

David Claerbout

The American Room (second movement)

26th March to 8th May 2010

Opening: Thursday, 25th March 2010, 7.00 – 9.00 p.m.

The works of Belgian artist David Claerbout interlink the media of photography and film, dissolving the barriers that separate them and calling in question the specific characteristics of the photographic and filmic image: static photographs are animated, while moving cinematographic images are slowed down or even brought to a standstill. A seemingly realistic spatiotemporal continuum turns out to have been subtly manipulated and changed by digital means, thus compromising the respective classic expectations of these media. Claerbout's new film and sound installation "The American Room (second movement)", which will be presented on the ground floor of the Rüdiger Schöttle Gallery, is no exception, for it involves the viewer in an exciting audio-visual experience full of surprising and disquieting ingredients.



"The American Room (second movement)" shows a concert held in the intimate atmosphere of a small concert room. The slow movement of the camera through the room and the Dolby-surround sound installation strengthen the viewer's and listener's feeling that they themselves are in the middle of the concert room. What irritates the viewer is the relation between movement and stillness: while the camera moves through the room, the people in the audience remain absolutely motionless. The impression results from a high degree of technical ingenuity, for the scene has been composited completely digitally: the people in the audience have not been filmed but photographed from all sides against a bluescreen to create a three-dimensional effect and then cut out and placed digitally in a photographed space. The movement of the camera was then

processed on a computer with the aid of an editing program. The music of the soundtrack in turn conveys a sense of movement through its rhythm.



"In the American Room the relation between movement and stillness is being translated very literally into the relation between breathing and holding the breath. The moments in which we hear the singer are also those moments in which she is offscreen - moments as long as a breath can hold."
 David Claerbout

David Claerbout was born in Kortrijk, Belgium, in 1967. He first studied painting at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp and then, after completing his studies, devoted himself to photography and cinematography. He now lives and works in Antwerp. A large solo exhibition at the Pinakothek der Moderne in Munich is planned for autumn 2010.

Candida Höfer

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Candida Höfer is undisputedly one of the leading international artist photographers of the present day. Her themes are mostly deserted interiors of artistic and cultural significance – places of knowledge, education and art appreciation, such as libraries and museums, prestigious interiors of palaces and churches, of edifices of secular and religious power, or places of cultural exchange, such as the foyers and auditoriums of famous theatres and opera houses.



Candida Höfer's large-format photographs are mostly objective in character. She prefers to use central perspective for her motifs or guides her camera into a kind of ideal diagonal. It is not the recognition effect of these prominent interiors that comes first and foremost in her work but rather the composition resulting from the choice of detail. What at first glance seems, by reason of its sheer perfection, to be entirely unspectacular turns out upon closer scrutiny to be a system of order inherent within the entire architecture, a system that recurs with rhythmical precision throughout the photographic image, from its foreground into its depths. Attributes distributed at random, such as a book left lying around, a forgotten bucket or a pushed-aside barrier, disturb the strictness of the system and tell us that people were present only moments before.

The title image of the exhibition is the famous Juno Room of the National Goethe Museum in Weimar. The eye-catching feature of this imposing interior is the Juno Ludovisi, a large plaster of Paris bust of Antonia Minor as the Roman goddess Juno. Candida Höfer shows this bright and empty room in a composition of extreme severity and clarity, almost tangibly evoking the spirit of the Enlightenment.

One of the focal points of the exhibition are Candida Höfer's photographs from Paris, Versailles and Fontainebleau. Her photographs of the Louvre, taken in 2005, count among the gems of museum photography, which is meanwhile a genre in its own right. Originally a royal palace, the Louvre museum has forever been a favourite motif of artists. Candida Höfer has concentrated on just a few of its galleries, including the Grande Galerie as the top-lit central axis of the building, the Salle des Caryatides and other rooms and galleries of painting and sculpture.

Motifs from the Opéra Garnier belong to a series of works devoted to the two large Parisian opera houses Palais Garnier and the Opéra Bastille. The exhibition shows a few selected works from the Palais Garnier, including the monumental staircase and the red and gold auditorium – scenes of triumphant representations in the style of the Second Empire.

Candida Höfer, born in Eberswalde in 1944, studied photography under Bernd Becher at the Düsseldorf Art Academy during the late 1970s and early 1980s. She lives in Cologne.

