-in spaces that he just saw on a painting or in a movie. Overlapping spaces, media, and tones will surround the viewer, while moving between reality and fiction. Don't expect a white cube; it will be the very reverse. Objectivity won't make it possible to keep control. A regular sound at the top of the hour might help to orient oneself.

GM: Going back to the title and quoting your reference to William Shakespeare's tragedy *Julius Caesar*, "Why, now, blow wind, swell billow and swim bark! The storm is up, and all is on the hazard," you point out how our everyday existence and society swing "between lust for life and loss of trust, extreme distress, and never-ending hope." I was wondering if there is a possible and safe way to leave the leaking boat.

UK: To make it short: Of course, there is always a way to get rescued. But the big lies must be stopped immediately. Trust should be the foremost rule of our communication to come slowly but surely closer to achieving a safe way to leave the leaking boat.

Swinging between references to art history, metaphors to our precarious existence in a multicultural society, and a panorama where one can always rescue from a state of emergency, Udo Kittelmann describes the origin of *The Boat is Leaking. The Captain Lied*, the forthcoming show at Fondazione Prada Ca' Corner della Regina, Venice. Through his words, the curator invites the reader to imagine the display of the project as an "open system," where the invited artists—Thomas Demand, Alexander Kluge, and Anna Viebrock—have created a joint picture of the world on-site in Venice.

Kittelmann, Udo and Giovanna Manzotti. "'The Boat is Leaking. The Captain Lied.' at Fondazione Prada, Venice," *Mousse Magazine*. December 15, 2017.

ARTFORUM

CRITICS' PICKS

Thomas Demand, *Klause II* (Tavern II), 2006, C-print, 70 x 96". Installation view.

VENICE

"The Boat Is Leaking. The Captain Lied"

FONDAZIONE PRADA | VENICE
Calle de Ca' Corner Santa Croce 2215
May 13 - November 26

Spread across three floors of an eighteenth-century palazzo, this exhibition visualizes a broad question: What happens when falsehoods stand in for the truth? For this collaboration, curator Udo Kittelmann, artist Thomas Demand, set designer Anna Viebrock, and filmmaker Alexander Kluge look to the eternal worry over art's duplicity. This time around, at issue are not the objects themselves as much as the walls that support them.

The design of the show is provocative, blurring distinctions between discrete works and a single massive installation piece. Viebrock's stage sets from previous theatrical productions have been appropriated throughout, providing a physical frame of contingency for the other artists' work. The ground floor offers a straightforward introduction to the artists and demonstrates how their practices address the deception of vision. First is Demand, whose video *Ampel* (Stoplight), 2016, features an animated replica of the titular device, nearly indistinguishable from the real thing. Nearby, Kluge's film *Die sanfte Schminke des Lichts* (The Soft Makeup of Lighting), 2007, subjects actors to various lighting effects, revealing the trickery of high-definition cinema. Two doors designed by Viebrock flank the projection, one of which is an astonishingly realistic hotel lobby entryway. Seemingly accessible, both doors are locked.

The upper floors slip fully into fabrication, with Viebrock's previously impenetrable sets now accessible as they fill entire rooms. A counterfeit cinema plays Kluge's films; its exit leads to a courtroom where Demand's photograph of a model of a building covered in ivy—*Klause II* (Tavern II), 2006—faces the stand. Wall texts are virtually absent throughout, except in one room: a facsimile museum gallery (Viebrock's *Exhibition Room*, 2017) stocked with social realist paintings. Although the labels state that Angelo Morbelli painted the works in the 1880s, amid so much fraudulence they feel fake. In reality, he did paint them, but the resulting feelings of uncertainty are all too frightening in a sinking city.

— *Lucas Matheson*

Matheson, Lucas. "Critics' Picks," *Artforum*. May 13, 2017.

ArtReview

Previewed

The Boat is Leaking. The Captain Lied.
Fondazione Prada, Venice
through 26 November

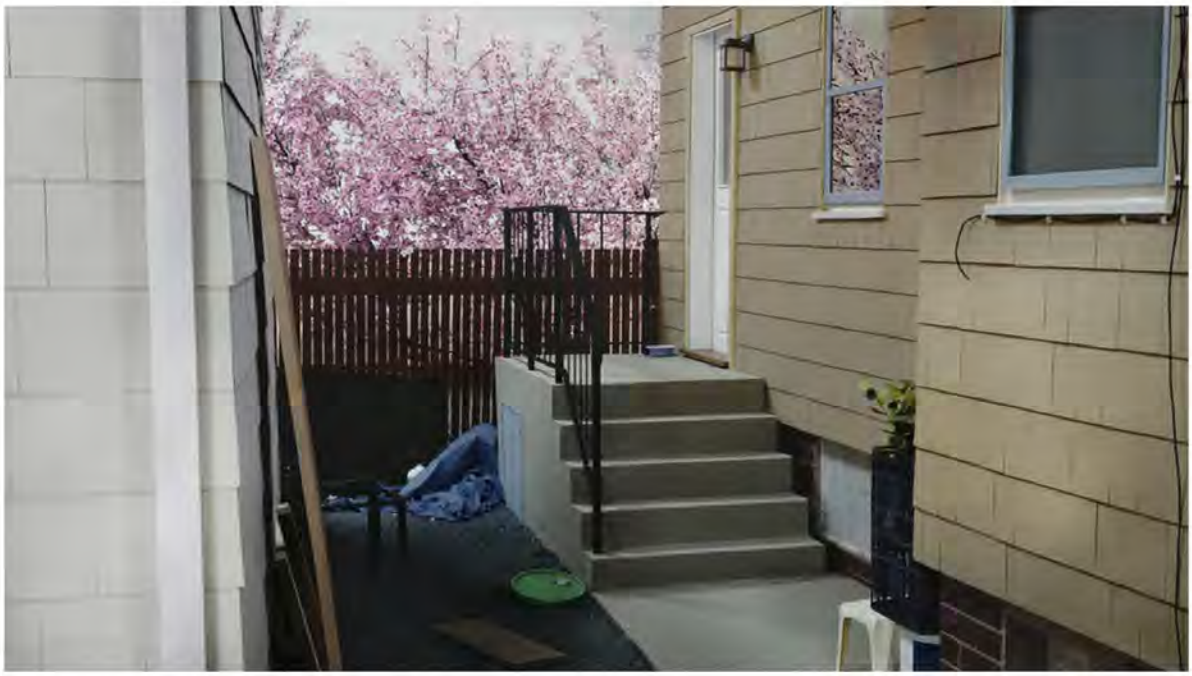
10 *The Boat is Leaking. The Captain Lied.*, 2017 (installation view).
Photo: Delfino Sisto Legnani and Marco Cappelletti.
Courtesy Fondazione Prada and Rachel Uffner Gallery, New York

And finally: the Venice Biennale is on again, of course, but we're not talking about it; that was last month. Running parallel with the show, though, is the Prada
10 Foundation's ***The Boat is Leaking. The Captain Lied.***, a 'transmedia exhibition project' unfolding across three floors of the restored fifteenth-century palazzo Ca' Corner Della Regina, and a collaboration between writer and filmmaker Alexander Kluge, artist Thomas Demand, costume designer Anna Viebrock and Berlin Nationalgalerie director Udo Kittelmann. The starting point, it appears, is misprision – fruitful misunderstanding – as each protagonist comes to his or her own conclusions about a painting, Angelo Morbelli's nineteenth-century *Giorni... Ultimi*, which in the past has been considered (wrongly) to depict some retired sailors in a Milanese hostel. The subjective 'responses' by the participants, assumedly avoiding that reading, are expected to intersect and overlap, mixing art, film and stage settings. And, of course, this being the sinking ship that is 2017, the title is culled from a Leonard Cohen song. Strangely, nobody seems to have yet made a show called *Don't Go Home with Your Hard-On*, but it's only a matter of time. *Martin Herbert*

Herbert, Martin. "Previewed," *ArtReview*. Summer 2017, p. 42.

Los Angeles Times

Thomas Demand undercuts what we think photographs show us



Thomas Demand, "Backyard," 2014, C-print mounted on Plexiglas. (Matthew Marks Gallery)

Christopher Knight
LOS ANGELES TIMES
christopher.knight@latimes.com

FEBRUARY 20, 2015, 12:00 PM

For a dozen years, German artist Thomas Demand has been constructing elaborate sculptures of still lifes, landscapes and building interiors from colored paper and then photographing them. The sculptures are based on color photographs, so his process closes a disorienting loop.

At Matthew Marks Gallery, 11 recent C-prints are mounted on large Plexiglas sheets. Some depict paper copies of architectural models. Differences between the two are confounded: Is one model more authentic than the other? And photographs are proposed as constructed spaces in which we live.

Other pictures show places associated with murder and mayhem – the Santa Monica apartment patio of gangster Whitey Bulger, say, or the black gate to the Cerritos home of filmmaker Nakoula

Knight, Christopher. "Thomas Demand undercuts what we think photographs show us," *Los Angeles Times*. February 20, 2015.

Basseley Nakoula. (He's the Coptic Christian whose anti-Muslim movie depicting the prophet Muhammad as a pedophile sparked deadly protests in the Middle East, including Benghazi, Libya.)

Most disconcerting is "Backyard," a thoroughly mundane patch of grass flanked by a cheaply shingled garage and concrete steps leading up to a house. A blue tarp lies crumpled by a fence, a bright burst of pink flowers erupting above.

Paper lends uniformity to everything, matching the scene's banality to the blandness of the depicted surfaces. A white, plastic step-stool, a house plant on a crate, some litter – we are outside the unremarkable home of Tamerlan Tsarnaev, accused in the 2013 Boston marathon bombing.

Because so much of our worldly knowledge comes from looking at photographs, the image gets disarmingly creepy. An attractive, sometimes familiar scene slowly reveals itself to be unknowable.

"Backyard" originated as a news photograph (Demand erases people). Reconstructed, a casual fragment of journalistic information now seems visually irradiated. But so does "Atelier": Matisse's empty studio with colorful scraps of cut-paper strewn across the floor suggests a crime-scene. ("Pacific Sun," his short film of the interior of a storm-tossed cruise ship currently being shown at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, seems enchanted – until it starts to make you seasick. Demand will discuss his work at LACMA's Bing Theater next Tuesday at 7:30 p.m.)

At his best, Demand manipulates photographic light, shadow and paper to undercut our blithe acceptance of what the picture purports to tell us. Even "Parkett/Parquetry," which shows nothing but a sun-dappled wood floor, begins to seem ominous, the spiky shadow of an unseen tree becoming downright spectral.

Knight, Christopher. "Thomas Demand undercuts what we think photographs show us," *Los Angeles Times*. February 20, 2015.

MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY
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ARTFORUM

Vince Aletti

VINCE ALETTI REVIEWS PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITIONS FOR THE *NEW YORKER* AND PHOTOGRAPHY BOOKS FOR *PHOTOGRAPH* AND *CAMERA* MAGAZINES. THIS YEAR, HE CONTRIBUTED ESSAYS TO CATALOGUES ON PETER HUJAR AND IRVING PENN AND EXHIBITED EPHEMERA FROM HIS COLLECTION IN "FAN THE FLAMES: QUEER POSITIONS IN PHOTOGRAPHY" AT THE ART GALLERY OF ONTARIO.

1. **Garry Winogrand, *Los Angeles, California*, 1969,** gelatin silver print, 16 × 20". 2. **View of "Macho Man, Tell It to My Heart: Collected by Julie Ault," 2013–14,** Artists Space, New York, 2013. Photo: Daniel Pérez. 3. **Thomas Demand, *Daily #15*, 2011,** dye transfer print, 27½ × 26½".

4. **Collier Schorr, *Boots, Chair, Hair*, 1998–2014,** gelatin silver print, 60 × 45¼". 5. **Francis Bruguière, *Light Abstraction*, ca. 1925,** gelatin silver print, 10 × 8". From "A World of Its Own: Photographic Practices in the Studio."

1

GARRY WINOGRAND (METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK; CURATED BY LEO RUBINFIEN WITH ERIN O'TOOLE, SARAH GREENOUGH, AND JEFF L. ROSENHEIM) Most black-and-white street photography since the 1960s looks like Winogrand's work: anxious, hectic, spontaneous as a snapshot, and open-ended yet somehow resolved. So his accomplishment and his influence were givens, but it wasn't until this show that I realized how much I took the work for granted. Though hardly radical or revisionist, Rubinfien's selection (including new images from the photographer's archive) made me look again. Winogrand is still too much—insanely prolific, scattershot, easily distracted—but at a time when photographers seem more interested in academic abstractions than in the world around them, his appetite is inspiring. And daunting.

Co-organized by the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC.

2

"MACHO MAN, TELL IT TO MY HEART: COLLECTED BY JULIE AULT" (ARTISTS SPACE, NEW YORK; CURATED BY JULIE AULT, MARTIN BECK, RICHARD BIRKETT, NIKOLA DIETRICH, STEFAN KALMÁR, JASON SIMON, SCOTT CAMERON WEAVER, HEINZ PETER KNES, AND DAN VO) Ever since her days with Group Material, I've admired Ault for her unconventional installation style, which established a savvy, engaging visual language for the heated dialogue between art and activism that pervaded the 1980s. Revived here for a sprawling, two-venue show of work from Ault's own collection, that style proved as protean as ever but also far more personal, now including photographs, paintings, drawings, sculpture, posters, and videos that traced an intricate web of connections from Andres Serrano to Martin Wong, Roni Horn to Sister Corita. The result, arranged as if for a supersize magazine layout, felt at once casual and flawless, brainy and unselfconsciously beautiful. I wanted to move in.

Versions of this exhibition were exhibited as "Tell It to My Heart: Collected by Julie Ault" at Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Basel and at Culturgest, Lisbon.

3

THOMAS DEMAND (MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY, NEW YORK) The settings referenced by Demand's photographed constructions—Pollock's studio, the Oval Office—give the work a historic heft that can sometimes weigh it down. Freed of any backstory (save the fact that they're based on his own cell-phone snapshots), his "Dailies" feel not just lighter and looser but more immediate. Like so many photographers these days, Demand is looking at the incidental, the insignificant, and the everyday: plastic cups stuck in a chain-link fence, thumbtacks on a bulletin board, a sponge at the edge of a sink. Luigi Ghirri's brilliant work in this vein was in the same space last year. Demand followed it with a quiet, witty tour de force.

4

COLLIER SCHORR (303 GALLERY AND KARMA, NEW YORK) For years, Schorr has photographed male subjects—wrestlers, soldiers, race-car drivers—exploring issues of gender and power. With "8 Women," an exhibition and a book, she switched her focus, and her interest in the blurred lines between masculinity and femininity is even more explicit. Some great work for fashion magazines helped smooth Schorr's transition, and she incorporated it here. There is a boldness and a confidence to these new pictures, especially apparent in the expanded "bootleg" version published by Karma and exhibited briefly in their space, which allowed her to dive even deeper into the obsessive side of desire.

Aletti, Vince. "Reviews," *Artforum*. December 2014, p. 284.

BBC

Room (1994)

By recreating the 1944 assassination attempt on Adolf Hitler, Demand addresses questions of public and private memory. (Thomas Demand / VG Bild-Kunst, courtesy Sprüth Magers)

15 September 2014

Thomas Demand: Making history – with paper

By Fiona Macdonald

Thomas Demand recreates notorious scenes from history with paper and cardboard, then destroys them after taking a photograph. He talks about his work to BBC Culture.

Viewers seeing Thomas Demand's photographs for the first time might not realise their significance. Lacking any explanatory text when they are displayed in galleries, the images show empty places with no identifying detail. Looking at a conference room filled with debris, the viewer might not recognise it as the location of a failed assassination attempt on Hitler; they could miss the fact that a slightly shabby kitchen is one where the Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein cooked his last meal before his capture in 2003.

Macdonald, Fiona. "Thomas Demand: Making history – with paper," *BBC.* September 15, 2014.

These pictures are not what they seem: Demand creates model replicas of scenes out of paper and cardboard, before photographing and destroying them, leaving only an eerie facsimile of a real place. As a new exhibition of his Dailies series opens in Berlin, the German sculptor and photographer tells BBC Culture about creating a sense of déjà vu, and how he has an earthquake app on his phone.

BBC Culture: Would you call yourself an illusionist?

Thomas Demand: I try to reconstruct an idea of reality we might all share – 'illusion' always implies there's a trick or a trap, a moment where you say 'oh, I was fooled'. I'm not after that at all, I'm trying to picture an idea of reality which is changing all the time. It's something that's interesting for an artist because you spend some time making pictures, and you realise that the notion of reality we all share is changing rapidly, especially when it comes to pictures. That's why I started making the small Dailies.

BBC Culture: The pictures in this series are taken from images you've snapped on your mobile phone – how is that kind of picture changing the way we view photography?

Thomas Demand: Classic photojournalism is dying out: it is becoming replaced by a subjective version of the world: the hand-made, amateur picture. I started making pictures which are about simple, impromptu observations – like the haiku in Japanese poetry – bringing in the shortness of that, and the nowness of it; the fact there's no implication, it's not part of a puzzle for a bigger metaphor about the world – it's just what it is. That kind of feeling I see in many photographs online, because they are sent out for private reasons. They would never make it to the news, there is nothing you can use them for, but they are the predominant way we communicate with images now so I thought I should look into that. I felt that kind of work is appropriate for the time, and that's why I started doing it.

BBC Culture: How did you draw on the throwaway snap for the Dailies series?

Thomas Demand: The imagined photographer for the Dailies is always a pedestrian, or a passer-by. The camera looks down, or looks up, or is at the same height as you are – but there's no extreme perspective on anything. I tried to have a lightness – including in the title – 'Dailies', trying to show what concerned me yesterday. Somehow they have become autobiographical. I've been making them for six years now, and in that time I've moved from Berlin to LA. When I look at the more recent ones I can see a subconscious West coast feeling coming into the images, which wasn't intended at all. The light is very different, it has a certain sense of humour: the early ones had a Teutonic dryness – in the way that Kraftwerk is actually very funny but no one would laugh. Now they're becoming lighter in every respect. Comparing it with literature, the other works are more like a novel, and those are more like a poem.

Macdonald, Fiona. "Thomas Demand: Making history – with paper," *BBC*. September 15, 2014.

BBC Culture: What made you first reconstruct famous images, like the bathroom where the German politician Uwe Barschel was found dead?

Thomas Demand: When I started making photographs of other people's photographs, which were mainly from the media, I tried to reprivatise an image of the world and the meaning of the world with very simple means. To reprivatise our idea of that part of the world – most of these parts I have never been, and I will never get to – because, for example, Saddam Hussein's kitchen is probably not there now. But it was the world for me – the same way the tunnel in Paris where Diana died was the world for me.

BBC Culture: Why did you reconstruct the room in which the final assassination attempt on Hitler took place?

I was studying at Goldsmiths College [in London] at the time, and I started thinking 'who am I here, and where am I coming from' – some stupid student thoughts – and I remembered this picture, which would probably define me more than I want, on the one hand, and on the other hand, it would be what other people wanted me to be – 'be the good German, know that you have to stand up against things when you know that they're wrong'. We all have these images which are supposed to have an educational impact on us, and I thought: 'What if I actually visit this, rebuild my own version of it so I can be there and have a look at it?'

BBC Culture: But why paper and cardboard?

Thomas Demand: It started because I could buy it anywhere, and people know how it's made and used, which is important. So it's not about the making – it's about patience, if anything. There's no miracle in the making, really; everybody knows paper. And it's disposable, and everybody knows that too. I keep saying 'everybody knows'; for me that's an important part – that I communicate through scenes that everybody is familiar with. So when you see a picture, in a weird way you have this feeling of déjà vu.

BBC Culture: And what happens when it rains?

That's one of the reasons I got very productive in LA. The rain is not so much a problem because I hardly ever work outside, but the humidity in the air is a real problem – things start wobbling. In Berlin I kept re-doing things that I'd already done, because they deteriorated from dampness, which was counterproductive. The trouble is here, they have earthquakes every day. The first three years I was here I made a complex animation, but the earthquakes turned out to be an unexpected problem. You wouldn't feel them, but when you started work the next day everything had moved by a millimetre or two. I have an earthquake app on my phone now, and every morning I get a warning: it's quite active, that plate.

If you would like to comment on this story or anything else you have seen on BBC Culture, head over to our Facebook page or message us on Twitter.

Macdonald, Fiona. "Thomas Demand: Making history – with paper," *BBC*. September 15, 2014.

TATE ETC.

Tate Etc. asked three artists, Thomas Demand, Beatriz Milhazes and Philip Taaffe to talk about their personal fascination with Henri Matisse

Thomas Demand

Henri Matisse at work with assistant Paule Martin, Hôtel Régina, Nice, c.1952, photographed by Lydia Delectorskaya

I have carried around this photograph of Henri Matisse in his studio for nearly three decades. To me, it embodies inspiration. The light, the detail, the colour... every element is ready to be part of something: it might be a bad idea or a good one, a shape or a coincidence, a pairing that led to another possibility or ruined it. In fact, it's all about composition, as the elements and drop-outs are already an image, even if they could end up as yet another one – one we know and admire for its equilibrium. It's also about the material as an object, not a medium. The shapes in his hands are still forms, not a leg or a plant. As he is not working on a wall or a flat surface, their figurativeness may still shape up, but is as yet undefined and unrefined at the point the image was taken.

The situation seems pretty untheatrical, immersed in a moment which has no climax, but is focused. The old man sits on the chair; he has to, but that's something the onlooker is bringing towards the image. He himself seems unconcerned.

The space is inhabited, some domestic features are visible on the edges, a sunny room (we know it's in Nice) with direct, overexposed patches of light on the parquetry. I presume it's afternoon light. The photographer is either very tall, or stands on a chair or some other piece of furniture (the ladder is in the picture) to catch the environment in its totality. The old man seems not to be bothered by the set-up, which on one hand shows his imperturbable composure, while on the other lets the girl on the side appear more posed than she would be without the camera in the atelier, pointed down on her.

Right next to her, there lie the shreds. They appear to be negative shapes, antonyms of flat silhouettes and repetitive patterns, which were met with an incredulous shake of the head by critics for their blunt decorativeness. But the leftovers on the floor might get back into the game, and even if not, they are equally notable because they are what often turns a studio into the suspended world it can be. If a process is intact, especially if that process is meandering around notions of simplicity and beauty as it is here, all steps, all sides, the not needed, the scraps and the abandoned will communicate this beauty – as much as the work which will eventually leave the atelier. To form something from nearly nothing, to obtain meaning by shaping, is what this picture promises.

Thomas Demand is an artist based in Los Angeles and Berlin.

Demand, Thomas. "Thomas Demand on Matisse," *Tate Etc.* Summer 2014, p. 60.

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ARTFORUM

NEW YORK

Thomas Demand

MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY

The title of Thomas Demand's recent exhibition "Dailies" evokes the cinema—dailies (also known as rushes) being the raw footage of each day's shooting prepared for viewing the following day by the director and crew. But while Demand has made films in the past (for which he may well have used dailies as part of his working process), this was a show of still photographs. As would be expected by anyone familiar with the work of this photographer, who trained as a sculptor, everything in his new images appears to have been fabricated in the studio from basic materials such as cardboard; as ever, he presents a sort of Strawberry Fields, where, as the song says, "nothing is real." The sense of eerie unreality conjured by the clean surfaces devoid of detail in Demand's scale models (made only for the eye of the camera) has often carried an ironic charge, since the images are derived from news or other kinds of documentary photographs linked to real historical events. *Model*, 2000, for instance, is said to refer "to the moment when Albert Speer presented his draft for the German Pavilion at the world expo in Paris to the Führer"—though, like all his other images, it presents an unpeopled space—while *Space Simulator*, 2003, replicates the pod in which Apollo astronauts trained in the 1960s.

Some of Demand's best work, however, has emerged when he has pushed beyond his standard methodology of working from found photographs of historical places. For his remarkable 2007 exhibition "Yellowcake," he became a sort of reporter himself: Its images of the office of the Embassy of the Republic of Niger in Rome—supposedly the source of stolen papers (in fact, they were forgeries) documenting Saddam Hussein's efforts to buy uranium—were based on his own observation and recreated from memory. In "Dailies," by contrast, Demand has eliminated any overt historical references. The modestly sized images on display here, made between 2008 and 2012, derive, we are told, from the artist's own cell-phone photographs, and they depict ordinary things that apparently are just as ordinary as they seem: a ceiling with a few of its panels missing and a couple of others looking like they're ready to drop (*Daily #5*, 2008); a bar of soap—a yellow cake, in fact—on the edge of a bathtub (*Daily #21*, 2012); a rubber band resting on a saucer (*Daily #13*, 2011).

Thomas Demand, *Daily #11*, 2009, ink-jet print, 28⅛ x 32½". From the series "Dailies," 2008–12.

