

G E O R G K A R G L B O X

Press Release

LIDDY SCHEFFKNECHT

Georg Kargl BOX

Exhibition dates: March 15 – May 4, 2011

A Moving Standstill - Liddy Scheffknecht's Media Hybrids

When it comes to photography, movement and standstill are two characteristics that are usually treated as a contradiction. As a cut through space and time, the photographic medium not only arrests a moment, it also stages that moment in an image, statically and enduringly. Photography “embalms time”: with this—still today one of the most famous descriptions of the phenomenon—André Bazin sought to understand its distinction from a different medium: film. Film goes beyond photography, for it adds the very element that defines the limits of photography: the definition of a temporal sequence by way of movement.

On first glance, Liddy Scheffknecht's work *7 Minutes 13 Seconds* clearly corresponds to the characteristics of photography: static, immobile, and staged in an enduring fashion, a photographer operates before the outside wall of a building on the shutter release button of a stereo camera placed on a tripod. The photograph was not taken by the artist herself, but is a visual product made by an anonymous photographer that Scheffknecht appropriated, enlarged, and recontextualized. The discursive strategy of media appropriation serves to visualize the aforementioned differences between photography and film. This is made concretely visible in an elementary motif: the video of a shadow is precisely projected onto the photograph, and the referent of this shadow seems to be the photographer depicted. In so doing, the shadow reveals an important characteristic that goes beyond the photographic medium: movement. It slowly moves across the image and by way of its changing shape not only visualizes a temporal sequence, but also mixes photography and film. In this superimposition of two visual levels, Scheffknecht generates a media hybrid, whereby the limits separating the two media are both violated and visualized as transparent. Accordingly, the semantics of the image need to be sought in the difference between the two media.

This complex relationship is explored in a similar way in Scheffknecht's *6 Minutes 38 Seconds*. This series of photographs shows a bicyclist whose dynamic motion is suggested by the blurry audience in the background, while the cyclist himself seems focused, like a statue at the center of the picture. The temporally punctual shot of the cyclist, torn from a movement in a fragment of a second and fixed, is repeated in all the photographs of the series. The series of pictures—which itself is a well-known stylistic device to suggest temporal change and thus (filmic) movement across a series of images—thus seems ambivalent. It is not the bicyclist that changes position, but the apparently secondary visual motif of the shadow. In contrast to the depiction of the sportsman, the cyclist can be found in each of the images in a different form, thus evoking continuous movement. The contrast between statics and the changed form of a shadow highlights a “break” and/or a “difference” between the two visual layers, which in turn generates a media hybrid of photography and film. Beyond the aspect of media theory, the shadow can also be defined as an elementary stylistic device, which is also illustrated by *7 Minutes 13 Seconds*.

The dialectic between static and movement is underscored in the video projection onto the photograph by divorcing the shadow from its referent and/or the photographer. On first glance, its continuously changing shape seems not to be an “imprint” or the result of the photographer, but rather suggests an invisible light source. On closer examination, this proves to be an illusion: the shape of the shadow can thus not be explained as a logical visual transformation, but due to its autonomous form the shadow separates itself from the causality of its reference, and thus emerges as an independent “double”. As the only mobile element, it dominates the static elements and divorces itself from the narrative context.

The photograph’s proximity to reality as well as the course of the shadow, which initially appears to be logical, yet ultimately cannot be traced back to the photographer, makes Scheffknecht’s work slip into the uncanny-surreal.

By way of conclusion, if a silhouette appears in Scheffknecht’s picture that no longer possesses any referent in the photograph itself, it includes an additional authority addressed by the camera of the photographer: the viewer. As a perceiving authority, he or she is thus inscribed as the midpoint between model and depiction, reproduction and construction, just as between photographic “reality” and its restaging in film.

Text: Walter Moser

Translation: Brian Currid (zweisprachkunst.de)

Presscontact:
presse@georgkargl.com
+43-1-585 41 99
www.georgkargl.com

Opening hours:
Tue, Wed, Fri 11.00 – 19.00
Thu 11.00 – 20.00
Sat 11.00 – 16.00