

Press information

still

Claus Goedicke, Laura Letinsky and Evelyn Hofer

7 August - 23 October 2010

3 September, starting at 19h, opportunity to meet artists Claus Goedicke and Laura Letinsky

Following the exhibition *Do you see me?*, which was dedicated to portraiture, Galerie m Bochum is now turning its attention to another classical art genre – the still life. The gallery will be showing work groups by Claus Goedicke, Laura Letinsky and Evelyn Hofer (6 August – 23 October 2010).

still - the title of the exhibition is a word that has been used since the 17th century in German, Dutch and English to describe the genre that involves the depiction of inanimate objects: *Stilleben / stil leven / still life*. The Flemish and Dutch masters painted arrangements of transient precious objects and delicacies to remind the viewer of the finite nature of all life. The still life has always been regarded as well as an opportunity for the artist to showcase his skills in rendering perspective and the fall of light, in composition and coloring.

The photographs in the exhibition reveal the complexity and topicality the genre of still life still has today.

The protagonists in Claus Goedicke's (*1966 Cologne) pictures are for example a carrot, a used dishrag or a blood unit. They are placed centrally in his large-format photographs, resting on familiar but undefined surfaces. The concentration on an isolated everyday object gives the viewer a startling close-up view of things we have never scrutinized this carefully before – either as a whole or in such detail. We are suddenly brought eye-to-eye with our understanding of these ordinary things, our relationship to them, with memories and associations. Thus depicted, the items prompt us a desire to investigate their material presence, their symbolic character and their history for us personally.

While the “maverick objects” in Claus Goedicke's photographs are presented almost clinical, Evelyn Hofer (*1922 Marburg a.d. Lahn, Germany, † 2009 Mexico City) instead artfully deploys light and shadow to emphasize the plasticity of the objects and fruit in her photographs. The striving for perfection in her compositions is paired with an equally perfectionistic photographic and printing technique using the dye transfer process. Hofer places fruits of the field and orchard in dialogue with vases and bowls, wood and velvet, thus presenting a visually rich display of matte, textured or shiny deep purple surfaces, of varied volumes and colors. Her tableaux recall the classic, balanced compositions of Francisco de Zurbarán – one of Hofer's

Galerie m Bochum

still lifes is even explicitly a tribute to that painter. The results are both sensuous and irritating: When has the viewer ever been so tempted to reach for the cherry or apple in a picture?

Canadian photographer Laura Letinsky (*1962) presents a contemporary take on the typical Dutch and Flemish table scenes of the 16th and 17th centuries. Her still lifes quote the sliced-into pâtés, peeled lemons, glass goblets placed at the edge of the table and tilting plates of the *banketjes*. But Letinsky's tables, seemingly abandoned after a feast, hold not only fine silverware, exotic fruit and seafood – the detritus of civilization is scattered across their apparently endless surfaces, threatening to slide off the edge. Light and perspective foster the vexing impression of being suspended in time and space. The effect of the obviously staged arrangements of shiny, slippery, soft, artificial and natural objects fluctuates between lyrical grace, bizarre strangeness and inclinations of a deeper meaning. Laura Letinsky's pictures are images of a moment that has been halted, carrying the time-honored genre of still life onward into our present day.