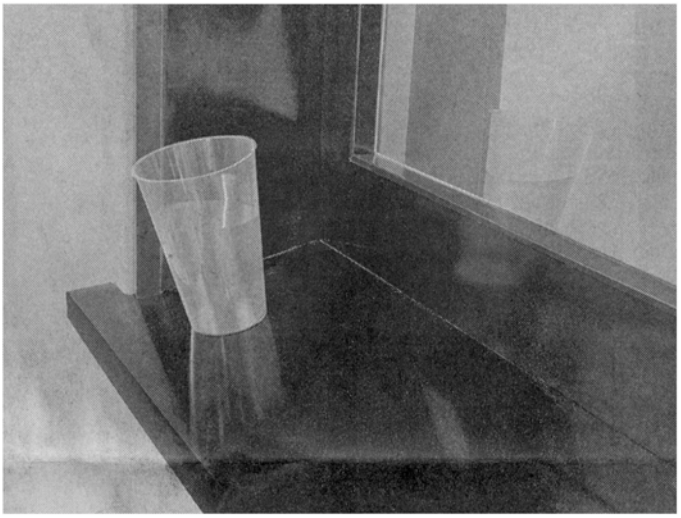
Like Luc Tuymans, who, in his recent exhibition "The Summer Is Over" depicted his own everyday environment, Demand seems to have decided that historically fraught subject matter is dispensable—and, like that of Tuymans, his work hasn't suffered one bit. On the contrary, the overt modesty of the new images demonstrates, for one thing, how much sheer visual wit goes into Demand's art. As deadpan as his work is, it can also be almost comically lively: In *Daily #14*, 2011, the outdoor flowers leaning up against a frosted glass window seem to be trying to peek in; the wordless red "do not disturb" tag on a hotel door handle in *Daily #12*, 2009, might as well be broadcasting that there is some hanky-panky going on inside. Realized as dye-transfer prints (rather than the C-prints he's shown in the past), these "Dailies" also manifest a marvelous tactility that's probably far indeed from the lo-res smear of a casual cell-phone shot. You can feel the chain-link fence squeezing against the plastic cups that have been jammed into it in *Daily #15*, 2011, or, by contrast, sense how delicately the maple seedpods in *Daily #11*, 2009, lie atop the brown roof on which they've fallen. In these works, Demand shows himself to be a poet of the unnoticed details of daily life.

—*Barry Schwabsky*

Schwabsky, Barry. "Thomas Demand," *Artforum.* March 2014, p. 284.

The New York Times

Art in Review



THOMAS DEMAND/ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NEW YORK; MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY

Thomas Demand

'Dailies'

Matthew Marks Gallery
526 West 22nd Street, Chelsea
Through Jan. 18

Thomas Demand's photographs are always a little bit uncanny because the historically important interiors they show — places like Saddam Hussein's bunker and Jackson Pollock's studio — are actually models made entirely of paper and cardboard. But the more modest, quotidian works in his latest exhibition are his weirdest yet.

Their sources are Mr. Demand's own cellphone photographs, taken, the title implies, every day. And their subjects are so unassuming as to seem disposable: a bar of soap on a bathtub ledge, a paper cup wedged into a chain-link fence, a "Do Not Disturb" sign on a hotel-room door. These objects are all paper sculptures, like the ones in his earlier works, but they've been rendered extraordinarily vivid by the dye-transfer printing method, which Mr. Demand is using for the first time. It's as if he's channeling William Eggleston, a master of dye-transfer and the peripheral but color-rich detail.

At times he also seems to be invoking Modernist painting at its most severe, in grids of bathroom tile and orange plastic netting or the competing ellipses of a rubber band on a stack of plates.

The "Dailies" represent an exciting new direction for Mr. Demand. In his earlier works, the conversion of a photograph to a sculpture and then back to a photograph could feel bloodless and forensic. Here, the supercharged colors of the dye-transfer method cut right though the layers of artifice so that the question becomes not "Is this real?" but "How can something this immediate be a photograph?"

KAREN ROSENBERG

Rosenberg, Karen. "Thomas Demand: 'Dailies,'" *The New York Times*. December 20, 2013, p. C26.

MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY
523 West 24th Street, New York, New York 10011 Tel: 212-243-0200 Fax: 212-243-0047

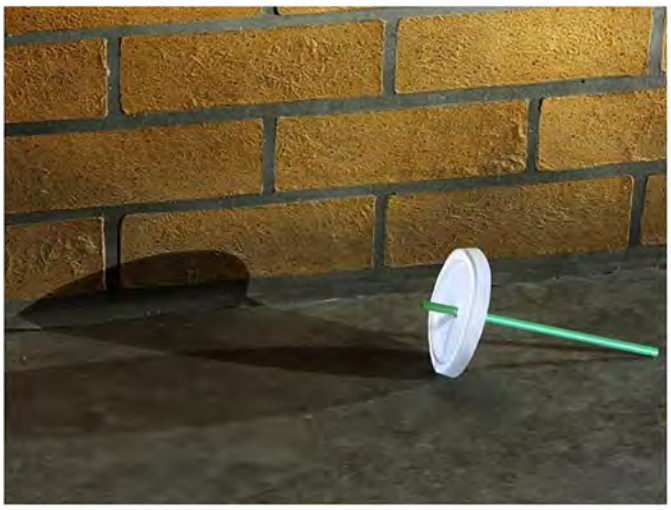
THE NEW YORKER

Thomas Demand
In the past, the German artist has photographed elaborate sets made of paper and cardboard, based on existing images (Jackson Pollock's studio, Saddam Hussein's hideaway). He keeps it simpler here, with smaller than usual still-lifes, which re-create his own cell-phone snapshots. Without the weighty cultural significance, Demand's new pictures are appealingly casual; their off-hand style recalls Luigi Ghirri or Wolfgang Tillmans. The rumpled venetian blinds, cigarettes in a sand-filled ashtray, and clothespins on a laundry line are deceptively random—this is some of Demand's best work yet. Through Dec. 21. (Marks, 523 W. 24th St. 212-243-0200.)

"Goings on About Town: Thomas Demand," *The New Yorker*. November 25, 2013, p. 24.

MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY
523 West 24th Street, New York, New York 10011 Tel: 212-243-0200 Fax: 212-243-0047

Art in America



Thomas Demand

at Matthew Marks,
through Dec. 21
523 W. 24th St.

Most of Thomas Demand's photographs of meticulously colored construction paper models depict dramatic or politically important scenes and events, like the inside of the Oval Office or a cruise ship caught in a storm. The 19 photos in Demand's latest show, "Dailies," on the other hand, are mundane images culled from the artist's cell phone camera roll: an empty bulletin board dotted with colorful pushpins, the shadows cast by a decorative window grate, a yellow bar of soap perched on the edge of a bathtub. The dye-transfer process (it's Demand's first time using this method) imbues his prints with warm, saturated hues, their surfaces tactile and velvety.

"Thomas Demand," *Art in America.* November 14, 2013.

MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY
523 West 24th Street, New York, New York 10011 Tel: 212-243-0200 Fax: 212-243-0047

The New York Times

Art in Review

Thomas Demand

Matthew Marks Gallery
522 West 22nd Street, Chelsea
Through June 23

The sculptor, photographer and occasional filmmaker Thomas Demand is back in Chelsea with new work in which normal-looking rooms are revealed as giant dioramas made entirely of paper — and then further exposed, by titles and news releases and other texts, as sites of malfeasance or calamity.

The photograph "Control Room," for instance, purports to show the interior of the Fukushima Daiichi power plant during its tsunami-induced meltdown; it's a no man's land, made even less habitable by Mr. Demand's conspicuous artifice.

Most intriguing is a very short (100-second) film, "Pacific Sun," based on a YouTube clip of a cruise liner caught in a ferocious storm while traveling the Tasman Sea, which lies between Australia and New Zealand. Captured by a security camera in the boat's cafe, the original footage shows tables, chairs and panicked voyagers being pitched from one side of the room to the other by the ship's seesawing motion.

In Mr. Demand's version, he omitted the people, as his photographs generally do. Working with animators, he reconstructed the cafe and recreated the movements of its contents (down to a falling ketchup bottle and a bobbing milk carton) in 2,400 frames. The result is convincing enough to make you seasick and, in concert with the Fukushima image, to instill a sense of powerlessness in the face of the ocean.

Yet there's something stuntlike about the film; it could be an outtake from James Cameron's "Titanic." And the question of why this particular event (which resulted in injuries but no deaths) merits such meticulous attention is left unanswered. Mr. Demand may be exploring the idea that viral video sharing and continuous surveillance make disasters more accessible but less real.

KAREN ROSENBERG

Rosenberg, Karen. "Thomas Demand," *The New York Times.* June 15, 2012, p. C25.

MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY
523 West 24th Street, New York, New York 10011 Tel: 212-243-0200 Fax: 212-243-0047

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Thomas Demand

by Richard B. Woodward

Confronted by the perplexing photographs and films of Thomas Demand, one can always respect their craftsmanship.

A master fabricator, he and his team take weeks or months in building accurate paper models of places and events he wants to photograph. After taking a picture of the finished object, he destroys it. His photographs thus become the residue of something that he created and that no longer exists.

Why he chooses to reconstruct a particular something can be harder to discern. Some subjects have a political edge (the Oval Office, a room at Stasi headquarters in East Berlin), while others seem to be challenges he has set for himself.

Is it possible to make a compelling photograph of a model bathtub full of dirty water? (The answer, by the way, is "yes.")

The centerpiece of his new show is "Pacific Sun," a two-minute film depicting a storm in the Tasman Sea as recorded by a security camera in a dining lounge aboard a large ship. Mr. Demand came upon the footage on YouTube and over 15 months supervised a crew who made 2,400 individual frames re-creating this tempest-tossed uneventful event.

The result is a mesmerizing tour-de-force of stop-action animation.

At first, a toy ashtray moves slowly across the toy counter, followed by chairs, tables, potted plants, plastic cups, sandals, ketchup bottles, napkins, straws and napkins sliding violently back and forth across the floor. With no human beings in the picture, the room seems to have been invaded by capricious poltergeists.

A photograph in the gallery's first room, showing the control room at the Fukushima Daishi Power Plant, its ceiling ripped apart, may explain some of the motives behind this work. On the one-year anniversary of the Japanese tsunami, and the 100th anniversary of the Titanic's sinking, he may want to remind us that wherever we're standing on the globe, and however upright we would like to be, the ground beneath our feet is never stable.

Woodward, Richard B. "Thomas Demand," *The Wall Street Journal*. May 19, 2012, p. A22.

MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY
523 West 24th Street, New York, New York 10011 Tel: 212-243-0200 Fax: 212-243-0047

BLOUINARTINFO

Thomas Demand's Living, Breathing Conceptual Photography at Matthew Marks Gallery

By REID SINGER

The Cindy Sherman retrospective at MoMA is the latest sign that conceptual photography has truly been canonized. Since Jeff Wall's retrospective in 2007, and Thomas Demand's at MoMA in 2005, certain modes in photography may no longer be considered avant-garde. Generally speaking, it's no longer shocking for an artist to make photographs whose is photography itself. Nor is it that big a deal when a photographer draws almost all of his or her inspiration from another established medium; Wall draws from 19th century painting, Demand draws from Modernist sculpture, and Sherman draws from post-war cinema.

With this in mind, the exhibition running at Matthew Marks Gallery through June 23rd may be one of the last available opportunities to see Demand's work outside of a Gagosian gallery before he is sealed into textbooks forever. Even though it was only made in 2012, Demand's Never mind that the interior Demand created for "Kontrollraum" ("Control Room," 2011) looks like a German computer lab from the 1970s, what's truly classic about it is the level of energy the German artist has put into each paper button, screen, and miniature object that he will destroy after capturing on film.

Such effortful awesomeness is strikingly apparent in the video "Pacific Sun" (2012). Based on a video of the interior of a cruise ship caught in turbulent waters between the Republic of Vanuatu and Auckland, New Zealand, the video shows tables and bar furniture swaying from one side of the room to another. Like Demand's other work, the video was made by filming objects that had been made entirely out of paper, which, after being photographed, were destroyed. Bumping around a room during a storm, they are imbued with a precariousness that's not unlike Demand's oeuvre itself. "Hurry," you think. "Catch it."

Singer, Reid. "Thomas Demand's Living, Breathing Conceptual Photography at Matthew Marks Gallery," *ArtInfo*. May 9, 2012.

MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY
523 West 24th Street, New York, New York 10011 Tel: 212-243-0200 Fax: 212-243-0047

The New York Times Magazine

May 4, 2012, 7:13 PM

A Sneak Peek at Thomas Demand's Storm-Tossed Imagination

By KATHY RYAN

Three years ago, the German conceptual artist Thomas Demand saw a startling video on YouTube that captured the chaotic scene inside a cruise ship being tossed about by a storm in the South Pacific. Everything not bolted down — chairs, tables, bottles, cartons, people — could be seen sliding back and forth across the floor as the ship rocked violently. But where most viewers might have forwarded the link to their friends, Demand decided to recreate the scene, minus the people, entirely out of paper and cardboard, then film it.

Demand has long been known for building and photographing realistic, life-size models of actual environments. The resulting pictures are the final works of art — so realistic that people often don't realize they're looking at paper constructions — while the sculptural models themselves are destroyed and never exhibited.

The "Pacific Sun" video (named after the cruise ship) consists of 2,400 still images all together. The animators took three and a half months to meticulously re-create every object's path across the room. The resulting video — that's a sneak peek above — can be seen starting this evening at the Matthew Marks Gallery at 523 West 24th Street in New York, with other new works by Demand.

This week, I spoke to Demand about how he works. Here are some edited highlights from our conversation:

Why are there no people in your images?

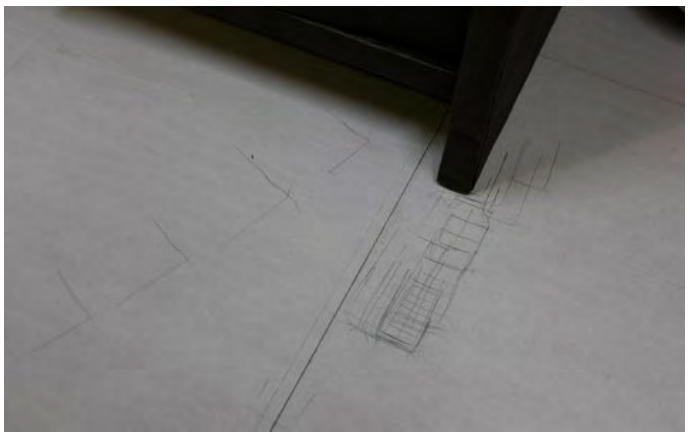
I think the imagination works better if you don't have people, because if there are people, you look at it as an anecdote. If you have an empty space that in this case is animated and has lots of signs of life, it is actually like reading a novel or something. You basically create in your own mind what is happening or what the space represents, and for me, that is much more interesting.

A remarkable thing I have to say is when I started doing this, it was a slapstick-movie thing, and it was interesting and peculiar, and I thought it's just absurd but also it has a certain beauty. Then the tsunami happened in Japan, and then the cruise ship hit the rock off the coast of northern Italy. It was no longer slapstick. The context in which the image would be seen changed throughout the making of the film.

Ryan, Kathy. "A sneak peek at Thomas Demand's Storm-Tossed Imagination," *The New York Times Magazine*. May 4, 2012.

Those disasters happened after you had begun?

I was in the middle of it when the tsunami happened. I hired people. I rented a studio in California. I had a whole workshop set up, building all these chairs and whatever else we needed. There were between 8 to 12 animators on set working 12-hour days for three and a half months. There were 55 chairs. The people we were working with on the project were unbelievable — fantastically dedicated. I was told there are only about 35 animators in L.A. We basically had 12 of those animators for three and a half months.



The animators do what, exactly?

In recent years, stop-motion animation has become very popular. "Fantastic Mr. Fox" is an example of this. People like the handcrafted quality of it. You can't really fake it with C.G.I. I initially thought about doing it digitally, but in the end decided to do it with stop-motion animation because it is so beautiful. Everything was made of paper. They were really fragile objects. The fragility of the objects gives the scene its beauty. Plus, all the C.G.I. people I spoke to just said it would be too complicated to do virtually, and it will never look like the real thing, so we should really try to do it in animation.

Ryan, Kathy. "A sneak peek at Thomas Demand's Storm-Tossed Imagination," *The New York Times Magazine*. May 4, 2012.

One of the reasons why I moved to L.A. was because I thought it was kind of a stable climate, sunshine every day. It's sunny, but what I didn't have on my list of things — what I didn't consider — were the earthquakes, the tiny little shakes of the earth every day. When we would start in the morning, we would always see a little change in the placement of the objects from the night before.

I didn't realize there were so many tiny movements every day.

Every day something is moving. Like 1.2 on the Richter scale or something.

Is that something filmmakers there are always dealing with?

I don't know. Nobody seems to talk about it. If I say earthquake, everybody in L.A. rolls their eyes and says, Thank God it wasn't the big one yet. For animation, it's terrible because these objects are all moving a little fraction. It was really a disaster. It was funny as hell. That's why we needed a lot of people — because we had to adjust all this. It's so minimal you can't really do anything about it, but that's also quite charming in the end because everything is kind of vibrating.

Any movement, like a ketchup bottle falling off a table, the animators would have to imagine that over a stretch of a week or something, but it's going to be only three seconds in the film, and it takes them a week to make it. You need imagination to know how it actually falls down and how all this is fitting together. We had scripts for every object, but that's another very long story.

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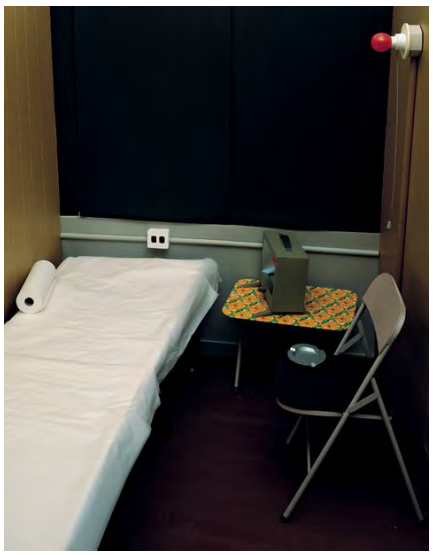
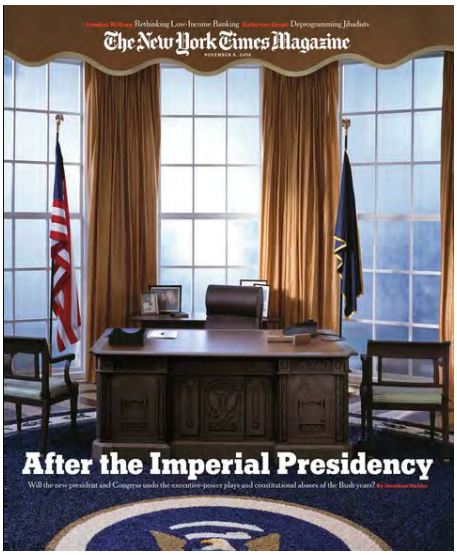
Back in 1997, the magazine commissioned Demand to re-create a massage parlor for a special photo issue devoted to Times Square; more recently, to accompany a cover story in Nov. 2008 on executive power, he constructed a life-size version of the Oval Office.





Ryan, Kathy. "A sneak peek at Thomas Demand's Storm-Tossed Imagination," *The New York Times Magazine*. May 4, 2012.

THE HUFFINGTON POST

Catherine Spaeth
Art critic

Artificial Coolness and Similitude: Thomas Demand's *La Carte D'Apres Nature* at Matthew Marks and Peter Eleey's September 11 at PS1

Posted: 10/06/2011

Magritte's painting, "Perspective II, Manet's Balcony," depicts coffins in the place of figures, a motif played out several times in Magritte's appropriations of art history. While this painting is not in the current exhibition of Thomas Demand's *La Carte d'Apres Nature* at Matthew Marks, in his catalog essay Demand mentions Magritte's coffins in reference to Kudjoe Affutu's "Fridge," a fantasy coffin commissioned from the Ghana artist by Thomas Demand. Demand explains that refrigerators are for artificial coolness, for keeping things fresh, and his own fascination with the serial murderer Jeffrey Dahmer is fully in play. Affutu's "Fridge" will appear later in this essay. For now, here is Kudjoe Affutu's "Pompidou," pictured below.

Kudjoe Affutu, Pompidou, 2010. Exhibited in Saâdane Afif's exhibition "Anthologie de l'humour noir" in the Centre Pompidou in Paris. Found here.

This thought about the commissioned refrigerator coffin as an artificial coolness is relevant when considering Demand's role as curator. For Thomas Demand to curate a show there is the expectation that the artist will strongly express his own work through it -- a stickler for detail and consistency, his name before a title doesn't seem

to allow for anything else. And Demand is quite frank that he has "taken many liberties where a professional curator might be accused of infringing on artistic self-determination." What follows are some thoughts as to what is at stake in the liberties taken in the context of *La Carte d'Apres Nature* and how they might inform our understanding of a similar taking of liberties in the exhibit September 11 at PS1, curated by Peter Eleey and beyond the pale of conventional standards.

There is strong recent history in the reception of Magritte. Among many other artists, Demand was involved in the 2007 exhibit Magritte and Contemporary Art: The Treachery of Images at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Of the artists, John Baldessari was most involved and designed the installation for the exhibit. Baldessari's own contribution was a photograph of a man standing before a palm tree, with the word "WRONG" below the image. Evident in Baldessari's work is a play upon Magritte's *This is Not a Pipe*, and the fascination that this work has held for artists, a fascination nourished even further by the publication of Foucault's essays on Magritte's paintings. This engagement with the work of Magritte in 2007 had some impact on Baldessari's 2010 exhibit *Pure Beauty*, for which this installation was produced.

With G. Roger Denson's wonderful essay in mind and as an elaboration upon it, "The World as Mind in Thomas Demand's La Carte d'Apres Nature," I take it as given that Thomas Demand's curation is in some interest with John Baldessari's response to the work of Magritte. Thomas Demand is participating in a rather large conversation that exists in the present context, and it is from this fact that we get to the point where one might say, as Denson does, that, "It is perfectly in keeping with the original Surrealists for Demand to blur the boundary between his own identity and art and the identities and art of the artists he includes in his show, both living and dead." Just how this becomes Thomas Demand's own maneuver is the thing.

Thomas Demand was given an opportunity to surround himself with those he can identify as philosophical friends, and understands that this gathering carries the force of his expression. Perhaps for this reason, the work by Magritte, for which the show is named, is the series of slight publications -- at times no more than a postcard -- that Magritte solicited the work of others for and sent to his friends.

It is in taking this situation of friendships and affinities seriously to heart that, arguably, the exhibit can be said to put into action the difference between similitude and resemblance that Foucault saw in Magritte:

> To me it appears that Magritte disassociated similitude from resemblance, and brought the former into play against the latter. Resemblance has a "model," an original element that organizes and heirarchizes the increasingly less faithful copies that can be struck from it. Resemblance presupposes a primary reference that prescribes and classes. The similar develops in series that have neither beginning nor end, that can be followed in one direction as easily as another, that obey no hierarchy but propagate themselves from small differences among small differences. Resemblance serves representation, which rules over it; similitude serves repetition, which ranges across it. Resemblance predicates itself upon a model it must return to and reveal; similitude circulates the simulacrum as an indefinite and reversible relation of the similar to the similar.*

It should also be noted that Thomas Demand is by far the photographer most known for the purging of chance from the scene of photography. Knowing this, it seems that from Rene Magritte there is the full permission to enter a shared world of intuitive deliberations upon one's craft and to loosely hold associations between one form and another without losing one's focus on and investment in them.

Hinging on difference does not seem to be the point. This is a shared endeavor that plows through concepts of self, nature, mind, culture and technology, and sustains the gathering hold of thought and world as it does so. In this more intuitive space of deliberation "problematic" operations of thought -- such as contradiction -- that would interrupt an otherwise more secured knowledge of resemblances simply don't apply.

Luigi Ghirri, Parma. 1985, Cibachrome, 15 3/4 x 20 1/8 inches; 40 x 51 cm, Courtesy Matthew Marks Gallery, Copyright Estate of Luigi Ghirri

Spaeth, Catherine. "Artificial Coolness and Similitude... ," *The Huffington Post.* October 6, 2011.

The above photograph of hat trees by Luigi Ghirri is one incident in an arrangement of photographs depicting trees -- alone on a wall, its hold as a resemblance to Magritte would become emblematic. However, in *La Carte d'Apres Nature* the majority of the exhibition walls are punctuated by the photographs of Luigi Ghirri, the deceased photographer whose 40 photographs effectively serve as a pendant to Magritte's Surrealist paintings. Ghirri himself investigated the relationships between painting and the photograph, spending time in Giorgio Morandi's studio to photograph still life arrangements.

In his essay, Demand explains that he selected Ghirri's photographs on the basis of Ghirri's concern with how the photograph reaches beyond simply capturing what is before it, and especially enjoyed that in Ghirri's body of work, from photograph to photograph, there is an extended relationship. He elaborates that, unlike Magritte's, there seems to be an emotional tone running through Ghirri's body of work that has nearly the consistency of a radio playing in the background.

Luigi Ghirri, Salisburgo, 1977, C-print, 5 7/8 x 9 inches; 15 x 23 cm, courtesy Matthew Marks Gallery, Copyright Estate of Luigi Ghirri.

Thomas Demand's own listed work in this exhibit is the wallpaper extending across the full left wall and around the back, continuously extending through five separate rooms and to support Magritte alone. It is a giant red curtain, and the invisibility of "what is behind" hands itself over to our thought.

The folds of the curtains are such that the stage could be on this side or the other -- the stage and the audience, a work and the world, are switching places at our feet. To borrow a phrase from Magritte in his response to Foucault: "... it evokes the reality of a world that experience and reason treat in confused manner." Yet unlike Magritte's use of a curtain, cut by the silhouette or opening to a scene, Thomas Demand's curtain is the unbroken skin of a photographic print.

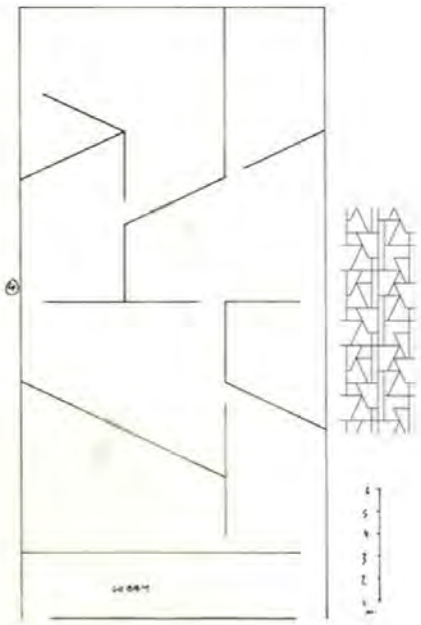
Another curatorial touch is that in Demand's framing of each of the photographs in the exhibit white matting slopes inward from the inner frame to the picture's edge. This passe-partout is the result of scoring on the verso, an action that has its own purchase when from the studio of Thomas Demand.

Detail of William Kissiloff, Model of William Kissiloff's Pulp and Paper Pavilion Expo'67, 2011, Pulp and paper, 12 1/2 x 43 1/4 x 35 1/2 inches, 32 x 110 x 90 cm
© William Kissiloff, Courtesy Matthew Marks Gallery

As in Thomas Demand's own work, trees do figure large -- just by the door is William Kissiloff's model for the Canadian Pulp and Paper Pavilion of Expo, 1967, buildings in the form of standing trees. Whether it is Sigmar Polke's photographic essay on the palm tree or Chris Garofalo's porcelain specimens of imagined plant life, the consistency and pleasure in intuitive deliberations is what takes hold in this exhibit.

This is perhaps most discrete in the work of Martin Boyce. The installation walls of *La Carte d'Apres Nature* are built upon a plan by Martin Boyce, a plan in turn based upon the motif that has driven Boyce's work -- repeated variations on the abstract cubist trees designed by French twins Joel and Jan Martel. A certain mute consciousness of artifice and exhibition is expressed here, as the concrete trees were initially exhibited outside at the *Exposition des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes* in Paris in 1925.

For the original installation of *La Carte d'Apres Nature,* the inaugural show of the Villa Paloma in Monaco, Martin Boyce exhibited a piece outside of the Villa Paloma. At Matthew Marks, forms generated from the cubist tree are laid horizontally and absorbed by the interior, cutting up the gallery box in a series of angles with clean beveled edges and an occasional pair of green glass windows opening room to room, "Through the Trees."



Martin Boyce, Drawing from a Floorplan, 2011, Ink and assemblage on tracing paper, 11 3/4 x 8 3/8 inches; 30 x 21 cm, © Martin Boyce, courtesy Matthew Marks

Becky Beasley's photographs from the series P.A.N.O.R.A.M.A. are of Eadweard Muybridge's garden in England as it presently appears. Known for his photographic motions studies, in America Muybridge murdered his wife's lover and got off with justifiable homicide, and in England he himself died in his garden while digging ponds in the shape of the Great Lakes. Beasley stood in the place of the missing Great Lakes and photographed a panoramic series, banal and devoid, that is never identified or exhibited as a panoramic view. At the center of 360 degrees then, the viewing subject is sliced and vanished. It is before Beasley's photographs that Demand placed "Fridge."

Installation view of La Carte d'après Nature, at Matthew Marks Gallery, New York. Kudjoe Affutu, Fridge, 2010, hardwood, paint and rattan, and Becky Beasley, selected photographs from P.A.N.O.R.A.M.A., 2010, Ink on Hahnemuhle Photo Rag Baryta 315 gsm paper using archival inks.

These last galleries are accompanied by the dramatic and foreboding soundtrack of Rodney Graham's *Phonokinetoscope*. In this work, the whir of film sprockets echoes the silent image of a playing card tucked in the spokes of a bicycle ridden through gardens by the artist as he trips on LSD.

Spaeth, Catherine. "Artificial Coolness and Similitude... ," *The Huffington Post*. October 6, 2011.

MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY
523 West 24th Street, New York, New York 10011 Tel: 212-243-0200 Fax: 212-243-0047

ARTFORUM

"*La Carte d'Après Nature*"

MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY
523 West 24th Street
July 19–October 8

When, in 1951, René Magritte titled his self-published journal *La Carte d'après nature* (The Map After Nature), the name applied as much to its format—many issues consisted of one postcard apiece, printed with text and imagery from a coterie of contributors—as to the postindustrial estrangement from nature that it investigated. Borrowing this title for his group exhibition, in its second iteration after a debut at the Nouveau Musée Nationale de Monaco, artist-curator Thomas Demand maintains a focus not on flora and fauna but on the constructions and framing devices through which they are now experienced. Demand's own work here—a trompe l'oeil wallpaper mimicking a red velvet curtain—sets the stage on which other selected artists play out a pastoral of what he calls "domesticated nature."

View of "*La Carte d'Après Nature*," 2011.

Under Demand's curatorial hand, false landscapes unfold organically; motifs emerge less as an evolution than as related species with shared genetic material. The kelly green cones in William Kissiloff's maquette for the Canadian Pulp and Paper Pavilion at the 1967 World's Fair find immediate echoes in Martin Boyce's *Through the Trees (I)*, 2011, an angular emerald-tinted window cut through the exhibition architecture. Luigi Ghirri's images of foliage herald Sigmar Polke's photographic faux palms from 1968, whose splayed forms are built from buttons (*KNOPFPALME*), flaccid balloons (*LUFTBALLOONPALME*), or a stack of upside-down juice glasses (*GLASPALME*). In a transparent case, the knotted forms of Chris Garofalo's porcelain sculptures suggest barnacled sea creatures or amoeba amok, although every detail is explicitly inorganic and intentional. Another genus of works here replicates not nature but attempts to cheat it: Kudjoe Affutu's wooden coffin, carved in the shape of a refrigerator, taps the vanity of using a device developed for the preservation of the living body to try to preserve that same body in death.

Indeed, the exhibition is at its most poignant when it seeks to preserve life itself, as in Rodney Graham's acid-propelled bicycle ride through a city park. The artist pauses to contemplate the tiny stamp in his palm, trying to reconcile the distance between himself and the ferns lining the fountains in front of him. As a catalogue essay by Christy Lange points out, the format of a postcard posits "the idea that nature itself will always be 'somewhere else.' " It would seem Graham's antihero wishes he were there, too.

— Kate Sutton

Sutton, Kate. "Critic's Picks: La Carte D'Apres Nature," *Artforum*. September 2011.

MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY
523 West 24th Street, New York, New York 10011 Tel: 212-243-0200 Fax: 212-243-0047

The New York Times

Out-Magritting Magritte, or at Least Coming Close

ESATE OF LUIGI GHIRRI, COURTESY MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY

"La Carte d'Après Nature" at the Matthew Marks Gallery in Chelsea is the kind of magical, intuitive show that could only have been devised by an artist. Using the Belgian surrealist painter René Magritte as a kind of divining rod, it finds surrealism in some unlikely places.

KAREN ROSENBERG

ART REVIEW

Its curator, Thomas Demand, is well versed in the uncanny; his best-known works are photographs of paper reconstructions of historical landscapes and interiors photographed to look just enough — but not too much — like the real thing.

You won't see any of his art here, except for a wall-size photograph of red curtains that cuts through the maze of an installation and makes a striking backdrop for the show's three Magrittes. But you'll come to know Mr. Demand intimately through the pieces he's chosen.

Among them are 19th-century landscape photographs by the German artist August Kotzsch, 1970s shots of parkgoing tourists by the Italian artist Luigi Ghirri, and an architectural model from the 1967 Montreal Expo. And that's just a sample of the older work; on the contemporary end are memorable sculptures by the emerging artists Becky Beasley, Saâdane Afif and Kudjoe Affutu, as well as a film installation in which the artist Rodney Graham bikes through a German park while taking LSD.

The Matthew Marks exhibition is a version of one Mr. Demand organized last year for the Nouveau Musée National de Monaco. It features different paintings by Magritte and has been updated with a New York-specific work: a recording of bird sounds made in the Central Park Ramble by the Swedish artist Henrik Hakansson.

Also specific to New York is the layout, based on a drawing by the artist Martin Boyce, that creates intrigue and maximizes serendipity with triangular niches and wall cutouts. It also forces you to double back

Rosenberg, Karen. "Out-Magritting Magritte, or at Least Coming Close," *The New York Times*. August 12, 2011, p. C24.

La Carte d'Après Nature

Matthew Marks Gallery

through certain galleries, further intensifying the Magrittean sensation of déjà vu.

What is it about Magritte, anyway, that entices artists to play curator? Mr. Demand's homage inevitably brings to mind John Baldessari's 2006-7 show for the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, "Magritte and Contemporary Art: The Treachery of Images."

But where Mr. Baldessari paid tribute to the puckishness of Magritte, Mr. Demand appreciates his more arcane, cryptic side. In his catalog essay Mr. Demand calls Magritte "probably the artist whose works children most often first perceive as art, and whose omnipresence in the museum shops of the world has almost obscured the unique nature of his pictures."

TACITA DEAN. COURTESY MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY

Above, "Swiss Alps" (1979) by the Italian artist Luigi Ghirri, who sometimes used wholly artificial Italian landscapes. Left, "Pie" (2003), one of Tacita Dean's meditative works.

He has named his show after a strange little journal Magritte published during the 1950s and early '60s. It took the form of postcards mailed to fellow artists and writers, and included drawings, snippets of poetry and short stories (including a Surrealist take on pulp fiction, "Nat Pinkerton," that's reproduced in the catalog).

The Magrittes (two from the Menil Collection, one from a private collection in Italy) may get top billing in Mr. Demand's "Carte," but the photographs of Mr. Ghirri, 60 in all, drive this show. Their views of truncated, mediated and sometimes wholly artificial Italian landscapes give credence to the idea that, as Mr. Ghirri put it, "photography is already surreal."

In his images foregrounds of real vegetation give way to crudely painted backdrops. Potted plants stand in for trees, lawn ornaments for classical statuary. In a wonderful series taken in the Rimini theme park, "Italia in

Rosenberg, Karen. "Out-Magritting Magritte, or at Least Coming Close," *The New York Times*. August 12, 2011, p. C24.

Miniatura," Mr. Ghirri gleefully skewers the sublime, showing tourists wandering among, and looming over, the park's miniaturized mountains.

His photographs are very much at home next to two Magritte paintings, "In the Airy Glades" (1965), with its nested steles set against fluffy white clouds, and "The Universe Unmasked" (1932), of a roofless house open to an eerily architectonic sky.

And sometimes they look more Magrittean than the Magrittes, as in an image of bowler hats on display in a Parma shop window. Photographed from the inside of the store, they appear to hover

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An exhibition that ponders an artist's arcane, cryptic side.

---

over the plaza outside.

Mr. Demand's film choices are just as inspired, ranging from Tacita Dean's meditative sequences of pears fermenting in a glass jar and magpies rustling bare tree branches, to Ger Van Elk's wonderfully perverse "Well-Shaven Cactus." Best of all is Mr. Graham's "Phonokinetoscope," a drug-enabled idyll that's accessible to the sober; its Syd Barrett-inspired soundtrack echoes through the galleries.

But it's the mix of work in "La Carte d'Après Nature," more than any individual piece, that's truly eye opening. In one gallery Chris Garofalo's recent glazed-porcelain sculptures of invented botanical specimens cross-pollinate with a cubist tree designed in 1925 by the brothers Jan and Joel Martel. In another, Kotzsch's photographs of cellar doors become portals to the underworld when shown alongside an object commissioned, for this show, from Mr. Affutu, a Ghanaian coffin maker.

Along the way you may find yourself asking: What does all of this have to do with Magritte? But just as he tells us "This Is Not a Pipe," Mr. Demand quietly puts forth the idea of landscape as the ultimate "treachery of image."

Rosenberg, Karen. "Out-Magritting Magritte, or at Least Coming Close," *The New York Times*. August 12, 2011, p. C24.

032c

I'LL BE YOUR MIRROR

Presidency: THOMAS DEMAND'S oval office and The New York Times Magazine

Text ZAC ROSE

For any number of reasons Thomas Demand's images of the Oval Office, entitled "Presidency," stand apart from much of his work. Yet arguably, they are also his pieces that have been seen by the largest audience. Commissioned by *The New York Times* immediately before the 2008 American presidential election, the suite of five images (entitled *I, II, III, IV,* and *V*), one of which graced the cover of the weekend magazine supplement, depicts various wide angles and close-ups of the executive branch's most intimate White House workspace. And though recognizable as the President's office to almost any observer, the sometimes fuzzy, sometimes rough, always too smooth lines of Demand's life-size paper cut-out reconstruction instantly call the truth of the scene before us into question. Clearly not the real thing, yet so attentive to detail that it just about could be, "Presidency" jeopardizes the viewer's own tenuous ability to distinguish between fact and fiction – and by extension perhaps troubles our ability to accurately measure America's democratic trajectory.

While this is the standard operating procedure in Demand's work (everyday space recreated in paper, photographed, and then destroyed, leaving only the image to document that the model ever existed) the immediate familiarity of the Oval Office from television, movies, newspapers, or magazines – and the fact that the viewer need not strain his or her memory to situate the reality from which the pictures are drawn – pushes the work in a new, more explicitly political direction.

Often a media-sensationalized crime scene forms the indexical location in Demand's photography, and typically this knowledge is enough to unlock the photographs' uncanny power. Such a priori information allows us to perform a so-called postmortem on the images, and "solve" just how it is that they have linked discomfortingly into our

Lorem thanks to Christopher, I met with the

Rose, Zac. "I'll be Your Mirror," *032c.* Winter 2009–2010, pp. 54–61.

Thomas Demand's
MATERIAL PRESIDENCY
(Detail)

personal memories, which have themselves now been revealed as merely the afterglow of the 24-hour throwaway news cycle. Yet what about Demand's brightly lit and cheerily colored Oval Office, a room whose history is arbitrated less by tabloid journalism and more by the slow moving interests of international *realpolitik*? When we look at these images, we think we know all there is to know. But what dirty secrets have been inadvertently exposed when they are (paradoxically) "papered over" by Demand?

"Presidency" is in fact Demand's second project for the *Times*, information not always available in an initial viewing. Back in 1997, photo editor Kathy Ryan explained, "The first project Thomas Demand did for us was a commission to create something for our special photo issue on Times Square, just at the moment when it was changing from the old, seedy Times Square, into the new Disneyfied Times Square." This critical eye turned on the self-styled revitalization of an erstwhile clubhouse of hookers, hustlers, porn and pawn, and down-and-out sleaze, as well as starry Broadway dreams. As a contrast to the suburbanization of the city, Demand poked through the newspaper's photo archives and decided to recreate a private room from an anonymous massage parlor in the area. The result was *Parlor*, a stickily claustrophobic medley of browns that captured the dying essence of a grittier time. While not nostalgic exactly, like all of Demand's work *Parlor* plays on the often unquestioned images received from contemporary mass media – especially television and newspapers – which quickly and unconsciously become accepted features of the national memory.

Yet *Parlor*, just as much as "Presidency," is more about capturing an ambivalent moment of transition than simply forcing viewers to question the origin of their own image-saturated memories. "Artists love these kinds of assignments," Ryan explained, "because they give them a chance to flex their muscles in a creative way, linking into something that they're already working on. And we benefit hugely, going way beyond what most magazines do with photo illustrations." In fact, illustration can be a problematic way to describe the images Demand has contributed to the *The New York Times Magazine*. Much of his repertoire involves places of transit like corridors and stairs; yet these later moments of transition seem to call for a reevaluation of conventional goods and bads, a reevaluation of the place truthfulness, and by extension, real, usable knowledge – usually journalistic in origin – have in both the big city and a participatory democracy.

Rose, Zac. "I'll be Your Mirror," *032c.* Winter 2009–2010, pp. 54–61.

Thomas Demand's
MATERIAL PRESIDENCY
(Detail)

Because the sites in Demand's work tend to stir up only moderate recognition, the very immediacy of a commissioned "portrait" like "Presidency" shifts the images' power center. When looking at these pictures in the wake of Barack Obama's historic election to the White House, "Presidency" takes on both a solemn and, in some ways, a hopeful tone. "Perhaps," they say, "the bloody days of political and racial partisanship that have decimated American idealism are behind us." However, even though Demand and his team of assistants scrambled night and day for two and a half weeks in order to finish and photograph the paper models on deadline, the magazine in which they were printed was issued scarcely a week after Obama's win. Meaning that had the race not gone to the Democrats, the eerie images of an empty, abstracted, shell of the Oval Office might have taken on a far darker shade.

Ryan, who, along with associate photo editor Joanna Milter, worked with Demand, thinks that "the tone of the pictures wouldn't have changed much" had Obama lost. In her opinion the images present "a very visual manifestation of the sense of imperial power," whose hypocrisies the new administration will hopefully resist. The difficult task for Ryan was for the *Times* "to figure out how to visually convey the power of that office. In that sense they're bipartisan photos." Corruption, of course, goes both ways, and Ryan had to remind Demand's workshop about the paper's responsibility to remain neutral when dealing with political candidates. "We report on politics in Washington several times a year – so how do you reinvent that? The images really help translate these thorny, complicated editorial notions."

In this case, the article by Jonathan Mahler that Demand's photographs "translate" is entitled "After the Imperial Presidency," and goes on to detail various aspects of the violence done to the United States' democratic liberties under the administration of George W. Bush. The silent rooms of the Oval Office as seen through Demand's unyielding lens reveal themselves through their slight imperfections to be a sham, a hollow version of the promises school children learn about justice and the rule of law.

However, these tiny defects also function as an important critique of the mass media's and photography's mythmaking effect, here heightening the pleasure of seeing a close-to-flawless recreation of an iconic room (the same pleasure that arises from seeing scale-models or dollhouse miniatures), while also cruelly causing the viewer's eye to trip over the "missing" pieces, preventing the full illusion from taking hold: The lack of faces in

the framed photos, the absent text from the Presidential Seal, the carpet made of confetti, the curtains frozen in a ripple from an unblowing wind.

Demand told reporters at the time that he was "so proud about the way those curtains have turned out." Before completing the models, Demand had to hustle down to an Apulian workshop in southern Italy to learn how baroque papier-mâché masters were able to properly texturize and mold the flowing drapery used in the decoration of churches too poor to afford carved marble or wood. Drawing a connection to the high artistry of this fakery, Demand explained, showed how his work can be about expressions of power – both secular and divine – how "we live in a world in which its fictionalizations are increasingly becoming more important in forming opinion than fact."

Since the rise of television, power resides ever more in the pictures audiences receive, an analysis that carries over to how Demand never exhibits any of the actual paper sculpture that he creates. Like a televised image, the "reality" resides in a disposable, dispersible set, whose only evidence for having existed is the memory of its image, documented on film. Demand's pictures, sealed behind Plexiglas, are about making the temporary permanent, a utopian ideal easily relatable to the theoretical underpinnings of liberal democracy, in which the fleeting needs and desires of the masses ("fictionalizations") must be translated into the permanent fixtures of the state ("fact").

In this way Demand works as a kind of "double artist" (sculptor who creates a reality existent only in photographs), which becomes a metaphor for the eroded trust of the public in politicians to whom the distinction between fact and fiction mean little in a hyperactive media environment. This is an erosion of trust that accelerated under the oxymoronically titled "Imperial Presidency" of George W. Bush. Perhaps his government's actions then are what render "Presidency" into the scene of a crime – a kind of "after" image whose "before" is another reality that never actually occurred in the material world: a truly representative democracy intent on safeguarding civil liberties.

Thomas Demand's
MATERIAL PRESIDENCY
(Detail)

Rose, Zac. "I'll be Your Mirror," *032c.* Winter 2009–2010, pp. 54–61.

Such a nakedly political reading of Demand's images makes more sense when the work is looked at in the context of his coming of age in Germany during the socially tumultuous 1970s. The politics of that time ostensibly form a background buzz in much of his work, which in turn picks up on the intersection of private and public memories created in the media-storms fueled by the disastrous Munich Olympics, an economic downturn, politicians' suicides, and the threat of domestic terrorism. This is where the coolness and clarity of Demand's images crisscross stylistically and thematically with the American artist Ed Ruscha's deadpan aesthetic, which famously lacerates America's pathetically *un*savvy consuming masses.

Unlike Ruscha, though, Demand's wiping of individuality, both through the use of commercially available materials and the appropriation of "collective" transitional locations, oddly enough helps restore some of the unseen, absent humanity to his photographs. In a way, his "double-artistry" gives viewers a mechanism with which they themselves can interrogate various truths – political, cultural, personal, or national.

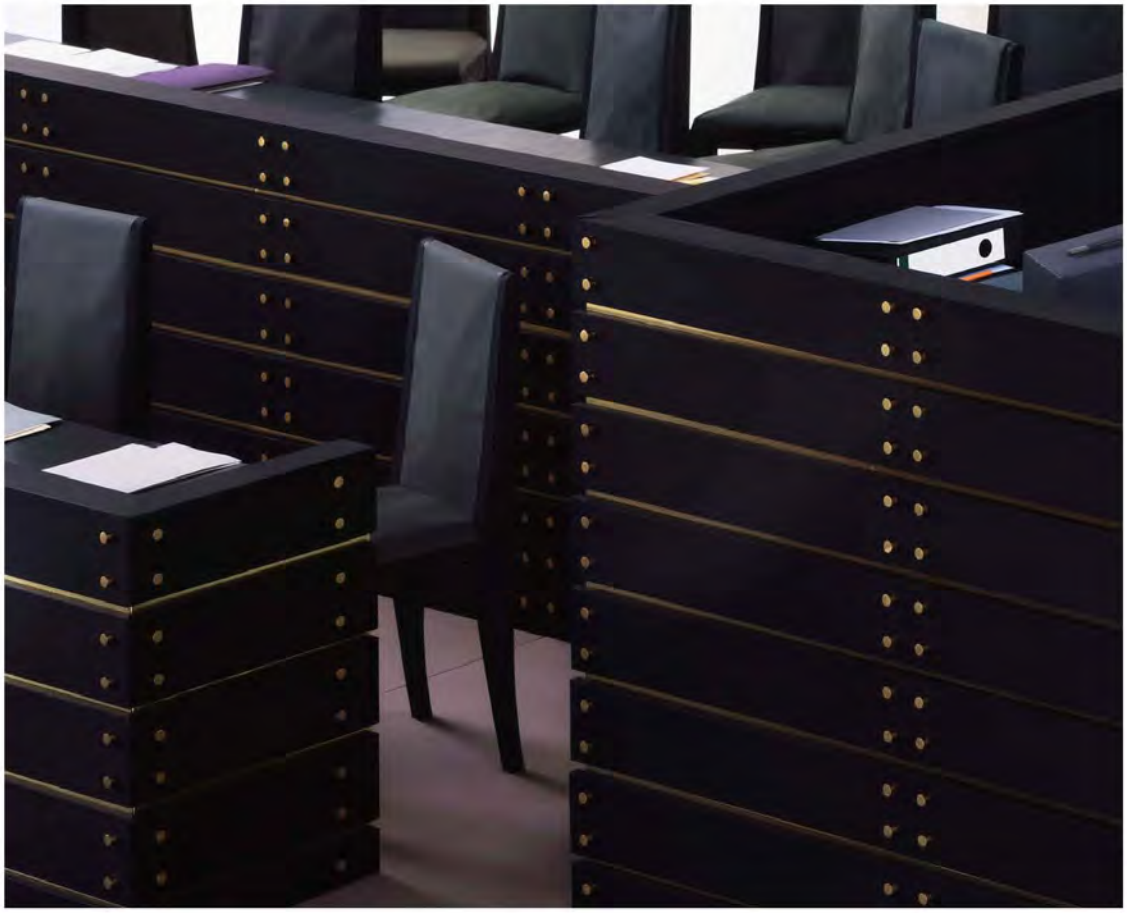
This kind of thinking in fact makes the acquisition of "Presidency" by Washington's National Gallery of Art a curious move. These were the first of Demand's pieces to enter the collection – a coup for any living artist. Yet the museum's gesture felt more self-congratulatory than reflective, especially in a city already so obsessed with insider power and media clout. It is unclear if the National Gallery would have been as interested in such devastatingly introspective pieces had the Republican ticket won the 2008 election, in which case Demand's hints at transition – and potential restoration through an interrogation of reality – would be moot. No real change would occur. The symbols of the office would be emptied out that much more, and some of the criticisms of Demand's photographs, that is, that they are "inert," might be proved true.

Luckily, for the United States, the world, and, more prosaically, Demand himself, such an event did not come to pass. Instead, a renewed political consciousness seems to have set in. One related, of course, to the psychodrama subtly on display in "Presidency." In the words of Roxana Marcoci, the curator of his 2005 solo show at the MoMA in New York, in his work, Demand doesn't so much set out to determine "truth" (and certainly doesn't ask that of those who view his photographs), but rather he seeks merely to "put it to work again." Hopefully, the same can be said for democracy in America.

Thomas Demand's
MATERIAL PRESIDENCY
(Detail)

Rose, Zac. "I'll be Your Mirror," *032c.* Winter 2009–2010, pp. 54–61.

Rose, Zac. "I'll be Your Mirror," *032c.* Winter 2009–2010, pp. 54–61.



Parlament (2009)
Parlament refers to the iconic image of the West German Parliament in Bonn, as it shows the Bundestag from a distinctive angle, looking directly onto the speaker's podium and the Chancellor's seat. The recognizable structure of black beams and brass bolts portrayed the modest but trustworthy idea of state representation in Germany's new democracy following WWII. The Bundestag served here for more than 30 years, until the seat of government was officially moved to the Reichstag in Berlin in 1999.

Parlament/Parliament, 2009,
C-Print/Diasec, 180 x 223 cm
(c) Thomas Demand,
VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2009

Rose, Zac. "I'll be Your Mirror," *032c.* Winter 2009–2010, pp. 54–61.

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032c

MEMORY ANIMATION

"Our knowledge of images is my material."

Werneburg, Brigitte and Thomas Demand. "Memory Animation," *032c.* Winter 2009–2010, pp. 62–65.

Brigitte Werneburg: It took a while for you to exhibit in Berlin. Was Udo Kittelmann becoming the new museum director a major factor in making it happen?
Thomas Demand: It wasn't me who requested it – and it doesn't go without saying that I should exhibit here. I have a long professional history of collaborating, and probably by now a kind of friendship, with Udo Kittelmann. He's been interested in my work for a while, and then, in 2006, I was asked to create a series of works in reaction to Max Beckmann's "Apocalypse" lithograph series (1941–42) for the Frankfurt Museum of Modern Art, where Udo was then director. We've stayed in contact ever since.

BW: The request for you to exhibit here in Berlin came from the public. You had your first solo exhibition in Germany in 2002 at the Lenbachhaus in Munich. In 2005, you had a big exhibition at the MoMA in New York featuring 26 works. How many will you show now in Berlin?
TD: There will be 38 works exhibited. We're showing some of my first images from 1992–1993 all the way through to five brand new works. The difficulty obviously lies in the last four to five years. The exhibition is called "Nationalgalerie," and it's a thematic retrospective. But you should read the title in quotation marks, because it isn't an exhibition that teaches you about the past 60 years of the Federal Republic of Germany, the twenty years since the fall of the Wall, or the Bundestag elections.

BW: What is the idea, then?
TD: Every big exhibition begins with the selection of the works, so I started by contemplating the established criteria. That's why the name of the building seemed to be a good starting point for me. Imagine entering your name into Google, and getting all possible results, including a rabbit-breeding club in the Niederrhein, and other things that you wouldn't necessarily associate with "Werneburg." We can't respond to all the associative concepts of "Nationalgalerie," because the range of images that we can choose from is limited to my work. But also because my own work has to do with our conception of history in general, which is an interesting context for a retrospective. What I want to say is that the associative combination of images demonstrates a thoroughly intimate methodology. And because the outcome doesn't result from predetermined premises, but rather from looking back at my work from the last fifteen years, it's definitely going to bring forward a very subjective impression.

BW: Will that also be the case with the new work?
TD: I began by looking at images that fit the selection criteria of having a connection to Germany, which had been the case for about 30 to 40 percent of my body of work. In addition, all the well-known motifs, this included many pieces that were more private. But at the same time, among them were some more general images, like *Lichtung* (2003), which everyone abroad would identify as having a typically German motif. I realized, however, that I still wanted to show new works. For the most part, the images came out of my archives. They deal with themes that once stood out for me, but then faded out of sight.

BW: Is this filter a kind of guiding principle throughout your work? Because the themes and motifs that you have dealt with over the years are actually quite diverse.
TD: I am still searching for the guiding principle myself – it isn't a strategic game. If you start when you're 22, you don't know what will interest you in 30 years. Rather, the guiding principle finds itself through the course of action. Taking pictures of pictures, for example, instead of presenting images that people comprehend as reality.

BW: But what about the "Embassy" series, which comprises images of the Nigerian embassy in Rome? There weren't any previous images for that series.
TD: The exception affirms the rule. Since working in reaction to Beckmann – whose "Apocalypse" series depicted Biblical scenes – I've become more preoccupied with the relationship between image and text. With "Embassy," I decided to deal with the place where they supposedly found the proof that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction. Similar to the way Honoré Daumier illustrated *Don Quixote*, I wanted to show this place with images that could have sprung out of my imagination, but that also appeared so believable in their specific form, and in how the space was presented, that they could pass for reportage.

BW: Your last piece, which got a lot of attention, was the five-part series "Presidency," which you did for *The New York Times Magazine* on the occasion of the 2008 presidential election. What did this assignment mean to you?
TD: I was fascinated by images of the Oval Office, which I happened to see for the first time in *The New York Times Magazine* – the mother of all magazines, which gives a huge amount of attention to the illustration of its journalistic content. It's a source for my work, and when that source comes to me and asks if I would like to do something for them, I can't say no. And I wasn't asked because I'm a more or less known artist who would therefore make the publication more prestigious; I was asked because my work possesses very specific characteristics that are needed for the text – because normal images wouldn't really work. The text is very basic: an essay of abstract quality on the origin and development of the US Constitution, and its blatant disfigurement by the Bush administration. There, it was clearly understood why I take these kinds of pictures.

BW: Why?
TD: Here's a very simple example: you organize a workshop in Argentina and ask the students if they can draw the tunnel in which Lady Di died. Everyone can kind of draw the entry to the tunnel in Paris. But they can obviously do it, not because they were there, but because they've seen pictures and videos of the accident. This knowledge is something very enticing to an artist; it's like the plaster an artist once would have used to make a sculpture of Daphne.

BW: So for your photography, you construct models of knowledge rather than images of space?
TD: What interests me in the images is that you and I have seen them, or that I know that you could have seen them. Even if you haven't seen them, you still know that I, and other people, have. That probably sounds like Donald Rumsfeld, or even trivial, but it makes a big difference whether you go into an exhibition and see things that you never could have seen before, or whether you find things that seem to be familiar, that provoke the memory. I'm interested in how these images get to me. What path do they take? Why do they get stuck in my head?

BW: Something that's different from your earlier works, when there was always a single image, is that you have begun to show series. Is the motif becoming more important than the image itself?
TD: "Nationalgalerie" will mostly exhibit single images. But at a certain point a detrimental reciprocal effect was canonized in the reception of my work – which had to do with me, myself. I thought I should shift the attention to the objects that exist in front of the camera. So I started making films, liquefying images – think about my animation, *Regen*. There, I wanted to set aside the emphasis on the photographic surface, and approach the gaze of the audience with the experience that I have when I go through the model. I pursue something similar in the multipart illustrations of the spaces in "Embassy," "Klause," and "Presidency."

BW: The surface of your images is very noticeably clean, neat, very photogenic.
TD: Obviously my images are photogenic. That's why I make them. When you say "clean and neat," a judgmental coloring comes into play. But when you shut off this recorder, you will also leave a lot out. This has to do with the techniques of our memory: we value certain things more than we do others, otherwise we would go crazy. And when I make those things visible through my eccentric way of copying, it's fundamentally about the question: what does memory need to become animated? Because we construct the images for ourselves in a new way every time. It should be clear to the viewer that he's looking at a mockup, which delivers just the right amount of information needed to recognize the image or to try to understand it.

BW: Is photography necessary for that these days? Is it more important as an art form today than ever before, as the critic Michael Fried, who has extensively engaged with your work, says?
TD: Photography, some might say, is still the visually predominant medium of our time. When you look at painting, you immediately draw comparisons. Does it look like photography? Was it painted using a photograph? Everything has to be measured up to the photographic image. In spite of that, there has been very little theoretical discourse about it in recent years. That's why Michael Fried wants to cut in with the kind of knowledge of someone who comes out of painting. He applies the canon of painting criticism, in which he drives the theoretical analysis, to a certain type of photography, such as mine.

BW: The writer Botho Strauß has composed short texts for each of your images as a sort of image key. Does his name push "Nationalgalerie" into a conservative corner?
TD: Must we cultivate this kind of dichotomy? First of all, he's a brilliant writer! That's the reason I invited him. And who says that he and I have to have the same political stance? That isn't even dealt with in the exhibition. It isn't an election event. Given the subtleness of his thoughts, to qualify him as "conservative" would be one-dimensional. But even visitors who think these categories are crucial could use a bit of a challenge. You have nothing to lose by reading up on it a bit.

Werneburg, Brigitte and Thomas Demand. "Memory Animation," *032c*. Winter 2009–2010, pp. 62–65.

Fotoecke (2009)
Demand found the source photograph for *Fotoecke* in a reportage in *Der Spiegel*, where it illustrated a story about a political prison in Gera. According to the story, the guards poisoned the political prisoners by photographing them repeatedly from the front while exposing them from the back to strong radiation from an X-ray camera. These accusations only emerged a decade after the prison closed, when it was revealed that the former prisoners in Gera suffered from a higher than average rate of leukemia.

Fotoecke, 2009,
C-Print/ Diasec, 180 x 198 cm

Werneburg, Brigitte and Thomas Demand. "Memory Animation," *032c.* Winter 2009–2010, pp. 62–65.

Thomas Demand loathes to cede control. For that reason, to know his carefully formed cabal of collaborators is to gain partial access to a tightly structured imagination. Adam Caruso, 47, co-founder of London based architecture firm Caruso St John, and Udo Kittelmann, 51, the newly installed director to the state museums in Berlin, represent the two other forces of the current Demandian triumvirate. Together, these men are launching "Nationalgalerie" – Demand's first solo presentation, of around 40 new and existing works, in a Berlin museum. Housed in the Mies-designed Neue Nationalgalerie until January 2010, the project presents tall and obvious challenges. Firstly, how do you exhibit photographs in a glass box without walls? Perhaps more fundamentally, what does it mean to make an exhibition called "Nationalgalerie" in the Nationalgalerie, on the 60th anniversary of the German Federal Republic, exactly 20 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, in the nation's capital? Broadly speaking, Caruso St John's role is my first question; Kittlemann's is my second. Demand presides over both.

This summer, I met Caruso and Kittelmann at Demand's studio – a sprawling space refurbished from a warehouse next to the Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin's contemporary art museum. That day, both men had an easy demeanor as we sat in conversation in the museum's restaurant, Demand eventually joining the fray at the right temperature.

Caruso, who made the day trip from London without his partner, Peter St. John, is effusive – his sentences tangle with tangents and asides, as if he's narrating the marginalia of his thoughts. Kittelmann speaks with aplomb. He draws out his words like a cellist would with tones – giving music to his ideas on exhibition making, history, and Berlin. The German press takes every opportunity to point out, sneeringly, his pedigree in ophthalmology rather than art history; but it is the art circle's general excitement that greets the beginning of his tenure. Having proven himself to be both maverick and intellectual during his six years as the director of Frankfurt's Museum für Moderne Kunst, "Nationalgalerie" will no doubt point our eyes into the horizons he has set for Berlin's museums.

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Haltestelle (2009)
According to myths spread by their fans on the Internet, the immensely popular German teen band Tokio Hotel was founded in this bus stop. As nine-year-olds, brothers Bill and Tom Kaulitz hung out in the bus stop outside their home in Loitsche, imagining their future band and planning its success. Following their meteoric rise to fame as Tokio Hotel in 2005, the bus stop became a living monument to the band, attracting a non-stop pilgrimage of hysterical teenage fans, much to the dismay of the residents of this previously unknown and nondescript East German town. Consequently, the mayor of Loitsche decided to purchase a more modern, less welcoming version of the bus stop, which he planned to fund by auctioning the old one on eBay. Unfortunately, the structure attracted no bids, and in the subsequent offers at auction, it was disassembled and sold off in increasingly smaller pieces, eventually being auctioned off in bits of 20 cm – small enough to accommodate teenagers' bedrooms, and their budgets. Pieces of it have since been sold all over the world. Coincidentally, the structure itself closely resembles the German "Urhütte," the Alpine hermit's hut.

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032c

NEVERLAND

CARUSO, DEMAND, and KITTELMANN confront the challenges of "Nationalgalerie"

Interview CARSON CHAN

Udo Kittelmann: I've known Thomas for a while, and I've always admired the way he collaborates. Thomas is very strong-minded when it comes to his work – especially with whom he works with. This makes things quite easy. He is an artist a curator can trust. He has an instinct for who would work well together.

Adam Caruso: Peter [St John] and I met Thomas during our collaboration at the Fondation Cartier in Paris. The museum wanted him to exhibit in the basement, but he had absolutely no interest in being down there. At the first meeting he had already said that exhibiting in the Fondation Cartier, designed by Jean Nouvel, is like doing a test run for a show at the Neue Nationalgalerie (New National Gallery) because both buildings are glass boxes. This was ... ten years ago.

Udo Kittelmann: He never told me this!

Adam Caruso: Both buildings presented us with the problem of installing two-dimensional wall-based work in spaces that have no walls. This show at the Neue Nationalgalerie is really picking up that thread we started in France.

Carson Chan: I heard that neither you nor Thomas thought very highly of Nouvel's building.

Adam Caruso: It is what it is. Thomas was interested in doing something strong in that space – the space has problems, but it was still possible to do some really nice things. Having worked with other artists, I found that Thomas has a comparatively "unprecious" way of working – in the sense that he is not overly worried about how the work is presented. The most important thing for him is that the experience of the show is powerful, and that the work be brought into a relationship with the architecture in a way that adds to the meaning of the show. Thomas is keen on the fact that the artist-architect relationship produces something new. This is the only way you can make exhibitions memorable.

Caruso, Adam, Udo Kittelman and Thomas Demand. "Neverland," *032c.* Winter 2009–2010, pp. 66–73.

Udo Kittelmann: Yes. Thomas knows how to play ball, so to speak. He gives everyone a feeling of being involved in a very creative process. It's always about creativity. Every idea is welcome and open to discussion.

Carson Chan: The way you're describing Thomas's method was the same way Taryn Simon described to me your way of working, Udo. She said you were "magically blind to restrictions," and that you allowed her ideas boundless movement. Adam, in terms of boundaries and resistance, the Fondation Cartier presented the challenge of installing in an open glass space, and I was struck by how Caruso St John positioned the exhibition design as a form of very subtle resistance in the way your walls were oriented across the grain of the museum's flooring. The Neue Nationalgalerie is a bold space. To what degree are you going to resist the Mies van der Rohe museum?

Adam Caruso: You know, you usually need architects to make an exhibition only when there is a problem. In a good art space with nice walls and good rooms, a curator can install the show; an artist can install the show. Almost every time we've made an exhibition design, either for Thomas or the Tate or the Hayward, it was because they had an idea for a show that they couldn't execute themselves. It's the same as when we are designing galleries. We've worked several times with Gagosian Gallery. Our role is to make something that mediates between the space given and the art. The point is to intensify the experience of the show; to make it as powerful as possible. There are lots of bad galleries that take away from the presence of the art.

Udo Kittelmann: I would disagree – or rather, I wouldn't go so far as to say that you need an architect to design an exhibition to make up for the shortcomings of the exhibition space. There is plenty of artwork that could work just fine in any space – in the worst spaces, even.

Adam Caruso: Well, it's a combination between the exhibition space and the show. Beaubourg [Centre Pompidou, Paris], before it was renovated, housed excellent shows. Also, the Kunsthalle Bregenz only presented shows with a big potential for success in that building. Many shows could have died in there, but they worked really well – they seemed to be designed for that particular space.

Carson Chan: In that sense, wouldn't a photography show, like Thomas's, categorically not work at the Neue Nationalgalerie?

Adam Caruso: No. I would say that there are many compelling reasons why the combination of Thomas's work and that building will be a powerful thing. I think the same was true at the Fondation Cartier. There, as with here, we have the problem of how to hang the photographs. Mies is one of my favorite architects. The Neue Nationalgalerie is very impressionable, and I was surprised at how much I liked it the first time I saw it. The scale, the way in which the incredible weight of the roof seems to be suspended, doesn't come through in photographs. The building is very beautiful, yet most of the shows I've seen there have been very problematic.

Udo Kittelmann: In this context, it's nice to remember what this building was originally designed for: it was planned in the early 1950s as the headquarters of Bacardi rum in Santiago de Cuba, and Mies never changed his plans for the current glass hall in Berlin. It's still the original plan as the Bacardi headquarters.

Adam Caruso: It was one of those projects that he had to do – his big universal space project.

Carson Chan: Which is something Caruso St John is generally not into, right? You've mentioned several times in the past that you prefer the individual rather than the universal experience.

Adam Caruso: One exception is okay! Especially one by Mies!

Carson Chan: Well, one thing that I see in both of your practices is a deep interest in the relationship between the city and the lived place. There's a city-centric, site-specificity to both of your work, which is sensitive to the particular history of the city you're operating in. Udo, as a young curator in Düsseldorf, along with Beate Klingen, you made an exhibition and accompanying catalog about the Düsseldorf art scene. At around the same time, you interned with Galerie Remmert und Barth, dealers that specialized in Das Junge Rheinland artists, a Düsseldorf-based art movement. That is to say, even in your twenties, there seemed to be a very concerted effort to work with the artistic history and traditions of a city. When you made a small show at the Haus der Kunst in Munich recently for the city's 850th anniversary, you put in quotes by Karl Valentin – the early 20th-century Munich film comedian – and listed him as co-curator. I'm interested in how you will address Berlin – which is not just another German city, but also the Federal Republic's capital. The idea of doing a show about 60 years of Germany's history with a Berlin artist who works with representations of history – and who has thus far been celebrated everywhere around the world except in Berlin – seems somehow fitting.
Likewise, Adam, I see a similar impulse in the way you have been writing about neo-classical architecture as a style that

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is aware of architectural traditions that should be built upon, as opposed to finding innovation simply through the new. There is a concern for civic society, its consciousness and its historical resonances. Caruso St John's architecture understands design in a broader urban way: a building is never a thing in itself; it grows with the city, it ages. I'm curious to see how this shared connection with history between the two of you, and of course with Thomas, will enact itself in the exhibition.

Adam Caruso: The last decade or so of architecture has been filled with empty gestures in the name of invention that are not that inventive. Architects behaved too much like fashion designers –

Udo Kittelmann: – As did artists.

Adam Caruso: When I was in school, contextualism was a weak and boring idea. It was about making sure the cornice line and the base line matched from building to building. But there's a much deeper context that is social: it's about all the social relationships that come into a project. Architects have learned a lot from contemporary art practices about strategies to engage with things that are really ugly on the surface – I think then you can really make a project that is not thin and facile – that has depth. Putting Max Beckmann lithographs in Frankfurt's Museum für Moderne Kunst, as Udo and Thomas did a few years ago, could have been terrible. But they saw it as an opportunity to make a German expressionist relevant in a contemporary setting. The connection between being a good curator and a good architect is this contextual engagement. If you're engaged, then you have the opportunity to engage others.

When we started, Thomas gave us a file containing research on 70 or 80 percent of the shows that were in the Neue Nationalgalerie – which was research that Caruso St John would have done, but he did it already. There were photographs of shows that Mies designed too, and you can see the history of shows that worked, and shows that really didn't. And a lot of shows didn't. What clearly didn't work was any kind of scenographic approach, because you can't really deny the presence of the building. It's just so strong. We were really interested in Mies anyways – pre-WWII Mies, when he was doing these exhibitions for the silk industry and for the *Werkbund* – so our first idea was to connect to the history of Mies's exhibition-making. The show at the Neue Nationalgalerie, the Mondrian show, was really impressive; hanging systems of different sizes. It created something between neutral space and specific room-like spaces. We always tried to push something that related to that. But when we started discussion with Thomas, he was concerned with the same point you addressed earlier, which was about how much our design should be something that is polite and *going along with* the building, and how much it should be challenging it.

Udo Kittelmann: I think that's the point. This is a kind of architecture that is always challenging. This is the message of the building. Mies is always challenging whatever people decide to use the building for. It's a big question mark.

Carson Chan: Actually, what I found extremely confusing in the last several years at the Neue Nationalgalerie was the previous director's unwillingness to take up this challenge. It was a refusal on Peter-Klaus Schuster's part – he seemed either ambivalent about or ignorant of the museum's challenges. Thomas's show is your first major exhibition as the director of all the museums in Berlin. How do you plan on using the show and the building to present your method and ideas?

Udo Kittelmann: The building is intimately linked to Berlin's history. It's also a Mies building, one of his masterpieces; artists and curators are often frightened by this. It's heavy to work in there; there is physical and historic pressure. People don't feel free. First of all, I think that one must get rid of this notion, this weight. One has to take a naïve approach, forget that it's Mies, and just see it as any other building. I had this thought when I curated Gregor Schneider's exhibition in the German pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 2001. Whenever you have strong, atmospheric architecture, it becomes problematic when you start dealing with its history. In a way, history is always there without you having to deal with it. You can't escape from history.

Thomas Demand: When we did our research on all the shows at the Neue Nationalgalerie, I remember thinking about the Rem Koolhaas show ("CONTENT," 2003): he used the building like a sports stadium. He's the biggest admirer of Mies, yet he just filled up the space, momentarily ignoring the pathos of the building, the history, the demand from a certain public to explain the world with each exhibition. One must get over this pretense; and by overloading the space, he did that. Though this recipe worked for an architect, I'm not sure it will work for an artist. Everything looks like art when you put it in there. There was Candida Hoefer; there was a piece of a model of a house he never built. He just filled it with stuff – he moved his studio into the museum.

Adam Caruso: It's a valid approach, but it's one that has to do with the modernist rupture. Koolhaas's method was to stand in opposition to the building. This gesture was very clear at his show in the Neue Nationalgalerie compared to other

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museums where "CONTENT" was exhibited. The clarity of the building was contradicted by the mess of the show – but the show was a mess everywhere, wasn't it? And Carson, regarding your comment on the general indifference towards programming at the Neue Nationalgalerie, I would say that this attitude can be found in many, many museums. From what I've observed in England, there are at least two methods. There is the David Sylvester method of making shows that are very sensitive to the space. Nicholas Serota, the current Tate director, works from this method: right from the beginning you're thinking about how to choreograph the art in the space. On the other hand, for the past ten years or so, the shows have been much more of a "catalogue." It's as if the shows were excuses to make catalogs, and you get curators that have almost no sensitivity to what the experience of the show will be, or to what the challenges of putting that show in that space are. In London, the Tate has raised the bar for exhibition making – we can't simply do historical shows anymore. There has to be some experience that you take away from the show and the other institutions have really responded to that. The Hayward took a building and gave it a new potential, and all the shows benefit from this weird space. It's a very provincial approach to do a show just to get people to see it – almost as if the director has accepted the gallery as a tragedy he has to live with. You see a lot of shows that are like that, don't you?

Carson Chan: Yes, unfortunately. So Udo, as the new director of several Berlin museums, you've kind of inherited a double challenge. Not only are you working with extremely challenging museum spaces, but also a challenging, or challenged, antiquated administrative structure completely unlike the institutions you worked for in the past. Your predecessor, Schuster, has bred a cynicism in the museum-exhibition-making culture in Berlin. The most successful shows in Schuster's eyes were the MoMA show and the Metropolitan Museum show – exhibitions that essentially used the Neue Nationalgalerie as an ersatz storage space for whenever these American institutions needed a temporary home for their collections during renovations. How do you dispel this cynicism? How will you get people to understand that no, that is not what a successful exhibition is – that a museum is, at its root, a place for the public dissemination of cultural knowledge? In the institutions you have worked with previously, you have always begun by redefining the accepted order of the museum. How will you do that in these spaces?

Udo Kittelmann: My beginning in Berlin will be the same. My general understanding of art institutions – whether it be a museum, opera house, theater, or whatever – is about how these institutions are responsible for producing impulses for creativity. Simply put, a museum should be a "creativity factory" – this is the only reason in my mind why they exist. These "factories" run on the ideas of its workers; they produce ideas that are transmitted into reality.

Adam Caruso: This is also how you build an audience. The Labour Party, in England, took more of an interest in culture than the previous administration. But the cost of that interest was that museums had to have a political role. The carrot was that the government paid, and the museums were free. But the museums had to report to the government on the number of people coming in. Plus, they had to be popular – you had to get people in, and this probably resulted in shows that were blatantly populist. What all the good institutions are now seeing is that you can be populist, but still provide good, tough exhibitions. To really keep an audience you have to first build an audience.

Udo Kittelmann: Yes. Institutions must build their own audience!

Adam Caruso: You have to engage in new ways with audiences. And you'll agree, Udo, that that's the most exciting thing an exhibition can do.

Udo Kittelmann: As you've mentioned, Carson, exhibitions in the past decade were too often seen as a product to sell. This is not our business – if we were to sell anything, it would be ideas; to give statements, to involve people in discussions. I want to irritate, to ask them to take part in my ideas. The product is the creativity we can inspire.

Adam Caruso: And because you're responsible for all the state-run museums in Berlin, you have the opportunity to orchestrate a correspondence between museums by programming exhibitions on one subject in all of them at the same time. A few summers back, the Tate, the Barbican, and the Serpentine were all simultaneously showing photography. There starts to be a discussion with opposing views and you get some kind of organic festival – a conversation between institutions in the city.

Thomas Demand: Udo has the chance to build this conversation because he has four museums –

Udo Kittelmann: – Six museums!

Carson Chan: What I found most interesting about your curating in the past is your willingness to make mistakes. To see mistakes as something rich, something generative of new ideas, almost the direct opposite of the cynical PR that I was talking about earlier.

Udo Kittelmann: It's not that I like making mistakes, but I'm eager to take risks! Sometimes they turn out to be mistakes. Sometimes I fail.

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Adam Caruso: I think that most American institutions can't afford to have an unpopular show because they'll die.

Thomas Demand: I think the eBay show you did, Udo, where you exhibited items bought on eBay with the Museum für Moderne Kunst's permanent collection, was an institutional mistake – which doesn't mean the show was a mistake. But it was a mistake to put it in an art institution to test the status of the art object. That was a willing risk you made, right? The mistake was throwing the issue back in the air – trying to redefine art. That kind of mistake is not the same kind as a failure in visitor numbers.

Udo Kittelmann: I don't know then if "mistake" is the right word – it's more about confronting challenges, while most art museums are afraid to take risks. Those of us who work in museums must always remain critical of ourselves. This is how all new projects should begin.

Carson Chan: Adam, you've also written about how architects have lost a certain connoisseurship. If anything, the classic curator is an art connoisseur, and not a dilettante.

Adam Caruso: Connoisseurs are the opposite of dilettantes.

Carson Chan: You mean "not dilettante" as in amateur? Because connoisseurs are not necessarily professionals either.

Adam Caruso: Real connoisseurs are erudite – they're experts.

Udo Kittelmann: I prefer amateurs!

Adam Caruso: Compared to "bad experts," yes! I'm thinking of the word connoisseur in the 19th- or 18th-century sense, when people were slightly amateur, but they were so connected to their subject and were able to work with it in a poetic way. That is what architects have lost. They don't know how to do an interior, they don't know how to select furniture for a building. They think, "It's a shape, and that's enough."

Carson Chan: It's about the personal connection to one's profession. Which is one thing that is quite nice about this group: you, Adam, and Udo and Thomas. Udo, Thomas is your best friend in Berlin, right?

Udo Kittelmann: No! [*laughs*] He's even more than a best friend – it's something between hate and love.

Carson Chan: Actually, I think it's great that Berlin's museums will be curated from a very personal and intimate level. It is nice to experience an idiosyncratic curatorial voice.

Thomas Demand: For the record, before Udo and I first worked together in Frankfurt, which was our first collaboration, we knew each other, but not more than a friendly hello/goodbye. The upcoming show at the Neue Nationalgalerie was planned not so much for the building, but rather as an idea that we've both been thinking about for a while.

Udo Kittelmann: The funny thing is, it wasn't until three or four months after we thought of the name of the show, "Nationalgalerie," that we became aware of the fact that September 2009 is Germany's 60th anniversary – we didn't even think of that! For one, it was always about the work and how this work can relate to the Mies building and its history.

Thomas Demand: When Udo called, he said, "You wouldn't believe what's happening next year. It's the 60th anniversary of Germany as a federal republic. And what's more, it's also exactly twenty years since the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the show is opening a week before the anniversary." We didn't need this alignment, but it's wonderful because now we have the whole population of Berlin talking about the same issues, and already sensitized to the topic of nationality. At the moment, everyone's talking about history, but later this year, people will be talking about politics and what politics are for. How is public opinion formed? How is it manipulated? We have a side program for the show that aims to connect the museum to the outside world. We're trying not to reproduce a circular discussion about art *for* art. We're working with a journalist on the future of money, we have a politician on the team ... We're not trying to educate, but we're interested in making clear the connections we're working with.

Carson Chan: That's the role of the museum.

Thomas Demand: That's the point. We have the Neue Nationalgalerie sitting there, showcased in the middle of the city. It's a wonderful platform that hasn't been utilized to the best of its potential.

Carson Chan: If anything, the show can remind people why it's called the "National" gallery.

Thomas Demand: Well, that's an old convention from the 19th century – the real question is what it can and could be now.

Carson Chan: It's a good question for the museum. It's also the 40th year of the building – it was completed in

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1968. There's this beautiful, meta-, circular situation here. Thomas's work has always dealt with simulacra, or simulation of historical moments, and here we have a show about the 60 years of Germany, in the Neue Nationalgalerie, built in 1968, a time when West Germany was still trying to establish its national identity – not only are the decades lining up, but the concept and situation seem to refer to each other in an ideal way.

Thomas Demand: Today, to call this museum the "National Gallery" is not ironic per se; but no one, especially not me, can pretend to know what that means. It's obvious that it's not what it's called. Germany has several more prominent art museums. In a way, it's an imposter national institution – but that in itself starts to question what is and what is not representative. I think this is what my work can bring to the discussion.

Adam Caruso: But it can't possibly be representative.

Thomas Demand: Of course not, but that's the point.

Udo Kittelmann: There is no longer this idea of a representational institution. In terms of the museums I'm responsible for, the Alte Nationalgalerie (Old National Gallery), which before was simply the Nationalgalerie, a name given in the 19th century to evoke the idea of a unified nation. After the Mies building was completed, they named it the "Neue" Nationalgalerie. And only 30 years later, when Berlin opened a contemporary art museum, or the Musuem für Gegenwart (Museum of the Present), did they keep a building's original name – the Hamburger Bahnhof, which refers to its former purpose as a train station. Already then there was no longer pretense about nationality – it's just where you caught the train to Hamburg.

Adam Caruso: They couldn't have called it the "New" New National Gallery…

Udo Kittelmann: You can't go beyond the new!

Adam Caruso: There was this idea of defining communal identity through art in the 19th century. The greatest parts in the National Gallery in London all contain early Italian Renaissance painting. It was an incredible attitude in the mid-19th century to think the best things in the National Gallery were Italian. There was a moment when English artistic identity was not based on English artistic production. When they called the Mies building the Neue Nationalgalerie, they weren't thinking very much – it was almost like a reflex, wasn't it?

Udo Kittelmann: Don't forget that they chose the building site to be Potsdamer Platz because it was right next to the Berlin Wall. It was a political statement so that the people from the East could see the "New" National Gallery, as the "Old" National Gallery was situated in East Berlin on the other side of the wall.

Carson Chan: Is the real job to rename the building? To rebrand it? Or does that mean that, by definition, anything that happens in it is historical?

Udo Kittelmann: You can't change history!

Carson Chan: No, but you can make it.

Udo Kittelmann: It would be stupid to change the names of the museums – the "New" and the "Old." They are part of history.

Thomas Demand: It's already part of our show. The Neue Nationalgalerie is no longer a description, but we're playing with the discrepancy between what people think it should be and what it actually is. It would be just a waste of money and ideas to make the effort to call it a different name.

Udo Kittelmann: Call it Neverland.

Adam Caruso: Tate Britain was the National Gallery of British Art when it opened. It has a potential that Tate Modern doesn't have – which, in the end, is really like any other museum of modern and contemporary art. Tate Britain, because of its history, has the potential to have a real edge, and you have that historical edge in Berlin, don't you? You can go from the 18th century to the present and everything is in one collection. Simply presenting chronology is not good enough anymore. Boundaries are blurring, national boundaries are blurring…

Carson Chan: Which is why I've always thought the name Tate Britain was kind of funny. It almost presupposes the founding of a Tate China or a Tate America.

Udo Kittelmann: Well, look at the British Museum.

Adam Caruso: That's the imperial one.

Udo Kittelmann: Yeah – the younger generation always asks why it's called the British Museum when there is so little British art inside. Shouldn't they call it the Mummy Museum? I think it's quite important to keep these old names because they confront us with history.

Carson Chan: This is a point that I've been grappling with, especially with regards to Berlin or contemporary German culture in general. I'm talking about a kind of cultural amnesia in terms of history. In 2006, when the government laun-

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ched its "Germany, Land of Ideas" campaign, there was a sculpture on Bebelplatz that had all these names on it – Hegel, Kant, Goethe, Schiller, Marx – this big silver thing that looked like a stack of books. (Bebelplatz was, of course, where Joseph Goebbels's book burning ceremony took place in 1933.) If there were any German export that has had an immense worldwide resonance, I'd say it would be its intellectual and philosophical traditions. At the remaining ruins of the Palast der Republik, literally a stone's throw away from this monument to German intellectualism, the idea of historical authenticity, which stems from Hegel, is completely ignored. It seems that Germans are blind to the most honored aspect of their philosophical history and tradition. The people who gave the world a way to understand history are also the people who are now rebuilding a fake royal palace. They're reconstructing the 19th-century Berliner Stadtschloss (Berlin City Palace), in order to eradicate traces of its 20th-century Communist history.

Adam Caruso: But Thomas, do you think there is amnesia here?

Thomas Demand: No, not really. I think it's a generational thing. I'm reading a book about Stalin, about when he finally took over Moscow and built the famous seven towers and destroyed a bunch of the modernist and constructivist architecture. The thing was, all the subway stations and big houses were still built with the original modernist plans. They had either killed the architects or sent them to Siberia, but they had to finish the buildings that they began to build. There is always a lag between current ideology and its expression in built form. We can't forget that it takes a long time to build buildings. The ball starts rolling, then the money comes, and then the Bundestag does something. So in the end, the Schloss will be finished when the mental state of this country is somewhere else completely. This is the legacy of an old revisionist idea that the East has to be extorted. It's an attitude that has no respect for Communist history because half of the people that promote the reconstruction of the Schloss hated the East and are happy to be rid of it. For people like you or me, it doesn't really mean anything; we're not attached to these ideologies. The question is, why take down the building, which is actually a thing on its own, even if it stands for an ideology you don't like? Instead of building a new building that no one can relate to, with a façade that is completely stupid because it's a symbol of imperialistic times, which no German can actually be proud of, and then fill it with stuff that was acquired with colonial power. We're doing exactly what the British Museum is being beaten for. No one in charge has any conception of these issues. It will be finished and it will have completely fallen out of time.

Udo Kittelmann: I wouldn't be surprised if, when the Schloss is finally rebuilt, the best thing they could sell in the souvenir shop would be a postcard showing the Schloss before and after, looking the same. It's never fully amnesia regarding history. We will remember the Palast der Republik, for sure. The more we understand about why political and historical decisions were made, the more we will miss the Palast – and the generation years from now may well rebuild it!

So thanks to Christopher, I met with the GREAT Eiloh Hosse! First we met at his

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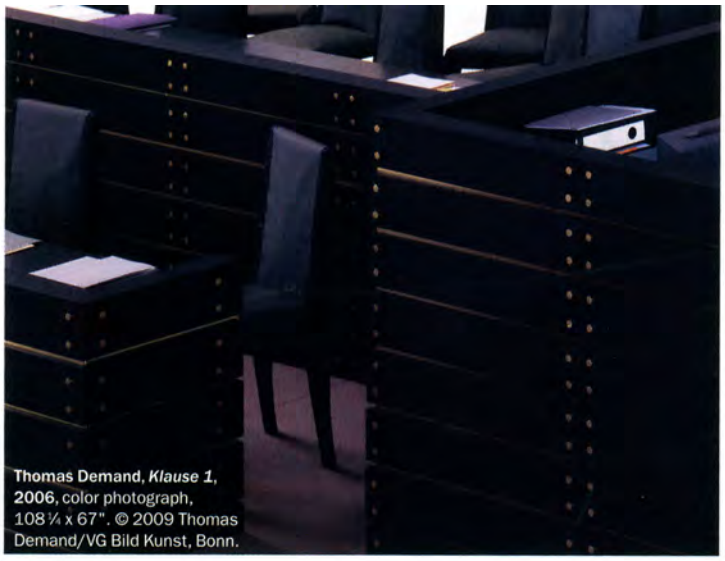

Thomas Demand, *Klause 1*, 2006, color photograph, 108¼ x 67". © 2009 Thomas Demand/VG Bild Kunst, Bonn.

5 **Thomas Demand (Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin)**
For his first retrospective in Germany, curated by Udo Kittelmann, Demand created a concept exhibition using a selection of his photographs about German history and its interpretation by the media, from the Nazi era through the birth of the Federal Republic to the fall of the wall. We are treated to a scenography of hanging curtains in dialogue with Mies van der Rohe's architecture, discursive texts by Botho Strauss that focus on the works without disclosing them, and an aesthetic and political debate launched by the artist through a symposium—all forming a flawless performance in which any decorative excess is carefully avoided, reinforcing the enigmatic and icy character of the images.

Macel, Christine. "Thomas Demand," *Artforum.* December 2009, p. 175.

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032c

HELIUM FOR THE CAVE MONSTER IN THE SERPENTINE GALLERY, BERLIN-BASED ARTIST THOMAS DEMAND HAS BUILT A MONSTROUS CARDBOARD CAVE AND REM KOOLHAAS HAS RAISED A HOUSE OF AIR.

By NIKLAS MAAK

01

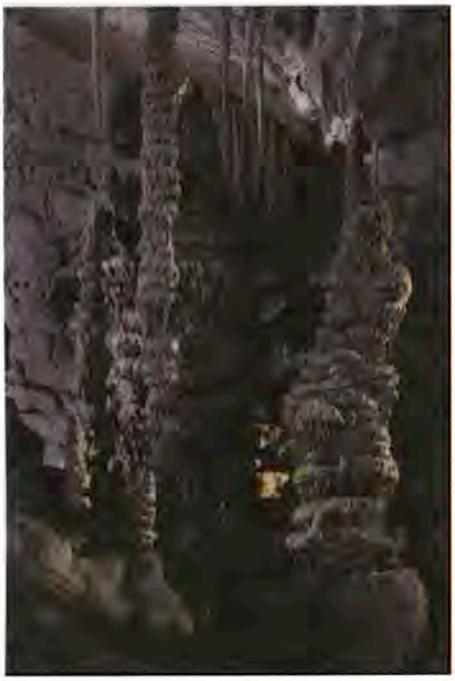
This must be, you think, a photograph of a cave: stalagmites below, stalactites above, with light falling at curious angles into this underground world. But then, as you take a closer look at the photo, you notice something odd. There are pixelizations here that look as if a printing error has been made, and then, if you stand right up close to the photo, you discover that the stalagmites are comprised of eerily similar layers – it's as if the cave isn't a result at all of limestone and water dropping to the depths over thousand of years, but

Maak, Niklas. "Helium for the Cave Monster," *032c.* Winter 2006–2007, pp. 78–81.

computer and a few glue-wielding students, accomplishing what the drips of nature need millennia to accomplish. Simply impossible. It can't be real.

Demand has become famous for his paper constructions. What looks in the photograph like an image of the real world again and again reveals itself to be pure illusion, a photographed model, and the mimicry of the material is outrageous. Demand's paper might genuinely look like freshly mown grass or like heavy gold bars; the forest in his pictures, looking more beautiful, fresher and all around more forest-like than any other forest one has ever seen, turns out to be a clever illusion composed of light, water drops and 270,000 sheets of paper. The cave turns out to be a gigantic paper mine.

Demand's *Grotte* appeared at the Serpentine Gallery in London this summer with other new works that have been exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art in New York over the past year, and the Gallery's new co-director, Hans Ulrich Obrist, along with Demand, lined up another spatial thinker. In July, Rem Koolhaas and his engineer, Cecil Balmond, presented a spectacular work of temporary exhibition architecture, which might be understood as an equivalent counterpart to *Grotte*. A helium-filled canopy, a castle in the air, rose up over the park as a swaying aerial structure in which images of Demand's works were projected. The hovering chimera Koolhaas built around Demand's optical illusions is a further development of the utopian sphere à la Buckminster Fuller, a homage to the pneumatic architecture of the late 70s and such works as the "moveable, inflatable and inhabitable cloud" developed by Coop Himmelb(l)au in 1972, an architecture currently being revived in contemporary art by, for example, the work of Tomas Saraceno.



An archaic image of the cave here, a futuristic pneumatic architecture there. With Demand and Koolhaas, Obrist opened up a fundamental discourse in architectural theory relating to the question of what space can be, with Demand primarily exploring the relationships between space, memory and control. His pictures reconstruct collective dream imagery of places where control has gone missing. You recognize the security checkpoint Mohammed Atta slipped through, Hitler's headquarters after they were bombed, the house in which a small boy was tortured and murdered, the hotel bathroom in which conservative German politician Uwe Barschel was found dead – and, in a certain way, this cave, too, is a place out of control. The entrance to an underground grotto was seen in the 18th century as a point of transition from the rational into the magical, from the calculable to the measureless world, to the subconscious of nature where prehistoric men and monsters of all kinds lived.

"La casa del diavolo," the house of the devil, is what fishermen called the Blue Grotto discovered by August Kopisch in the 19th century on the isle of Capri, and what made the cave so spooky was the fact that no one knew whether the bizarre towering figures within were the artful result of moody nature or man-made, possibly even devil-made works.

The grotto appears as a hybrid between natural form and artifact, as a place of lunatic, inexplicable formal excess. What the baroque grotto builders, bored by the geometrical culture of rectangular salons, loved about caves – what romantics, Merzbau master builders and futurists loved about them – was their delirium of forms, this wildly endless and senseless accumulation of forms. Small wonder that head futurist Filippo Marinetti set his novel *L'isola dei baci* in the Blue Grotto, where a surreal conference on the possibility of love takes place and everything's hot and glistening.

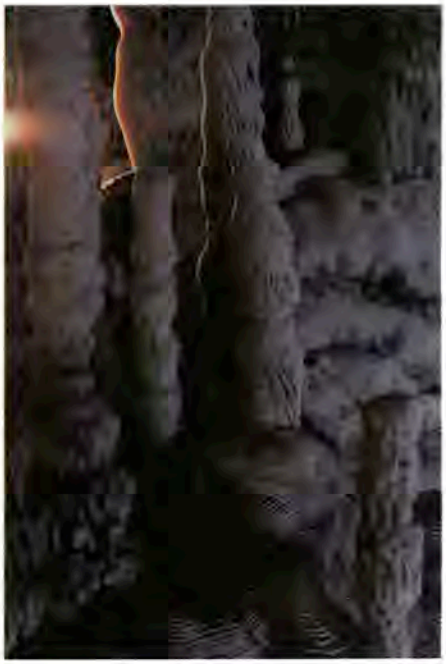
In the grotto, all that is measurable falls apart to make way for the measureless – even in the case of the new computer baroque master builder Demand. A postcard from Majorca served as a model; his paper cave is not in any way a minute replication of an actual grotto, but instead a fantastically built misunderstanding between image and space. The computer that gave its orders to the paper-cutting machine often

Maak, Niklas. "Helium for the Cave Monster," *032c.* Winter 2006–2007, pp. 78–81.

crashed under the weight of so much data, producing errors before breaking down while the cutting machine carried on cutting forms that no longer had anything to do with the grotto on the postcard. These forms are as irrational and random as nature itself, and the machinery, abandoning the programme and turning coincidence into form, mimicked nature.

Demand's work must bring tears to the eyes of design theorists because it makes visible what they find difficult to explain even to their peers. The system crash producing never-before-seen, uncontrolled forms is a favourite motif of deconstructionist design theory that poses the question of what happens when the computer no longer carries out the will of its human operator but instead, due to errors, creates forms no one could have foreseen and, as a sort of virtual nature, hurls these forms at people like so much flotsam and jetsam.

Of course, Demand's grotto photography also addresses the perception of images, the question of what you see when you look at something and which images you choose to believe. Pictures of grottos fascinated people as early as the 18th century because what could be seen in them seemed so unrealistic and fantastic; every grotto looks invented. Today, Demand's *Grotte* first registers as a computer-generated animation – you can hardly believe that a real space has actually been photographed here and that the unfocused spots are not mistakes in the photograph but a computer crash translated into three-dimensional space. *Grotto*, then, continues the tradition of Demand's early pictures, dealing with how the gaze is seduced and with the mechanisms of memory.



Left/Right: *Grotte* (Details), 2006, © Thomas Demand, VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

Demand's reconstructed scenes refer to well-known images and make visible the ways in which memory depends on the recognition of circumstances: you see a bathroom reconstructed out of paper that reminds you of something, and then you remember that in another similar set-up, in this inviting bathtub, Uwe Barschel once lay dead. Demand's paper worlds are backdrops of consciousness, speculations on the ways memory works and how things are reconstructed in the mind, that to remember is to set images and forms before the eye as if the interiors of the mind were a theatrical stage. Demand removes both text and people; like a police inspector who aims to comprehend the monstrous, he reconstructs the scene of the crime, attending to the most minute details as if this reconstruction, this double translation from image to space and then to photography, might offer clues as to what's happened.

But what Demand has created with his *Grotte* is a novelty for the transitional borderline between image and space – namely, an out-of-focus space. Both Koolhaas's pavilion of air and Demand's grotto break the rules of architecture. One aims to relieve architecture of its anchor and lead it to weightlessness and dematerialization, to make it a surface for projection, nothing more and nothing less. The other reconstructs a historical desire for an unsystematic space and has machines create such spaces as could never be planned. This model of a grotto is the opposite of a classical model: it does not make what's large comprehensible by making it smaller, but instead produces new incomprehensible models. Whoever steps into Demand's *Grotte* feels as if he has just stepped into a computer simulation, a room without the smells or the cool humidity of a real cave. It is, at the same time, both a real and a virtual space that Demand has built, and when you stand there among all these cardboard stalagmites in front of the strangely smooth reconstructed computer error, you feel like the man in the Woody Allen film who realizes with horror that it is not his eyes but he himself who has become unfocused. Demand's machine has turned its own breakdown into form. It's dutifully translated a distorted image into three dimensions, thereby producing something entirely new, namely, space out of focus, and the crashing computer that has produced these fantastic forms is in this way the true grotto of the 21st century.

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The Guardian

To the cardboard cave!

Thomas Demand's copies of real scenes couldn't be more eerie, says Adrian Searle

Adrian Searle
@SearleAdrian
Thu 8 Jun 2006
04.33 EDT

The walls of the gallery have been hung with wallpaper, a hand-blocked pattern of luxuriant ivy, each room colour-coded in different tones. The colours represent the four seasons of Thomas Demand's new show: a sunny midday, night, winter and murder. The same ivy clings to the wall of a tavern in a provincial town in Germany, which appears in one of Demand's photographs. A little boy was abused in this tavern, suffocated and dumped in a bin-bag. The wall is sunny, the ivy green and lush. The bar is closed.

Even though Demand's exhibition, at the Serpentine Gallery in London, contains works spanning a decade, this is no survey. Instead, it is an ensemble in which each element plays its part. It is a meditation on images, on the life and death of objects, on atmosphere and the lack of it. The show is about the meanings we ascribe to things, what we know and what we project.

▲ Something terrible happened here ... Detail from Klause (Tavern) by Thomas Demand

Searle, Adrian. "To the cardboard cave!" *The Guardian*, June 8, 2006.

Demand's labour-intensive working procedure begins with a found or archive photograph. Demand constructs a paper and card model of it, which he then photographs again. After this, the model is destroyed, leaving us only with Demand's staged image, and the story he chooses to tell us. The resulting, large-scale colour image presents us with a fictive world very like our own, but one we can never inhabit, an unpeopled copy of places and things. In these representations of rooms, tables, windows, kitchens and offices, glades and architectures, what one notices most is human absence, dead quiet (images, after all, can be noisy), a sort of indifferent gaze.

As much as Demand copies and recopies the world, he also describes it. And there is no such thing as a neutral description, even when everything is described in an excessively plain and uninflected way. Demand's coloured papers come as standard, in off-the-shelf hues, sheen and tone. His images have an emotional flatness, a palpable air of numb fixation. Just as there are no adverbs or adjectives in the manner of his descriptions, so there are no signs of use or wear in his images - no coffee stains, no dirt, no films of dust or greasy fingerprints or grime. His work is equivalent to the inert affectless prose of a police report. How is it so disturbing? After all, Demand's skill, the accuracy of his models and images, wouldn't detain us for long if his art were only a formal exercise.

We begin with a cave. A huge photograph of an underground grotto, based on a postcard image of a real cave, a tourist attraction in Mallorca. Demand's model was built from 50 tonnes of layered cardboard sheets, each cut individually, using several different computer programs to map, generate and cut the forms: stalagmites and stalactites, eroded and water-pitted strata, weirdly organic honeycombs of weathered paper rock. Of course, you find the same effort and statistics in a matchstick Taj Mahal; Demand, though, is interested in much more than useless verisimilitude.

Beyond the cave, and running through the Serpentine's galleries, are images that appear at first as depictions of anonymous, bland and arbitrary rooms, of inconsequential settings and situations. As with Demand's Grotto, one needs to dig deeper to discover their significance. The dark interior of an empty barn, with sunlight seeping in through the gaps between planks, is based on a photograph of Jackson Pollock's studio in the Hamptons. Nearby hangs Drafting Room, based on a tiny photograph of the office of a German architect in the late 1940s. Kitchen is derived from a photograph of Saddam Hussein's hideaway near Tikrit. These images take a lot of unpacking.

It is the five new images hung in the Serpentine's North Gallery that are the most unsettling. The series, called Tavern, takes us on a tour of the bar where the boy was

killed. The walls are lit with sun. The kitchen is clean, well-ordered. Demand shows us nondescript corners, in a building where time has been suspended, as if to say that everything is as it was. But how was it, exactly? This is something his images, and no photographs, can tell us. A desiccated houseplant sits on a sill. Something terrible happened here. Demand takes us to a place where our salacious interest is stalled. He takes us to a brink, beyond which is a void. The story, unravelling in the media, fascinated and appalled the German public. There is no sign of any crime here. But once we know what actually happened, the smallest elements infer an enormous metaphorical weight.

I have heard people say how beautiful this show looks, with the wallpapered galleries, the nuanced light that changes from room to room; and how elegant his photographs are, and how interesting his method is. This may well be true, but it is a distraction. In the end, the show is macabre and disturbing. In the single animated film in the show, Recorder (2000), the spools of a reel-to reel tape recorder turn in the shadows. Is the tune that accompanies the image an accompaniment to a silent movie, or are the bars of piano music a recording on the magnetic tape itself? The banal, repeated snatch of music will probably drive the gallery attendants crazy; it is like a repetitive thought that keeps being replayed in one's head. In fact, the repeated music drives out thought. One might see the whole show as an analogue, a model, of a world that can never be described, and can never be escaped. One is stuck, as if in a cave.

· Thomas Demand is at the Serpentine, London W2, until August 20.
Details: 020-7402 6075.

Searle, Adrian. "To the cardboard cave!" *The Guardian*, June 8, 2006.

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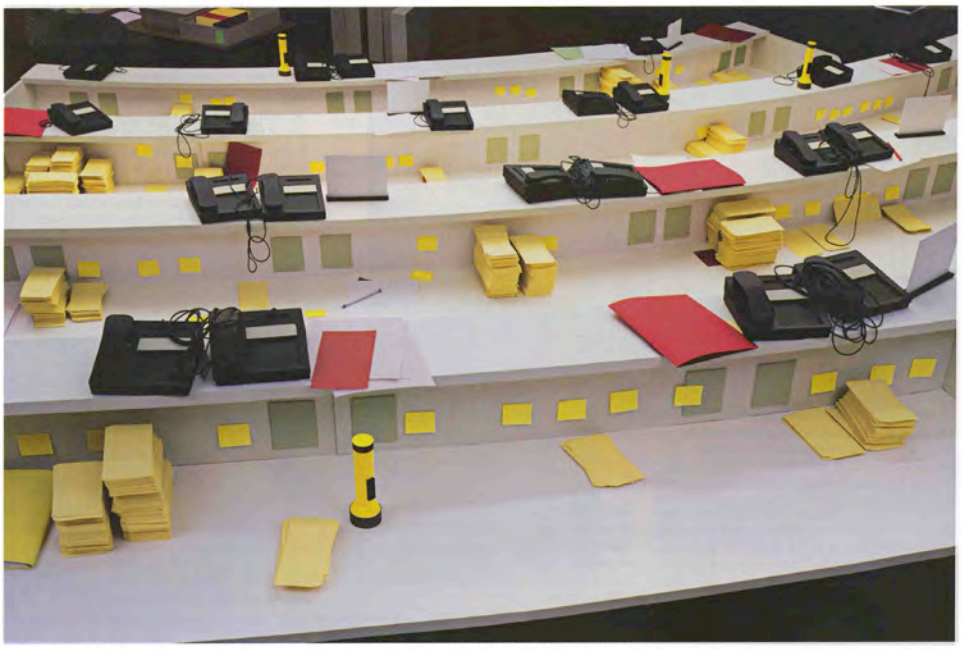
Art in America



Thomas Demand: Poll, *2001, chromogenic color print, approx. 6 by 8½ feet. Museum of Modern Art, New York.*

The Real Simulations of Thomas Demand

A sculptor by training and inclination, Thomas Demand uses photography to record his three-dimensional tableaux, which are based on found, often historically loaded, photos. The tableaux are then destroyed. His pictures were just shown at MOMA.

BY PEPE KARMEL

A few years ago, my son and I took the shuttle bus from Orlando to Disneyworld. As we drove through the flat Florida landscape, I noticed that the woman sitting next to me was wearing the ID tag of a Disney employee. She was from southern Germany, it turned out, and worked in the Bavarian beer garden at Epcot Center. Wasn't it strange, I asked her, to work in a replica of the place she came from? "The town I grew up in was bombed during the war, and then rebuilt to look exactly the same as it did before," she said. "So it isn't really that different."

Like the German pavilion at Epcot Center, Thomas Demand's photographs offer a cleaner, neater version of the real world. At first glance, they appear to be straightforward records of unremarkable locations: offices, auditoriums, hallways, kitchens, bathrooms, staircases, stadiums and gardens, the familiar sites of mass society. It seems mildly perverse to give modest documents such heroic presentation: enlarged to mural scale and laminated to gleaming sheets of Plexiglas. And there is something *off* about the scenes in Demand's photographs. They record the traces of human activity, but no people appear in them. The surfaces are too smooth, the edges too sharp. Sometimes things are damaged, but they never betray the wear-and-tear of daily life. To walk through the retrospective of Demand's (mostly very large) photographs (1993-2004) at the Museum of Modern Art was to enter an unsettling alternate universe.

Like Epcot Center, everything in Demand's work is a fake, a meticulously constructed replica in paper and cardboard. Unlike Epcot Center, Demand's pictures often lead the viewer into a troubling confrontation with history, both German and international. A 1994 photograph with the

Karmel, Pepe. "The Real Simulations of Thomas Demand," *Art in America*. June–July 2005, pp. 146–149.

Barn, ***1997, chromogenic color print, approx. 6 by 8⅓ feet. Museum of Modern Art.***

anodyne title *Room* shows a conference room in a shambles: table collapsed, windows askew, moldings tumbled to the floor, chairs overturned. This is Demand's re-creation of the military conference room where Count Stauffenberg attempted to assassinate Adolf Hitler on July 20, 1944. Four people were killed and the room was demolished, but Hitler survived.

Another photograph, with the equally dispassionate title *Model* (2000), shows part of a white architectural model atop a trestle table. Gleaming with the boundless optimism of early modernism, it looks like Walter Gropius's design for the Bauhaus or one of Kasimir Malevich's *architektons*. The catalogue essay by MOMA curator Roxana Marcoci reveals that the image was inspired by photographs of the model for the German pavilion at the Paris International Exhibition of 1937. A German brochure, showing the model being studied by Hitler, a would-be architect, and Albert Speer, its actual designer, stated: "By will of the 'Führer,' a new monument in the National-Socialistic architectural sense has been erected." In fact, Speer's enormous, squared-off piers surreptitiously evoked modernist architecture while featuring just enough classical detailing to evade the Nazi ban against modernism. By merging the piers into a single rectangular block and eliminating the Prussian eagle atop them, Demand returns Speer's design to its modernist origins. Conversely, he invites us to confront modernism's disturbing implication in the bureaucratic logic of Fascism.

Demand's use of architectural symbolism recalls Anselm Kiefer's 1981 canvas, *The Painter's Studio: Inner Room*, which reproduces the "Mosaic Room" from Speer's 1937-38 Reichs Chancellery. But where Kiefer loads his imagery with angst and impasto, Demand maintains a sense of clinical detachment. The rhetorical point of his image is made by the subtle lighting and by the choice of viewpoint, lowered so that the model looms ominously over the viewer. Instead of the figures of Speer and Hitler, the right side of the photograph is occupied by a bare wall, a window and a radiator, painted in tones of green and gray that eloquently convey the tedium and indifference of institutional architecture. It is an object lesson in the banality of evil.

Other photographs in the MOMA retrospective evoke more recent moments in German history. *Office* (1995) shows drawers pulled open and papers dramatically strewn across table and floor. Here, Demand re-creates an event of 1990, the year after the fall of the Berlin Wall, when, as Marcoci explains, "frenzied East Germans ransacked the deserted center of the former Stasi (secret police) building in East Berlin in search of their personal files." Countless people served as informers under German Communism: the ransackers were eager to find out what their supposed friends had said about them—but also to remove the evidence of their own activities as informers.[1]

Born in Munich in 1964, Demand studied church and theater design at the Munich Academy of Fine Arts, and then moved on to the Düsseldorf Art Academy, where Bernd and Hilla Becher were training a generation of young photographers including Andreas Gursky, Thomas Struth, Thomas Ruff, Candida Höfer and Axel Hütte. Demand, however, studied with the sculptor Fritz Schwegler, who encouraged him to explore

Karmel, Pepe. "The Real Simulations of Thomas Demand," *Art in America*. June–July 2005, pp. 146–149.

The palpable uncanniness of Demand's photographs gives them an emotional impact even before the viewer discovers their historical references.

architectural models as an expressive medium.[2] Like Gursky et al., Demand makes mural-scale photographs with the formal impact of hard-edge abstraction and the allegorical density of Neo-Expressionism. However, he is not simply a photographer. Rather, his work has, since 1993, consisted of life-size paper and cardboard models that are constructed in order to be photographed, and then destroyed. At first glance, Demand's pictures recall the work of Jeff Wall, but with the human actors removed. It is tempting to describe Demand as a theatrical designer, because his work sets the stage for action or records its aftermath. The fact that he makes and photographs models, rather than actual buildings and furnishings, brings him closer to James Casebere and Oliver Boberg.

The palpable uncanniness—what the Germans call *Stimmung*—of Demand's photographs gives them an emotional impact even before the viewer discovers their historical references. However, the flimsiness of his paper-and-board models is at odds with the portentousness of his framing and lighting. The fact that he works not with digital media but with old-fashioned "analogue" photography challenges our assumptions about what it means to live in an age of simulation.[3] Even today, paper remains the medium of choice for the permanent storage of information; the collective memory of society exists in the form of print. We know from experience that the sheets of paper in an East German office would have carried typed and printed words, but in Demand's photograph, they remain intentionally blank. Similarly, there are no logos, no keys on the typewriter, no buttons on the photocopying machine, no labels on the products. This willful erasure seems to represent the deliberate amnesia of a society that does not want to remember. At the same time, the blankness serves to emphasize the constructed nature of the scene before us—even if it appears to be made of metal, wood, plastic and carpeting. If Demand's political allegories speak to an adult sense of history, his trompe l'oeil craftsmanship appeals to a child's sense of the marvelous. We feel like the sorcerer's apprentice, admitted into the laboratory where miracles are made.

This emphasis on craft is reflected in the subject matter of many of Demand's pictures. He returns almost compulsively to images of the architect's office, the artist's studio, the politician's podium, the sound engineer's editing booth or (less glamorously) the kitchen. A 1996 work, *Drafting Room*, re-creates the studio of Richard Vorhölzer, the architect who directed much of West Germany's postwar rebuilding. As Marcoci explains in the catalogue, Vorhölzer and his colleagues revived the style of the banished Bauhaus as part of their quest for an "architecture of democracy" that could replace the corrupted pastiches of the Nazi era. Demand depicts Vorhölzer's studio as an *exemplum virtutis* of order and transparency, with rows of drafting tables locked into a grid of metal space dividers and pearly white light spilling from the windows at the left (as in a Vermeer).[4]

In *Barn* (1997), Demand turns to another mythic workplace: Jackson Pollock's studio in the Springs, Long Island. Like Vik Muniz's *Action Photo No. 1* (also 1997), Demand's reconstruction is based on Hans Namuth's photographs of Pollock at work. Where Muniz transforms one of Namuth's photographs by redrawing it with dripped chocolate syrup, Demand defamiliarizes his source by suppressing not only the figures of Pollock and his wife, Lee Krasner, but also any trace of his paintings or his working materials. Pollock's barn-studio becomes a kind of chapel, sanctified by the light that pours through the windows and between the boards of the wooden siding.[5] There is a closet spirituality to Demand's work, evident in the recurrent symbolism of divine light entering and transforming a secular space. Even as he astonishes the viewer with his ability to simulate reality, he implies that there is a kind of grace that can only be granted from outside. It is our human prerogative to invent new realities, he seems to say, but let us not forget that they are merely our own inventions. After all, Demand is the source of the staged light as well.

Above, frontispiece from Heinrich Hoffmann's* Deutschland in Paris, *an unofficial catalogue of the German Pavilion of the 1937 Paris International Exposition. Bavarian State Library, Munich.

Right,* Model, *2000, chromogenic color print, approx. 5½ by 7 feet.

Clearing, ***2003, chromogenic color print, approx. 6½ by 16¼ feet. Museum of Modern Art.***

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This same note of circumspection recurs in Demand's political allegories. *Poll* (2001) reconstructs one of the centers where Florida election officials, flanked by Democratic and Republican observers, labored to recount paper ballots after the inconclusive presidential election of November 2000. The desks of the ballot-counters are arranged in long, concentric curves, like the desks of staffers in election night newsrooms or flight engineers in NASA's mission control center in Houston.[6] But the technical means for deciding the political contest are old-fashioned paper ballots, flashlights, Post-it notes and telephones. For some, the photograph will appeal to the belief that Republicans stole the election by manipulating the vote-counting process to produce a false majority for Bush. Whatever the outcome, Demand seems to admire the sheer human effort that went into hand-counting the ballots, sorting out perforations from mere indentations, tabulating results and phoning them in to anxious officials. It is dull, patient handwork—much like his own. Reality is not something that exists without us, he seems to say: it is something we construct, cutting and pasting the raw materials of our lives. □

Most of the biographical and historical information in this article is drawn from Roxana Marcoci's elegant and informative catalogue essay. Other sources are noted below.

1. For a further discussion of the fate of the Stasi offices, see Jane Kramer, *The Politics of Memory: Looking for Germany in the New Germany*, New York, Random House, 1996, Chapter 5, originally published as an article in the *New Yorker*.
2. The sculptor Thomas Schütte, another of Schwegler's students, also utilizes architectural imagery.
3. Jean Baudrillard located the simulacrum in the realm of "fashion, media, publicity, information and communication networks" (*Simulations*, New York, Semiotext(e), 1983, p. 99), and 1980s artists such as Jeff Koons, Richard Prince and Sherrie Levine typically reproduced familiar images from the mass media and art history. At the same time, Baudrillard prophesied an age of pure simulation, not dependent on preexistent images: "[Simulation's] operation is nuclear and genetic, and no longer specular and discursive. With it goes all of metaphysics. No more mirror of being and appearances, of the real and its concept. . . . Genetic miniaturization is the dimension of simulation. The real is produced from miniaturised units, from matrices, memory banks and command models" (*Simulations*, p. 3). Baudrillard's prediction was validated in the 1990s by the proliferation of video games and computer-animated movies such as *Toy Story*. The makers of *The Matrix* (1999) paid homage to Baudrillard by briefly displaying a copy of his book in the film's opening scene.
4. As the Bauhaus recedes into the past, it becomes an increasingly powerful signifier of mythic modernist aspirations. Demand's idealized invocation might be compared to Brian Alfred's 2001 painting *Wrecking*, where a view through a similar steel-and-glass window reveals a giant wrecking ball about to smash through the gridded facade of Walter Gropius's building.
5. The full-scale model of Pollock's studio created for MOMA's Pollock retrospective of 1998 was also presented empty and lit by artificial light coming through the windows and chinks in the walls. It created the same chapel-like effect.
6. Demand's *Space Simulator* (2003), reproduced in the catalogue but not included in the exhibition, recalls the conspiracy theory that the American moon landing was an elaborate fake.

"Thomas Demand" *was on view at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, Mar. 4-May 30. The exhibition included 25 photographs and one animated film. The accompanying catalogue contains reproductions of 41 photographs by Demand and stills from five of his films, an essay by Roxana Marcoci and a short story by Jeffrey Eugenides, the author of* The Virgin Suicides *and* Middlesex, *and Demand's erstwhile neighbor in Berlin.*

Author: *Pepe Karmel is an associate professor at New York University who has written widely on Picasso, Pollock, Minimalism and contemporary art.*

Karmel, Pepe. "The Real Simulations of Thomas Demand," *Art in America*. June–July 2005, pp. 146–149.

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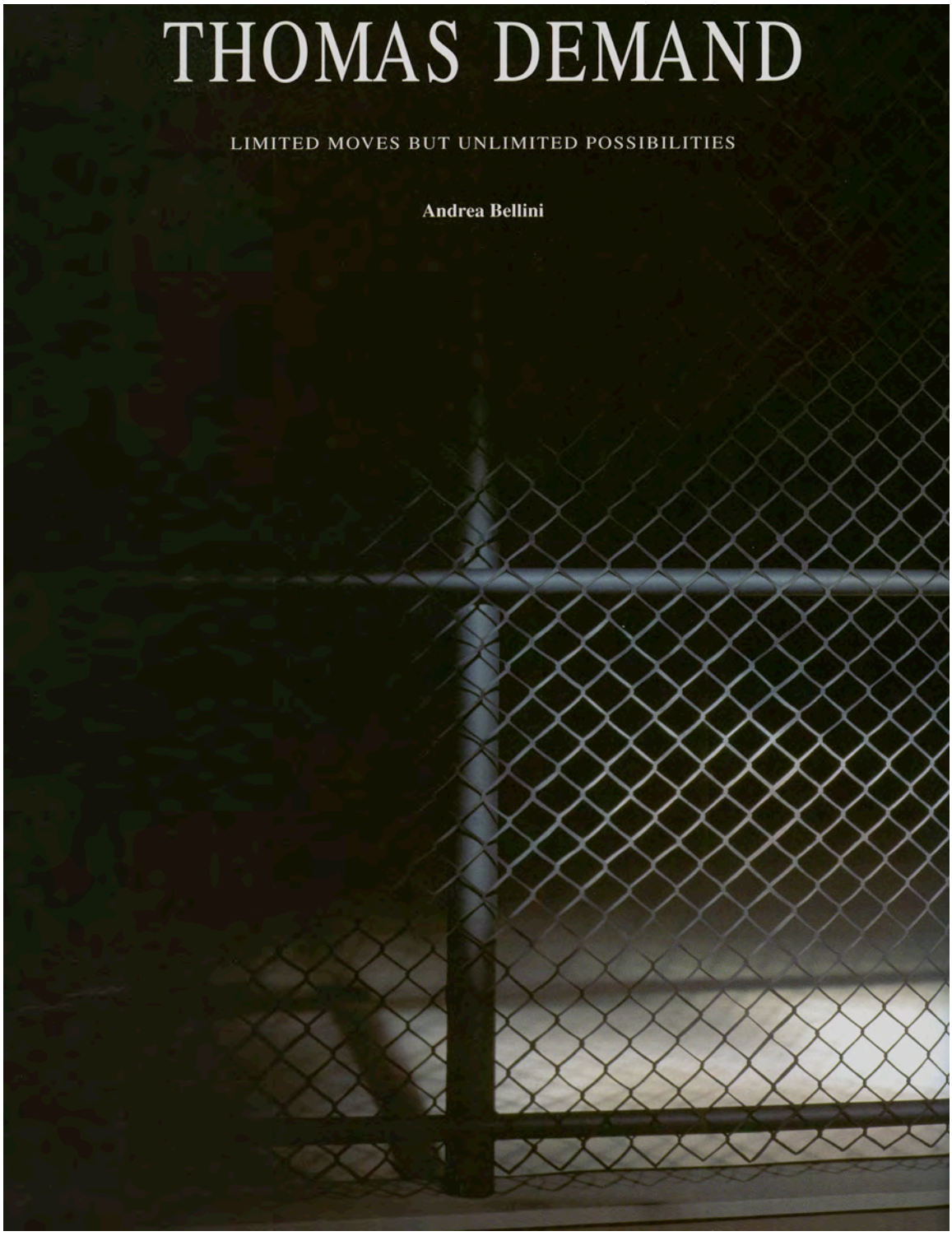


Bellini, Andrea. "Thomas Demand," *Flash Art*. May–June 2005, pp. 100–103.

ANDREA BELLINI: *In your current solo exhibition at MoMA in New York there are two photographs that address outdoor space. Is your approach to space changing? What has led you to the natural environment?*
Thomas Demand: I'd like to think that I am actually dealing with neither outdoor nor indoor space, but rather with our understanding and reading of space's representations in general.

AB: *So, in a certain sense the subjects of your images are not so important, but function as a vehicle…*
TD: It has a meaning of course, but classifying it in terms of outdoor or indoor doesn't lead very far. What's more important is to what extent we recognize what we have seen elsewhere or how we're able to locate its origins. Nature carries a handful of connotations related to romantic imagery for instance; however, one wouldn't do the notion of romanticism justice in limiting it to the outdoors. Think of Caspar David Friedrich, the soft porn movie *Bilitis* or the political romanticism of the Green Party: they all refer to different ideas of nature. Nature is just an available ingredient. I am not making an image of 'nature,' as my interest is rather in our prefabricated ideas about spaces, which might be found in nature or somewhere equally significant.

AB: So *what criteria determine which images you choose to translate into three-dimensional life-size paper models?*
TD: It's not really such a clearly defined process. Often I start with a very vague formal idea, like 'many similar objects in a space' or 'model versus sculpture' or 'what do I do?' This can lead to some kind of 'search mask' that I apply to my surroundings. But other layers come along and add themselves before I decide it's worth spending my time on a project. Of course, the relationship of a new work with my previous works also plays a role: it's similar to a game of chess in which you have limited moves and pieces on the board, but unlimited possibilities.

AB: *Limited moves and unlimited possibilities... have you ever had the feeling that you are working in a blind alley?*
TD: No.

AB: *What exactly do you mean by "limited moves"? Do you think your work ever reaches conclusions, in a certain sense?*
TD: By "limited moves" I'm referring to this rather eccentric practice of constructing a three-dimensional environment out of cardboard or other cheap and temporary materials. It appears to be limited at first glance, but the more intelligently you work with constraints like these (and others) the further you are able to push it. I also think it's necessary to spend time and effort with things. They don't just fall out of the cupboard, at least not in my case. It starts with an illusionistic surprise, introduces self-referential elements, is at times linked to other art and might sometimes include a close look at ways of consuming imagery.

Fence/Zaun, 2004. C-Print/Diasec, 180 x 230 cm. © Thomas Demand, VG Bild Kunst, Bonn/ SIAE, Rome. Courtesy Victoria Miro Gallery, London, 303 Gallery New York, Esther Schipper, Berlin, Galerie Monika Sprüth, Cologne.

Bellini, Andrea. "Thomas Demand," *Flash Art*. May–June 2005, pp. 100–103.

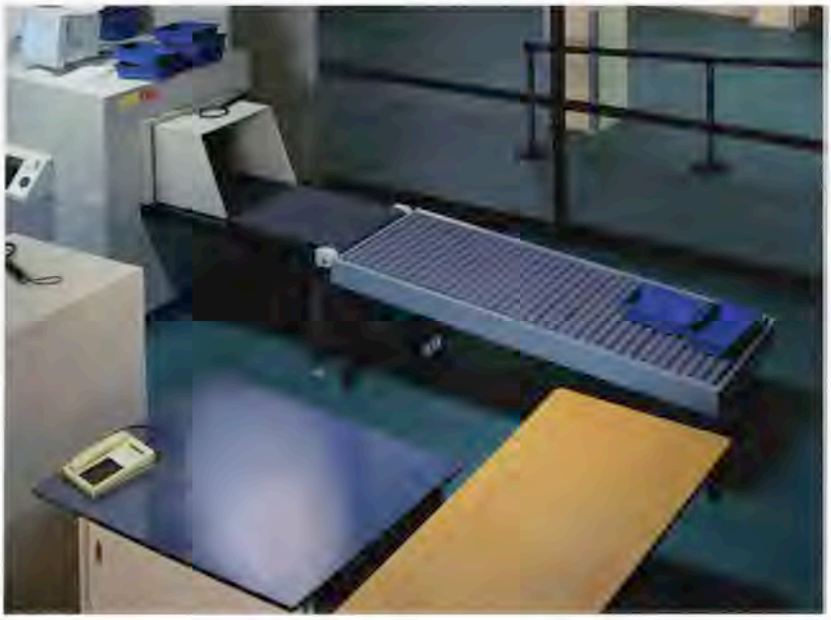
Bellini, Andrea. "Thomas Demand," *Flash Art*. May–June 2005, pp. 100–103.

AB: *Despite their illusionistic qualities, your images reveal the mechanisms of their making. You tend to leave clues visible in these staged tableaux: some minute imperfections, like a wrinkle in the paper or a pencil mark. What are your reasons for doing this?*
TD: I always have in the back of my mind this idea of the Magritte painting [*La reproduction interdite*, 1937] in which you see a man wearing a hat from behind who is himself looking into a mirror and seeing his own back. In other words, you watch yourself watching. I hate speculating about what 'the viewer' sees, but let's imagine that after the first encounter with the work, one hopefully sees the display disassembling itself beautifully. Others don't get it at all, but still see an image that is somehow resolved.

AB: *The idea is to cast doubt on the viewer's relationship with the image?*
TD: Doubt implies this dialectical approach of right and wrong, like Adorno's demon of 'the mass media.' I hope it is not going to get stuck there, because once the anecdotical and illusionistic layers go out the window, you still get something else from it, right? But I really would like to avoid sketching out a roadmap of understanding my work: I leave that to other people.

AB: *Yes, I agree. Can you tell me something about your 35mm films? Why have you decided to set some of your photographs in motion?*
TD: Partly I realized that the way people were approaching the work was increasingly linked to an understanding of photography versus truth, or in other words, the medium's troubled credibility. I was never very interested in that aspect of photography; I don't think it leads very far. But at the same time I have to admit that as a producer it's only possible to ignore the readings of one's work to a certain extent, though at some point unwelcome contextualization starts to feel uncomfortable when it's so far away from your own understanding of what you are doing. So I started to pay more attention to the aspects of my practice that have the least to do with this notion of realism, which obviously is the sculpture. I hoped that working with film would also bring the static aspect into flux again, and in so doing, encourage an emphasis on what is actually shown in the images, and not on how it is shown.

AB: *Talking about what is shown in these images, why is it that in both your films and your photographs people are never depicted?*
TD: Let's imagine an image of, say, a library with bright sunlight breaking through the heavy curtains; it falls on the dust in the air and over a few desks; in the background you see some shelves and there are some books on the tables: click! Now imagine the same scene with two girls sitting in the background: one turns to the other (with longish hair falling over her face) and talks to her whilst she stares at the book in front of her: click! So one scene is of the library and the other is an anecdote about two people in the library. Naturally, it has to do with the reading of a space and its possibilities for the imagination. Do you know what I mean?



Above: Gate, 2004. C-Print/Diasec, 180 x 238 cm. Opposite page, clockwise from top left: Clearing, 2003. C-Print/Diasec, 192 x 495 cm; Kitchen/Küche, 2004. C-Print/Diasec, 133 x 165 cm; Trick, 2004. 35mm film, 59 sec, loop; Attempt, 2005. C-Print/Diasec, 166 x 190 cm. All images: © Thomas Demand, VG Bild Kunst, Bonn/ SIAE, Rome. Courtesy of Victoria Miro Gallery, London, 303 Gallery, New York, Esther Schipper, Berlin and Galerie Monika Sprüth, Cologne.

AB: *Yes, and it clearly has something to do with the sculptural dimension of your work. It seems as though you want to avoid disturbing the purity of the image. In fact, you started as a sculptor. At what point did you start to photograph your sculptures?*
TD: I was basically trying to document my flimsy sculptures before dumping them. So many aspects arose just from that transitional process that I tried to include them in my efforts or, at least, to explore the representational aspects as thoroughly as I did the original objects. I have to admit, however, that those sculptures also had mimetic sides in terms of their appearance, and in this way, everything became intertwined.

AB: *How do you relate to the tradition of German photographers like the Bechers, Thomas Ruff and Thomas Struth, who use photography with rigorous discipline?*
TD: That's again something others might want to comment on, but I consider it to be on a different planet — though maybe in the same galaxy. I never met them as a student; I met Mr. Becher for 15 minutes, but that's about it. Seeing Andreas Gursky's first show in Krefeld made me feel very confident that there are ways to introduce painterly concerns into photography, but Ruscha's books made a bigger impact on my understanding of the medium than the Becher school, for instance. Sculpture and writing have been much more influential for me.

AB: *Nevertheless, the photograph doesn't just document your sculptures but it also constitutes the work itself, its final meaning.*
TD: It does, and the film is a permutation of this representational apparatus. However, the fact that we are all German and use a camera does not really make it an inspiring comparison. It's like comparing all the people who use a pencil in Brazil.

AB: *In which directions do you think your work is heading? Can you tell us about your forthcoming projects?*
TD: Next question please. ■

Andrea Bellini is U.S. editor for Flash Art.
This interview was conducted by e-mail.

Thomas Demand was born in Munich in 1964. He lives and works in Berlin.
Selected solo shows: 2005: MoMA, New York; 2004: Kunsthaus Bregenz; German Pavilion, Bienal de São Paulo; 303, New York; 2003: Louisiana Museum, Humlebaek, Denmark; Taka Ishii, Tokyo; Helga de Alvear, Madrid; 2002: Lenbachhaus, Munich; Castello di Rivoli, Turin; SITE, Santa Fe; Schipper&Krome, Berlin; 2001: Art Museum, Aspen; De Appel Foundation, Amsterdam; 2000: Victoria Miro, London; Peter Kilchmann, Zürich; Fondation Cartier, Paris; Monika Sprüth, Cologne.
Selected group shows: 2004: "Precarious Realism," Kunsthalle Wien; "Sculptural Sphere," Sammlung Goetz, Munich; 2003: 50th Venice Biennale; 2002: Taipei Biennale; 2001: 6th Lyon Biennale; "Public Offerings," MOCA, Los Angeles; 2000: "Age of Influence," MCA, Chicago; 1999: "Anarchitecture," De Appel, Amsterdam; "Children of Berlin," P.S.1, New York; Carnegie International, Pittsburgh; "Mirror's Edge," BildMuseet Umea, Sweden.

Bellini, Andrea. "Thomas Demand," *Flash Art*. May–June 2005, pp. 100–103.

TATE ETC.

Model Behaviour

IN THE STUDIO: THOMAS DEMAND

Matt Watkins talks to the German artist about how he makes his photographs

Thomas Demand's archive of paper samples

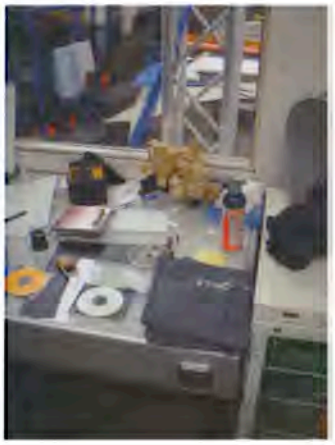
What does an artist's studio look like? There is, of course, no single answer. Just as artists work in increasingly varied media, so do their studios differ in size, shape and function. They might range from a single computer screen to a traditional painting room. Thomas Demand's is somewhere in-between. Situated close to the Mitte district of east Berlin, just by the Hamburger Bahnhof art museum, it occupies part of a large red brick warehouse, with loading doors at one end and a bank of windows raised high above head height along both sides. Inside, it is surprisingly empty. On one side there is a neat desk with some of the tools of his trade: Stanley knives, a cutting mat, pens, set squares and rulers, tubes of Uhu glue and cans of Spray Mount and Dust Off Plus. In the centre sits the partial remains of a model made for his recent work *Gate* (2004).

Demand's large photographs, some measuring up to three by four metres, are the culmination of months of preparation involving various stages of careful production. Unlike more conventional photographers who tend to capture what already exists in the world, Demand creates his own world – out of paper or cardboard. For more than ten years, he has been constructing often life-size paper versions of familiar objects and environments: an office interior, a staircase, a diving board, a Venetian blind, an autobahn. This requires an extraordinary amount of time and manpower – it can take a year to make five pieces. For one of his most recent pieces *Clearing* (2003), a complex reconstruction of a woodland glade, he worked with 30 assistants over three months.

There is no immediate logic to his choice of subject matter, and he has said that he "doesn't assume any hierarchy in the original of these images". However, there is often a potent political or historical subtext. *Podium* (2000), for example, is an image of a lectern – like the one from which Slobodan Milosevic made a speech on the 600th anniversary of the Serbs' defeat by the Turks. *Room* (1994) is based on the image of the ruins of Hitler's bunker, while *Barn* (1997), showed the dark interior of Jackson Pollock's last studio in Long Island.

For his most recent work, Demand wanted to find an object that was "so quirky that you don't really know what it is". And he discovered his source in an unlikely place – a poetic chance encounter while on holiday in Thailand. "In my wooden hut I found a book on space travel on the bookshelf," he says. "It had this amazing image of a space travel simulator. On one hand it looked like something recognisable, because the context was clear. But on the other hand it looked like some kind of mistake – like a crumpled piece of paper, or a Frank Gehry building that hadn't been finished."

Watkins, Matt. "Model Behavior," *Tate Etc.* Spring 2005, pp. 84–87.



The working tools in Thomas Demand's studio

Having decided on his subject, he may do a few drawings, but doesn't feel the need to produce detailed plans: "I am going to be stuck making this thing for three months, so I think through every detail of it. I know exactly how I want it." Unusually though, in the case of *Space Simulator* he built a small maquette, borrowing snippets of information from an Airfix diagram of a space capsule.

After this he chooses the paper. "The colour is very important," he says. "The thing about the simulator is that you can't really date it. So I needed to have a colour that is like those computers you see in old pictures. It couldn't be green – because NASA used a lot of green once. So I chose beige, but I made it a little darker in order to get close to a sort of Cubist colour. We couldn't buy paper in that colour, so, for the first time, we had to get it specially printed."

There are strong associative memories, he feels, with a material that we all use – from days spent on school projects to the simple act of crumpling a sheet of paper: "We know the surfaces, so we have a whole set of experiences about it, whereas fewer people have those experiences with paint."

When Demand first began building his models, he thought they should be "as seamless as possible", but then decided that "the imperfection is the beauty of it". This forms part of what becomes our multi-layered response to the finished photograph. "The viewer looks at it and it's exciting, but at the same time as enjoying it, he or she realises that the whole thing might fall apart. Then there is the realisation – the amazement that this thing is handmade."

His large-format camera is set up on a tripod and remains in position as the model takes shape, so that he can "keep looking through from the camera's perspective". With *Gate*, a convex mirror was attached to the tripod to avoid having constantly to go up and down the ladder. The quality of light in his pictures is crucial – from the flat light in *Office* (1995), to the rays of sunshine that break through the trees in *Clearing*. While this often looks natural, Demand almost exclusively uses artificial lights set on a framework of rigs around the model.

The taking of the final photographs signals the end of the life of the model. When Demand first began working as a sculptor, the models he made were the works of art. Now their function has changed, but he still finds it difficult not to become attached to them during their short existence, and it's never easy to throw them away. But once the last sections have gone out of the door, it is time to think about the next subject – and the next choice of paper.

Thomas Demand's exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, runs from 4 March to 30 May, and further new work will be on show at Victoria Miro Gallery, London, from June.

Matt Watkins is publisher of TATE ETC.

Watkins, Matt. "Model Behavior," *Tate Etc.* Spring 2005, pp. 84–87.

PROCESS

Take a Number

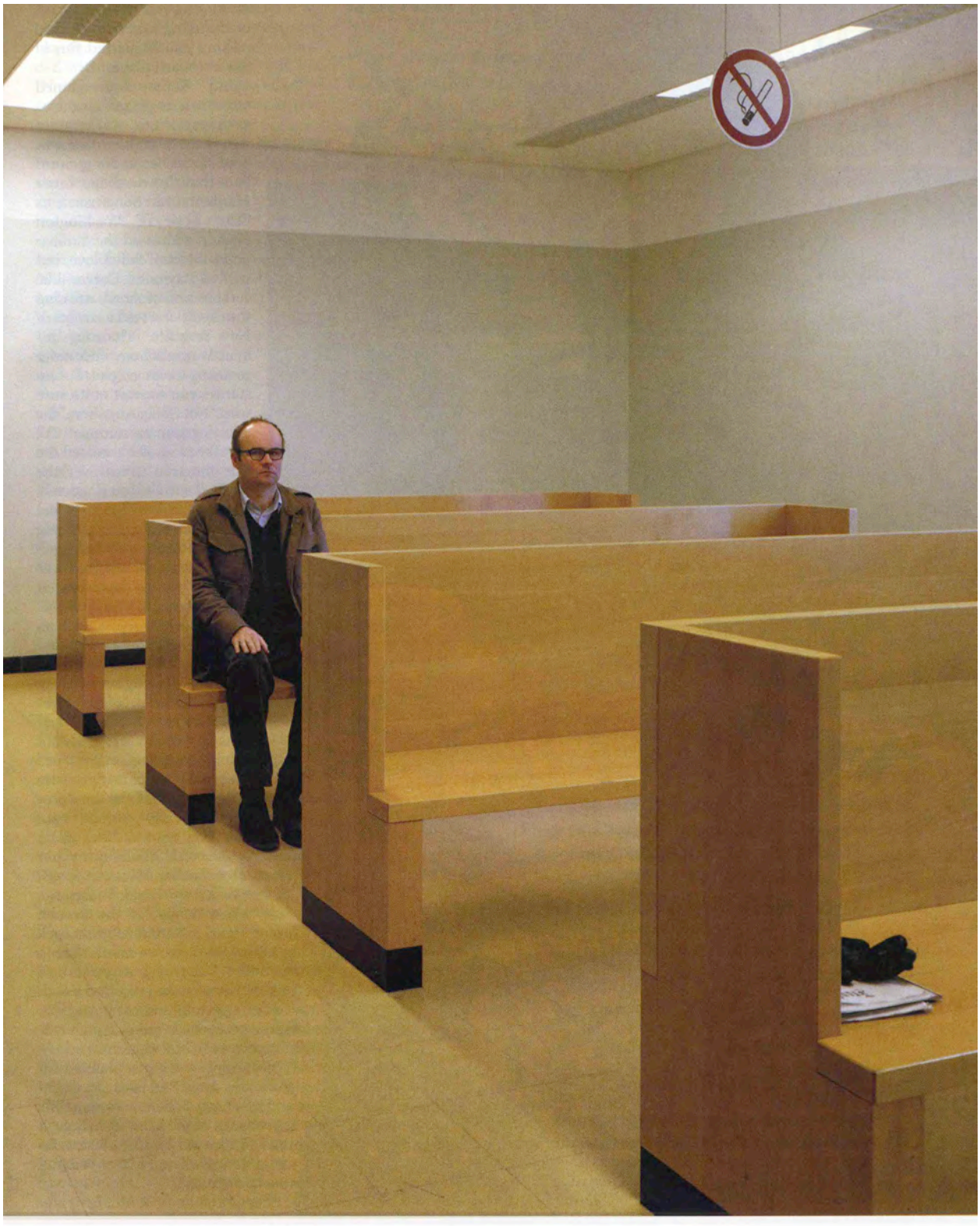
On the eve of his MoMA retrospective, Thomas Demand, known for his elaborately constructed paper models of neutral settings, talks about an environment that inspires him: the German immigration office in Berlin (where he is pictured sitting, right).

"I'm inspired by places like this immigration office. It has quite an atmosphere—dullness mixed with lots of things which would otherwise be in a religious setting. On the wall where the photographer is standing is a big panel with numbers and figures. It's a beautiful display—you take a number when you come in. On the same wall, which you don't see, are two of these frames where you can put an advertisement in—and of course there's no advertisement in there, only an advertisement for putting an advertisement in. Because no one would ever advertise there. The room is full of things like that. The benches are all facing one direction, to avoid any confrontation.

"It comes close to two works of mine. One is *Changing Room*; the other one is *Copy Shop* [from 1999; pictured above]. It looks like a church. It's a place of hope. Also a place of direction—you have to follow the rules, in a country that you don't know."

PHOTOGRAPH: LEFT, COURTESY OF THOMAS DEMAND, VG BILD KUNST, BONN/ARS, NEW YORK; 303 GALLERY, NEW YORK

Zimmermann, Harf. "Take a Number," *New York.* February 28, 2005, pp. 66–67.



Zimmermann, Harf. "Take a Number," *New York.* February 28, 2005, pp. 66–67.

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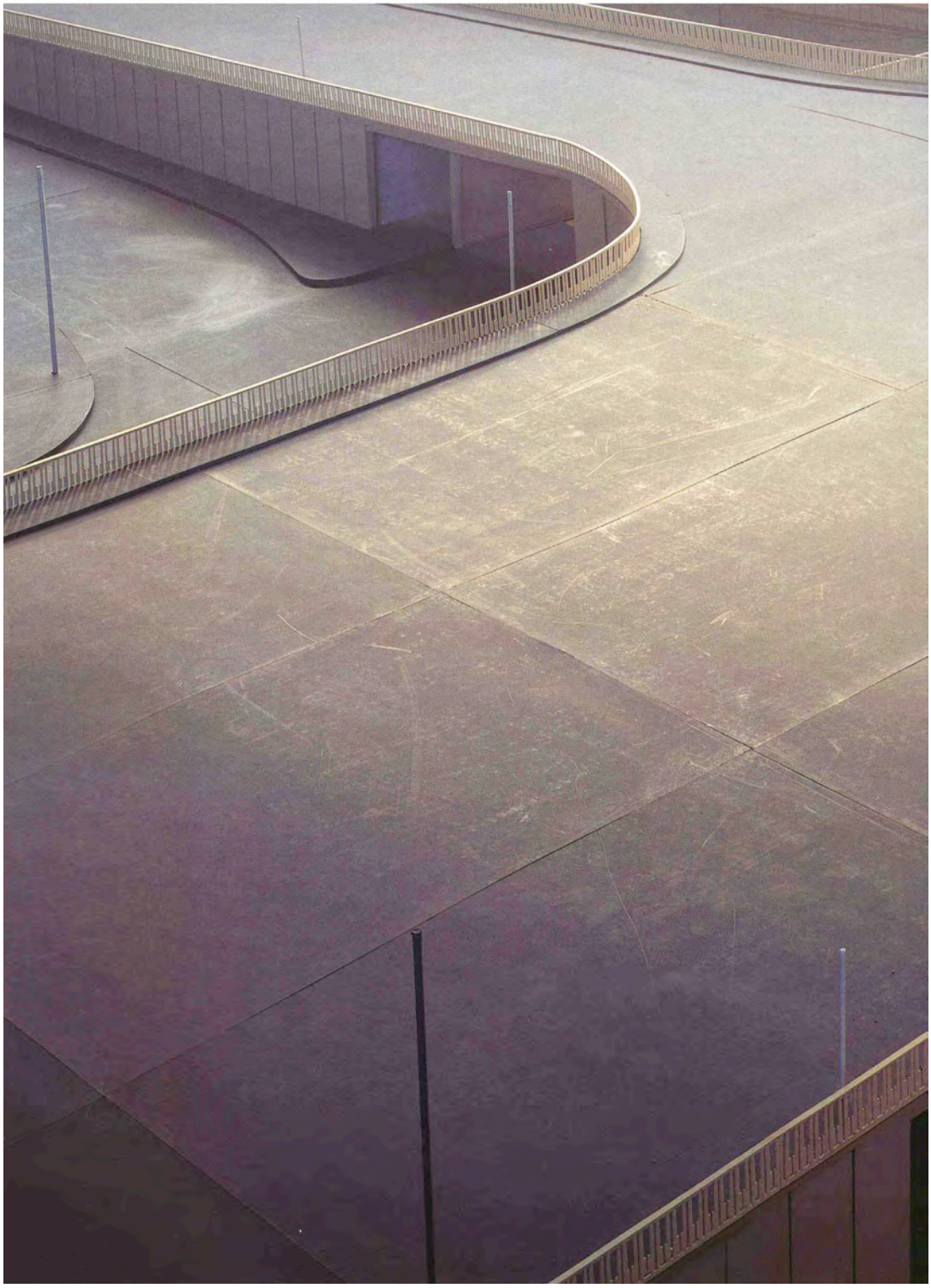
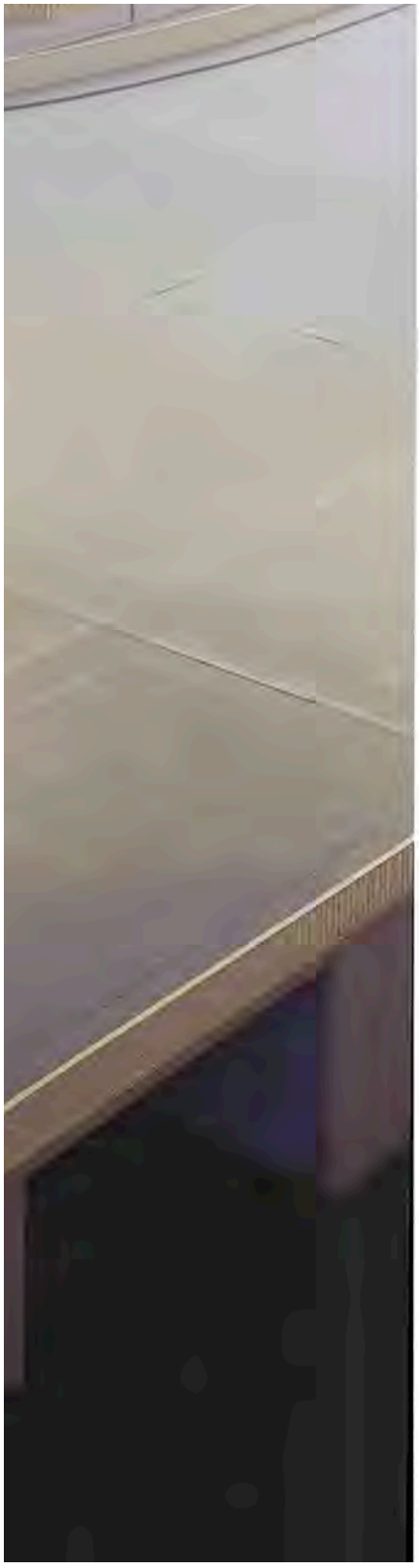


Wakefield, Neville. "Sites Unseen," *Art Review.* January 2005, pp. 64–69.



Sites unseen

Thomas Demand creates non-spaces, silent theatres of possibility that recall Robert Smithson and John Cage as much as photographic mentors, writes **Neville Wakefield**

Surfing the channels with an eye for something a little bit more captivating than the usual fare of Serengeti nature porn, prisoner abuse and reality upset, I was surprised to find my usual abject fascination directed towards an uneventful image from a small pedestrian precinct in the northern town of Bradford. The image came from a CCTV feed. It described a space that had recently been visited by the mirage of violence but where now nothing at all was going on. Held in the palpitations of the time-lapse video, it could have been any one of a million such images but for the shadow that darkened its anonymity. Like many such spaces it was an architectural enclosure of no particular distinction: a design so numbingly effacing that the desire to leave suggested it had been built according to the imperatives and codes of egress alone. It was, in other words, a non-space created out of adjacency and borrowed from the form of its surroundings. Just seconds before the reverberating silence that had me transfixed, an act of such ultra-violence had passed across the space that the victim, a 12-year-old girl, never fully recovered. Because it happened so rapidly and with such absolute choreographed premeditation the programme creators had no choice but to lengthen the clip and broadcast an image of empty space devoid of human presence. What was captivating was less the hallucination of action that had passed across the screen than the hum of ambient inaction either side.

The experience brought to mind the architectural anomie of Thomas Demand. Like the CCTV feed, his are spaces where monotony is stalked by fear, and significance is drawn from images that have been missed or have yet to be seen. It too is a kind of ambient photography. His evacuated images have neither the temporal decisiveness of Cartier-Bresson nor the objectivism that fellow students of the Bechers made their own. In fact, even as the end results take photographic form, the debt to photography is nominal. Each image, far from rendering narrative spectacle in the vectors of time and object-hood, suggests instead a set of abstract conditions, a theatre of possibility from which such specifics might or might not have sprung. In this they share as much with the sight/non-site dialectics of Robert Smithson and abstract sonic landscapes of John Cage or Brian Eno as they do with his better-known photographic mentors and peers. After all, to ▸

Left: Thomas Demand, *Kreuzung/Intersection*, 2002, C-Print/Diasec, 200 x 243cm

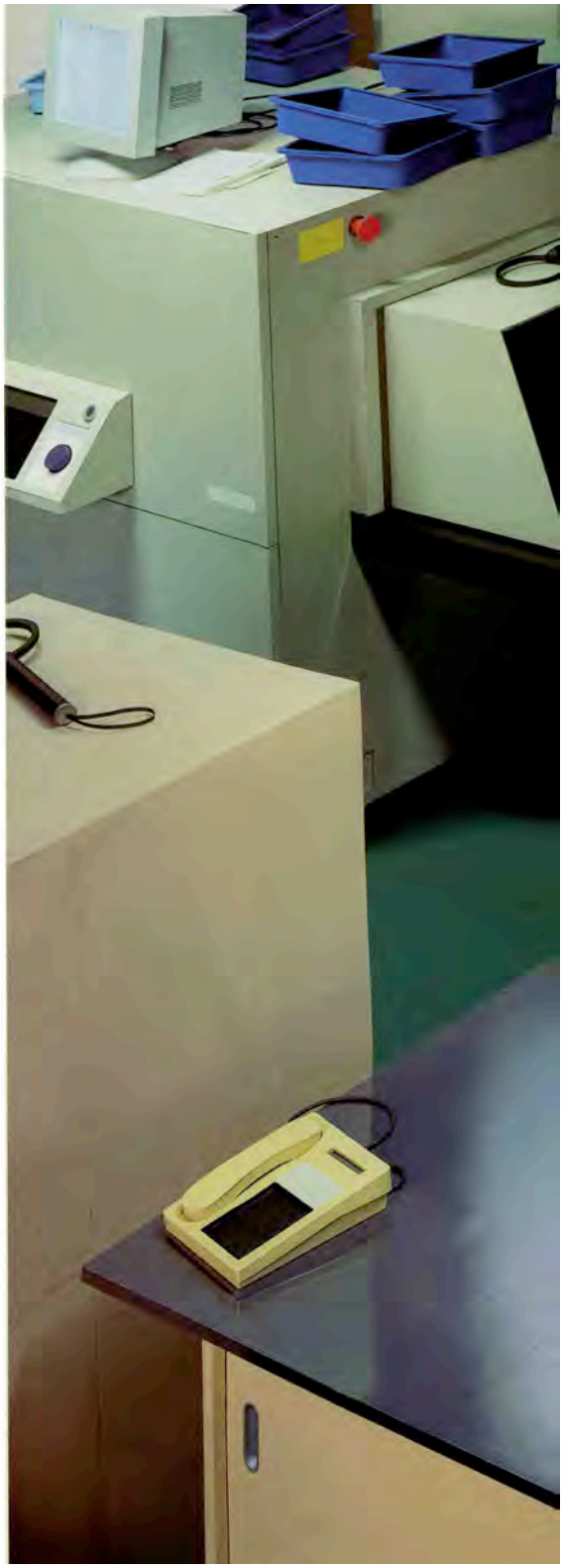
Wakefield, Neville. "Sites Unseen," *Art Review.* January 2005, pp. 64–69.

Like many of Demand's chosen subjects, *Gate* proposes prosaic architecture as silent witness to the pathologies of social disturbance

◂ continue Smithson's pun, all of Demand's works are non-sights. His crime-scenes are the circumstance of a forensic landscape as removed of incident and location as Smithson's containers of rocks are removed from the slag-heaps of Oberhausen or the dried lake-beds of Mono. Be they based on the NASA flight simulator or the Lumière brothers' early films, his explorations into the nature of space and illusion are also represented not by the thing itself but by the mechanism of its description. They too derive much of their strange compulsion from the fact that they are descriptions of the nondescript.

Some, but not all, are sites that have been visited by violence. His photographs are taken from careful paper reconstructions of situations whose existence and sometime notoriety has already been established in the form of pre-existing photographs. For instance, *Barn* (1997), *Corridor* (1995) and *Kitchen* (2004) are reconstructed images of Jackson Pollock's Long Island studio, the corridor leading to Jeffrey Dahmer's apartment and the hide-out from which Saddam Hussein was eventually routed. And for images such as these their stories have already been written in the paper of their making in such a way that Demand's models become fragile temples raised to the long extinguished deeds they might once have housed. Whether they summon the spirits of a deceased past or merely stand as obdurate reminders of time's irrevocability, his life-size paper architecture provides a description of the world through the site of the unseen.

Gate (2004) is perhaps the most literal of Demand's recent plays on the condition of history and visibility. Viewed as if from the perspective of a surveillance camera, it depicts the familiar stuff of airport security: the empty sheep runs, trays, rollers, examination tables and X-ray machines into which one surrenders identity and assumes the passivity that such an architecture demands. Like *Corridor*, *Escalator* and *Tunnel*, *Gate* is a non-space designed to process people as a function of their time, space and baggage. Passage through these conveyances is so normal as to be registered only in violation of these functions: the sealing of the entire second floor of North 25th Street, Milwaukee, after the discovery of dismembered body parts in apartment 213, the closing of the underpass following the death of the princess or the shutting down of airport security at Boston's Logan International following the attacks of September 11. Like many of Demand's chosen subjects, *Gate* proposes prosaic architecture as silent witness to the pathologies of social disturbance. And if at some level the X-ray machine that it depicts may be a metaphor for the revelation of the invisible, it is also just a mechanism whose indifference to the box-cutters and nail-clippers must then become attributable to human error. *Gate* is the screening portal through which Mohammed Atta *et al* passed to change the course of world history. Yet for all that, this may have less bearing on our understanding of Demand's intentions than the fact that, regardless of the burdens of history, these are places one would rather forget, places whose associations with ▸



Right: *Gate*, 2004, C-Print/Diasec, 180 x 238cm

Wakefield, Neville. "Sites Unseen," *Art Review.* January 2005, pp. 64–69.

Wakefield, Neville. "Sites Unseen," *Art Review.* January 2005, pp. 64–69.

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The very fact that nothing much is going on in these images allows them to become carriers for the human condition

anxiety, chronic delay and heightened security procedures have brought sublime terror into contact with the innocuous.

It may be the very fact that nothing much is going on in images such as these that allows them to become carriers for the human condition, in the same way that the nothing much going on in the music of John Cage or Brian Eno allows us to carry the experience of listening away from the intended orchestration of content. Where Cage asked simply that we pay attention to the random underlay that he regarded as the sonic texture of life, Eno, who had been brought up on the studio sound of Phil Spector, understood that within the studio-produced sound was a physical description of the environment, a sonic model of the conditions that gave rise to the music itself. *Laboratory* (2000) is Demand's most literal description of such a model. It shows the interior of a sound booth. A row of microphones hanging from the egg-box ceiling appear poised to record the pictorial noise that might arise from such a strange lamination of photographic and architectural silence. Pregnant with the possibility of sound, the room is prepared for the musical narration of melody even as it listens only to itself. Like ambient music, Demand's images are vacant screens awaiting mnemonic projection. And in this they are intensely disconcerting. For although spectral narratives may wait in the wings, their very refusal to recount the actions of the past from which their significance is derived is itself a reminder that to remember is to triumph over loss and death; to forget is to form a partnership with oblivion.

Despite all the cool remove which appears to characterise Demand's dissonant architectures and fields of fabricated detail there is also a romantic aspect to these images that feeds off the same aspects of our exclusion. We may have come a long way since Caspar David Friedrich's depiction of a landscape so beautiful that the beholding figure must turn away from such terrifying sublimity. And yet in some ways this too is what Demand asks us to do when he presents us with the conceptual structure of an event from which all eventfulness has been removed. Drama and chronology then become fictive remembrances entirely of our own making. This may be in part what Demand means when he says, 'Photography is less about representing than about constructing its objects. I think that is one of the central points of my work: to reconsider the status of the image by producing one particular moment of perfection.' Constructed from the prosaic material of architectural ruin, the perfection he speaks of is neither narrative nor archival. Rather, like Smithson's non-site, Eno's ambient soundscape or Friedrich's figure, it is a mode of address that purposefully misdirects our attention towards what isn't there. And out of that misdirection we come to understand that silence or a general lack of noise may have something to do with reverence as a form of pleasure.

Thomas Demand, 4 March-30 May, MoMA, New York (+1 212 708 9400, www.moma.org). Demand will also be exhibiting at Victoria Miro Gallery, London, in June (www.victoria-miro.com)

Left: *Kabine*, 2002, C-Print/Diasec, 180 x 254cm

Wakefield, Neville. "Sites Unseen," *Art Review.* January 2005, pp. 64–69.

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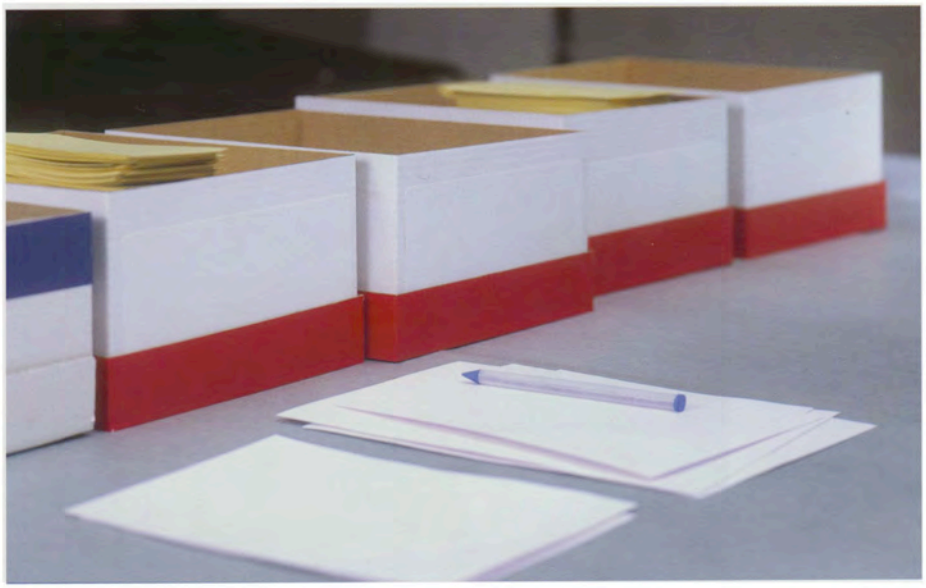
portfolio

Thomas Demand



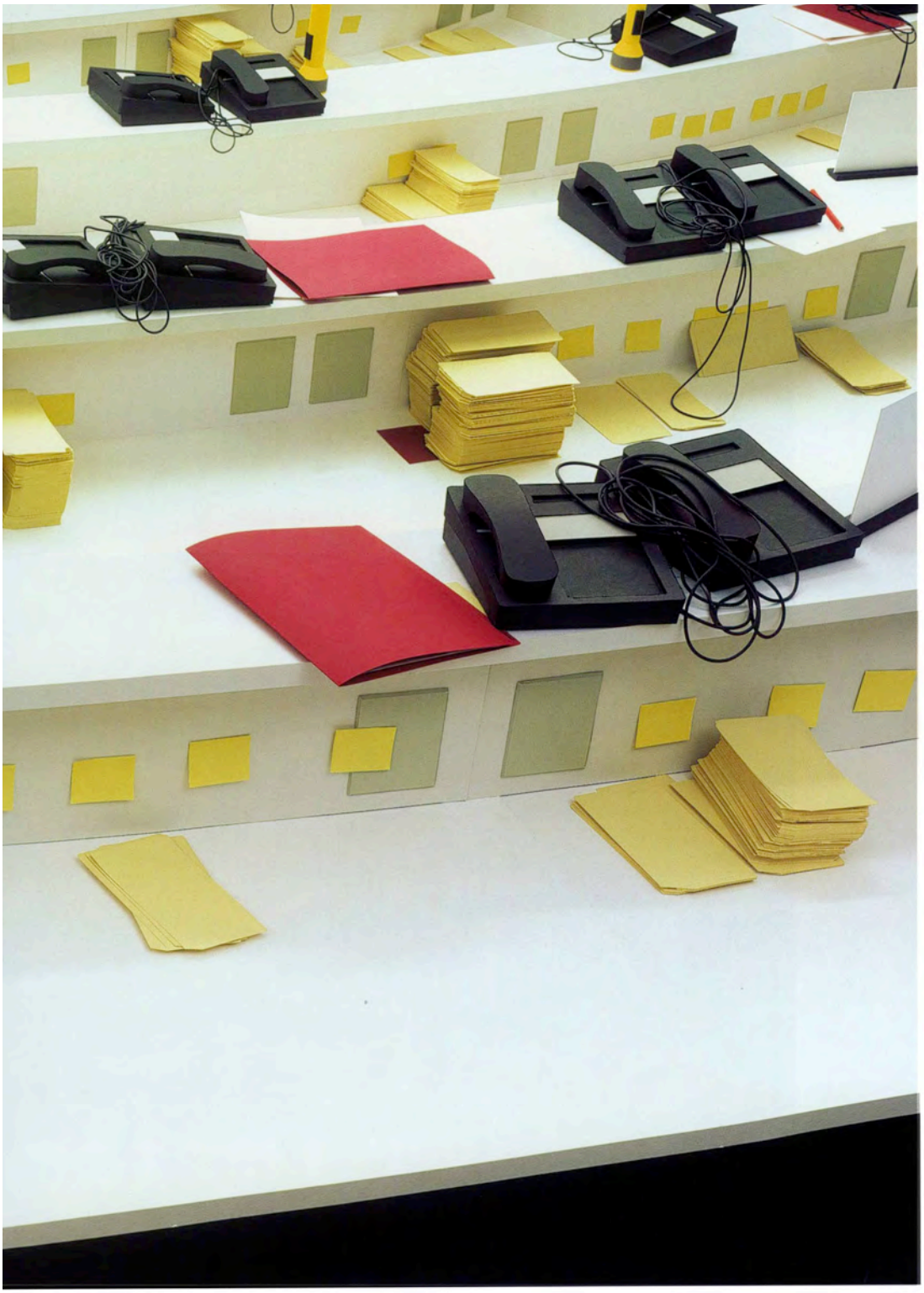
Stapel / Pile #1, 2001

Essay by Parveen Adams

Parveen, Adams. "Demand without Desire," *Portfolio.* 2003, pp. 15–21.

Poll, 2001

Parveen, Adams. "Demand without Desire," *Portfolio.* 2003, pp. 15–21.



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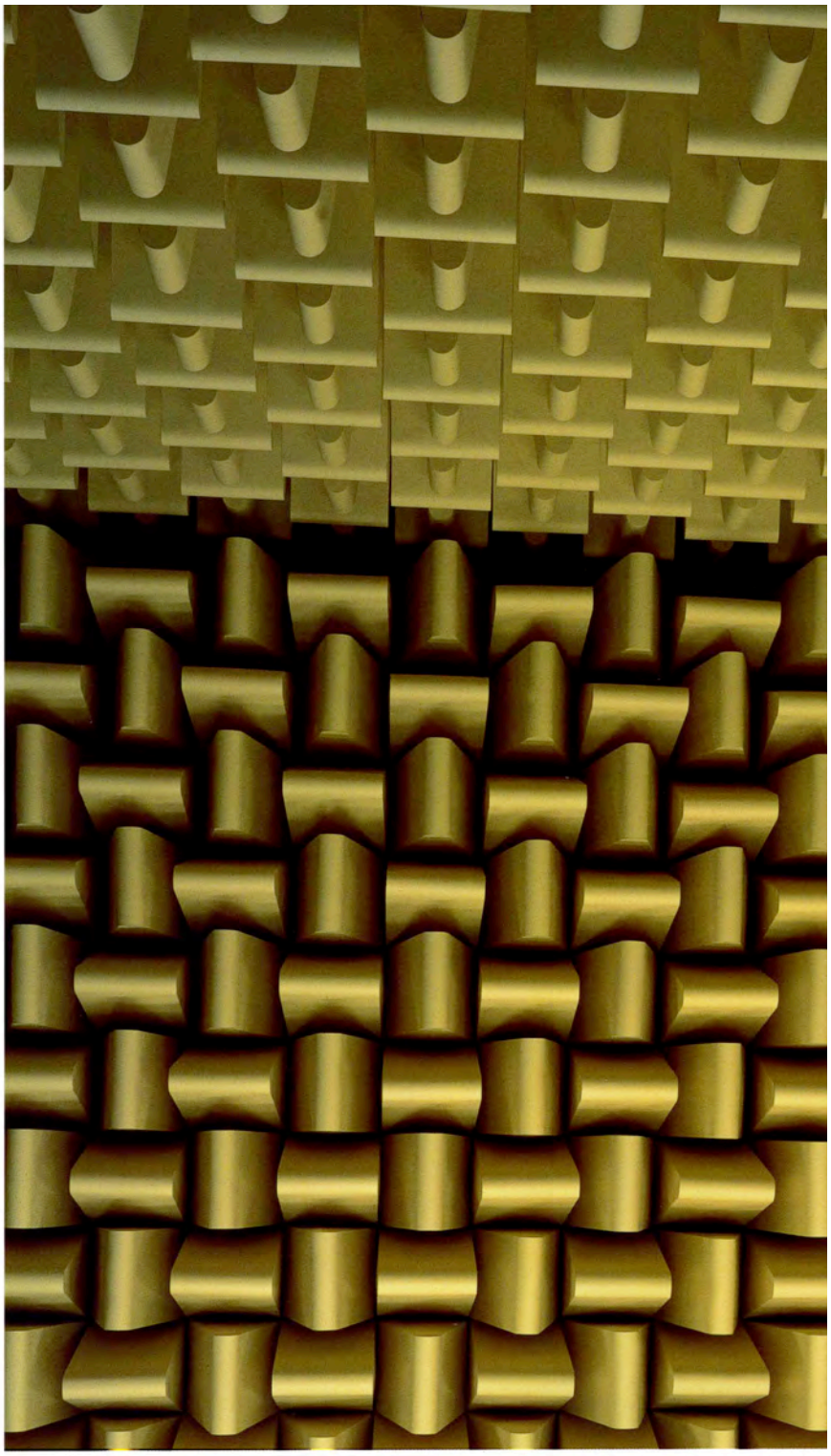

Labor, 2000

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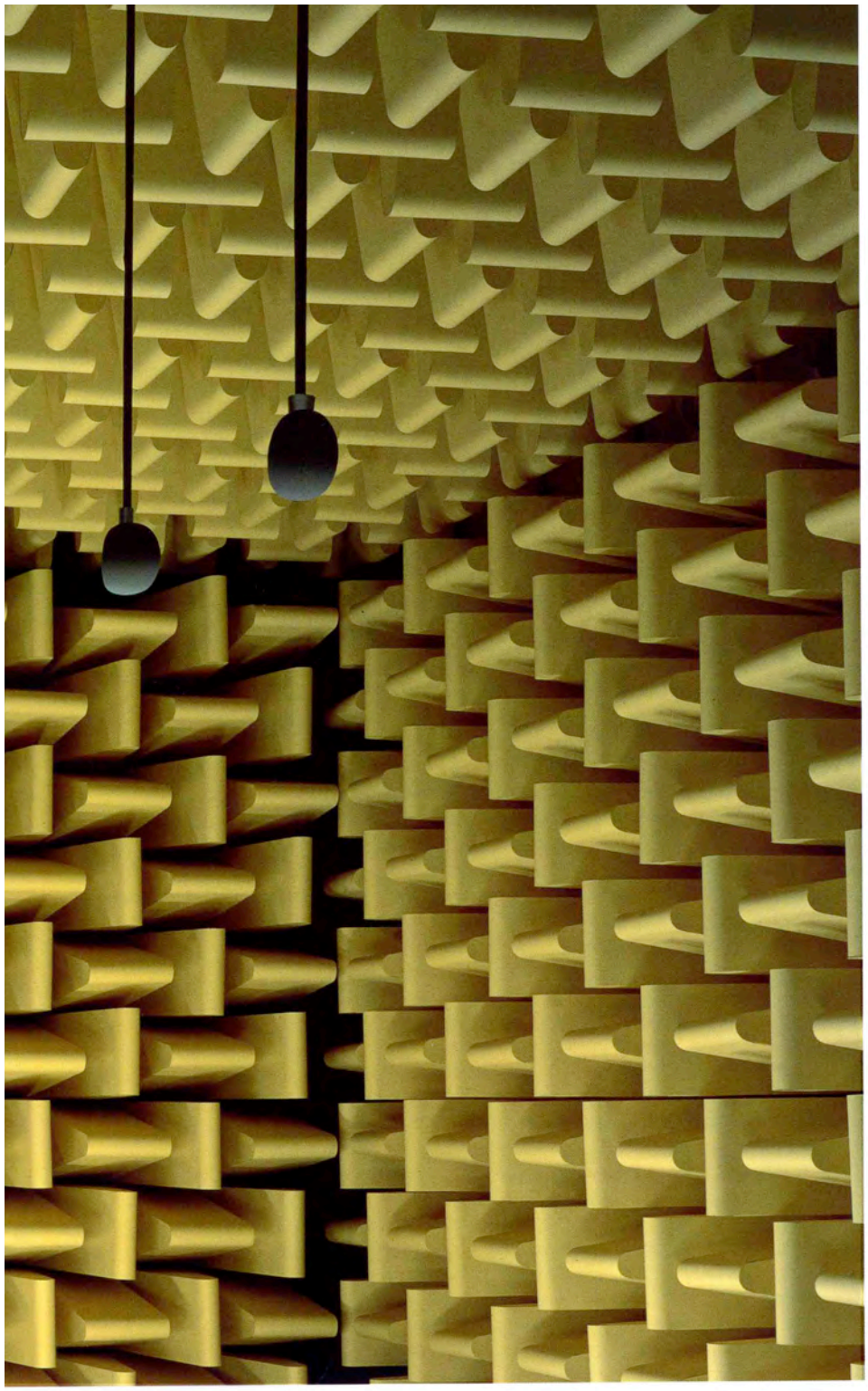

Parveen, Adams. "Demand without Desire," *Portfolio.* 2003, pp. 15–21.

Demand without Desire

The Work of Thomas Demand

BY PARVEEN ADAMS

Thomas Demand's photographs are in a world of their own. I knew of his work and I had probably seen one or two of these large and enigmatic pictures. But I was unprepared for the force of his show at the new Victoria Miro galleries early last year. The double-storey gallery displayed these large pictures to great advantage and allowed their enigma to envelop the space of the building. Unable to put words to the experience, I stood in an indeterminate relation to picture after picture. Confronted by these unruffled, silent office interiors, these unpeopled rooms, these blind balconies and these frozen garages, I no longer knew what it was that I was looking at. Neither beckoning nor sinister, these pictures couldn't be included in the world.

Demand's world is a paper world. The objects of Demand's photographs are models, models that he has built himself, models made of paper. Everything is paper, every architectural detail, every object, chair, a bed, a bowl, the multiple acoustic tiles of a sound lab, every blade of grass that makes a lawn. His world is paper and some of his titles underline the point – *Archive*, *Copyshop*, *Drafting Room*. His work involves the painstaking fabrication of sculptures, life-size rooms made of cardboard and paper that are then photographed at a scale of 1:1.

Why are these spaces and objects so unfamiliar? Objects are usually shot through with fantasy, in that they hold out some promise of desire fulfilled. Such are the objects that we recognise. Such are the objects in relation to which we position ourselves in our desire to have or avoid. Such are the objects that we take for granted and which allow us to feel in control of the world and ourselves. Demand's objects are not like this. He presents the object as it is, or at least as near to itself as it is possible to be. Yet we will see that this is by no means the indexical object of photographic theory. For it is Demand's challenge to the idea of the index that succeeds in undoing the perceived neutrality of objects in relation to desire.

Psychoanalysis has an understanding of the object in relation to desire. In a normal photograph the object would function to make it the photograph of an object. But Lacan bedevils this situation by insisting that the object is both a hole and the covering for a hole from the point of view of the subject's desire. The object may be indexical from the point of view of optics, but is a spectre from the point of view of the psyche. Normality turns out to be a veritable object lesson in revealing the imaginary identifications with which the subject devours the image. Yet in Demand's work, where the situation is not at all normal, the Lacanian interpretation falls. Demand's object is not the everyday object, nor is it the indexical object or the psychoanalytic object.

In Demand then an object is just an object. It does not promise anything and it does not hide anything. Neither is it a substitute for another object. Demand has overcome that ocular-centredness that Bernhard Waldenfels speaks of, a distortion of our perception that he says "is based on a misjudgement of our eyes that lets seeing become absorbed in the event..." But how does Demand strip away the symbolic and even the fantasmatic to conjure before us an object as little distorted by our perception as it might be? How does he enable us to see the object without its symbolic accretions? He corrects the misjudgement of our eyes. His pictures involve a different perception in which Lacan's object gaze, so central to the question of scopic desire, seems to play little part. Could it be that these are pictures without the gaze, without desire? Can it be that it is not the object gaze but the common or garden object itself that appears, for real?

This is what Regis Durand says about the work: "As photographs they capture some part of their subject's energy, its dull, obstinate, mysterious presence. Something was there, and they are linked to this object, its name, its meaning, its history... but nothing in these images vibrates; they do not elicit any projected desire or presence on our part. The space is entirely saturated, without depth and with no hint of anything outside it... this saturation, this slightly suffocating dullness, is at the heart of the artist's intentions. For, beneath their varying formal appearances, the underlying tonality of these works remains the same: there is the same saturation of motifs, the same unnatural light – a light that is only meant to give some sense of volume to the objects without suggesting any depth of field."

Let me comment on the idea that something was there – some object, its name, its meaning, its history – to which the photograph itself is linked. Such a connection is a feature of Demand's work. He works with photographic representations from archives or from images he constructs for himself. Quite often he works with a media image of notoriety, for example his picture *Bathroom: Beau Rivage*. What was the 'something' that was there? Ostensibly it was a newspaper photograph of a dead politician in the bathtub of a Geneva hotel, a photograph that was sent to the newspapers even before the matter was investigated. It caused a political furore. Demand of course was not the photographer. Nor is there a dead politician in his picture. But by using the image that was in circulation he modelled the bathroom in three dimensions, in paper, and then he photographed that model under particular light conditions that give 'some sense of volume to the objects without suggesting any depth of field'. Demand lights his pictures evenly so that there are no shadows. There are no signs of use, the paper is blank and has no texture – something he achieves by control of the scale of the models. [The models of interiors are life size and those of exteriors are the size that the photograph will be printed.] But what is he doing?

Office shows a room with paper all over the place and cupboards that are empty. In *Office* there is again 'something' from before – the storming of the Stasi offices by the citizens anxious to retrieve the files on them. The paper is blank and allows, as Demand himself points out, for the complete isomorphism of the signifier and the signified. For a sheet of paper is indeed where signifier and signified meet. It is a sheet of paper and it is made of paper.

It is not the event that matters, still less the subject matter of the work. Demand shows how the 'something' from before, grasps and enfolds the objects of the representation, so that they are framed as an event. Newspapers speak of the camera catching the 'event'. In truth it is the event that captures the camera and the objects of its photography.

To return to Durand's point about the absence of depth of field in Demand's pictures. Demand's object is what we are calling 'just an object' and is detached from the object gaze and desire. Lacan presented so vividly the opposite in relation to Holbein's painting, *The Ambassadors*. He insisted that the picture is not just about the space of geometry but also about the space of desire, indeed he introduced the

Parveen, Adams. "Demand without Desire," *Portfolio.* 2003, pp. 15–21.

Rekorder / Recorder, 2002

gaze in this context. It is important to my argument that gaze and desire are linked. But here I draw attention to the fact that Lacan specifically links the function of the gaze with the very depth of field that is missing from Demand's pictures. I quote from Seminar XI, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*:

"That which is light looks at me, and by means of that light in the depth of my eye, something is painted... something that is an impression, the shimmering of a surface that is not, in advance, situated for me in its distance. This is something that introduces what was elided in the geometrical relation – the depth of field, with all its ambiguity and variability, which is in no way mastered by me."

A little later Lacan says, "[That] which is gaze is always a play of light and opacity." In the light conditions of Demand's work there is little left of this gaze. And this suggests that there is little left of desire either.

The destabilisation of the index is achieved through the substitution of an everyday object. The original room is not given to us in the usual way through representation and neither is the paper room. We see neither the culturally perceived object nor a paper room. As spectators we perceive the photograph of the paper room as a real room and that is essential. But a room is a room and a paper room is a paper room. The picture has produced a split between the two. If the two rooms are not the same it is because something has been subtracted. They look similar, though one is a functional room while the other is a sculpture of the room. But it can still fool us into thinking it is the real room. Yet the paper model relates to the original object in such a way that its meaning is lost. We are confronted by the object, pure and simple, shorn of its particularity, its 'interest' we might say.

If there is an index here – the scene that is 'captured' in the photograph – nonetheless it bears little correspondence to what is glimpsed by the spectator. There is no simple referent. Paradoxically, the object that there is, is the very thing that puts the index into question. For it is no longer a secure object, saturated with meanings that locate both it and us, physically and psychically. It is a pictorial demonstration that our systems of perceptual meaning and our desires are embedded in objects that are far from neutral.

Exactly the same is true of Demand's recent video loops. You might expect the addition of movement and sound to alter the effect of the work, but again it merely registers what is front of the camera. Demand chooses to separate, once again, the object from desire. The meaning of the scene, that which would constitute an event, is absent. Nothing happens though the tape runs on and on – literally, in the case of *Recorder* where a paper tape runs through two paper spools that turn and turn against the auditory background of a linear, electronic soundtrack.

Demand's object is neither everyday nor Lacanian. It does not stand in the split of the real and reality. It does not stand in for something else. This object stands and it isn't the referent of representation. The photograph is no longer a memorial of a past but the opening onto a future.

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