PRESS COVERAGE

The Transportation of Place: Andrea Robbins & Max Becher

January 10 - March 5, 2003

When one critic of Philip Bery’s “The Transportation of Place” exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Photography suggested that his photography is too personal, Bery’s response was: “It’s a way of being who I am.”

Photography, as a medium, allows for the expression of the artist’s perspective and creativity. It offers a unique form of communication that transcends traditional boundaries, allowing viewers to explore the artist’s world through their lens. The art of photography is a fusion of visual elements, emotions, and experiences, making it an integral part of contemporary art. 

In the case of Bery’s exhibition, the photographer’s personal journey is evident, as he captures moments that resonate with the viewer. The works not only depict the physical landscapes but also evoke a sense of place and time, inviting the audience to reflect on their own experiences and memories. 

The use of light, composition, and color in Bery’s photographs plays a crucial role in creating an emotional connection with the viewer. Each image tells a story, reflecting the photographer’s unique vision and perspective. The exhibition serves as a platform for this exploration, presenting a collection of works that challenge conventional boundaries and inspire new ways of seeing.
photography

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A page from a photograph album is shown here, featuring an image of a person standing in front of a building.

rock, etc.

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morning in the city is paradoxically rare, and makes me feel very sad for him. (Well, as sad as you can feel for a guy who’s had a bad day.)

Compared to even the best of N Sync’s puppy-dog eyes, “Cry Me a River” sounds surprisingly mature.

Oberst’s defining change is a new political awareness—Lyfted comes with a wide-ranging protest number, “Let’s Not Stick Together to Love and to the Louvre,” in which he’s asked a chorus explicitly about Iraq when he performs it live. These sentiments were fore-shadowed on last winter’s Room Menace: Spanish, from Oberst’s side project Desaparecidos, a catchytex-utl that sounded like a grunge Western. Room Menace: Spanish is almost a concept album about suburbia’s sound and privatization, de-stressing Omaha. Life’s a bit more of an edge for people, Oberst links the evils of capitalism with the purity of women—the album begins with intimates from girls who consider romance without finance as a nuisance. (“I like a man that has money,” one says with a wry giggle.)

This is curious, because Oberst rarely relies on the depressive singer-songwriter tropes of blending ex-girlfriends for his music. Many bits of ob-

serving love-hate like “The Cigarettes (Hung from)” 2000’s Fevers of Arman, are the exception. His main subject is the unbearable fragility of contact between humans, in a solution for which he’s often encouraged an-against-the-world straggling: “Now that it’s June, we’ll sleep out in the gardens / And if it rains we’ll just stick into the mud,” he sings on “The Dif-

ference in the Shades,” 1998’s Letting Off the Happiness. His songs are the lyrical reports from a bo-

hemian dating scene where the boundaries betweenabaj and finding blue are constantly.

Rock’s sexual politics have al-

ways been tricky to navigate. When I

For insurance

Writers

Master Your Anxiety and Panic

The Family Institute

41 Northwestern University

Chicago Reader

February 14, 2003

Section D4

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Franz Ackermann: The Waterfall

October 19, 2002 – September 28, 2003 at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago

The Waterfall is the title of German artist Franz Ackermann’s site-specific wall painting which will be executed in the MCA’s second floor lobby. Painted directly on the 24-foot-high North lobby wall, Ackermann’s vibrant network of bold colors and forms will greet visitors as they enter the museum’s main entrance. Visually dazzling and disorienting, Ackermann’s paintings vacillate between abstract composition and representational cityscape or landscape and present the artist’s own fleeting impressions of particular places to which he has traveled. Embodying the excitement and flux of cities in today’s increasingly globalized society, Ackermann’s work also reflects the flurry of building activity, economic fluctuation, and cultural readjustment in his home base of Berlin. This will be the first time Ackermann’s work will be presented in Chicago. This exhibition is curated by Associate Curator Staci Boris.

MCA website: http://www.mcachicago.org/

With support from Lufthansa German Airlines

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Programs recently presented in association with the Goethe-Institut:

Photography: Andrea Robbins & Max Becher - The Transporation of Place
Andrea Robbins and Max Becher, Manifest from Bavarian By Law, 1995/96, chromogenic development print 35¼-by-30½ inches, Courtesy the artists and Sonnabend Gallery, New York

Andrea Robbins and Max Becher, Moses Pool from The Americans of Samaná, 1998-2001, chromogenic development print, 34¼-by-30 inches, Courtesy the artists and Sonnabend Gallery, New York

Andrea Robbins and Max Becher, Pawnshop, Lüderitz from
colonial remains, 1991, chromogenic development print, 25¾ -by-30 inches, Courtesy the artists and Sonnabend Gallery, New York

Andrea Robbins and Max Becher, Three Men from German Indians, 1997/98, chromogenic development print, 35¾-by-30¾ inches, Courtesy the artists and Sonnabend Gallery, New York

January 10 - March 5, 2003
at the Museum of Contemporary Photography, Columbia College, 600 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL, www.mocp.org

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EN/OF at the Julia Friedman Gallery

When: December 13, 2002 - February, 2003
Where: Julia Friedman Gallery, 118 N. Peoria, Chicago, IL 60607

Established by Robert Meijer, the EN/OF series initiated collaborations between contemporary visual artists and experimental musicians. EN/OF included nine art editions (photography, print, drawing, or flat object); each from an internationally known visual artist. Artists: Gerwald Rockenschaub / The Rip-Off Artist, Carsten Höller / Wander, Simon Starling / Oren Ambarchi, Sarah Morris / Jan Jelinek, Henrik Hakansson / Alejandra & Aeron, Angela Bulloch / TV Pow, Liam Gillick / Ekkehard Ehlers & Joseph Suchy, Olafur Eliasson / Heimir Björngulfsson, Tobias Rehberger / Stephan Mathieu.

Coming Together: an International Collaboration and Exhibition
The Little City Foundation Multi-Disciplinary Arts Center and Galerie Die Schlumper have both distinguished themselves for their extraordinary work in realizing the artistic expression of people with developmental disabilities.

The Chicago Cultural Center; 78 E. Washington St.; October 18th - December 30th, 2002, http://www.ci.chi.il.us/Tourism/CulturalCenter


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Gerhard Richter: 40 Years of Painting - The Art Institute of Chicago; 111 S. Michigan Ave.; (312) 443-3600; June 22nd to September 8th, 2002; http://www.artic.edu/artic/exhibitions/gerhardrichter.html
Photo exhibit examines multicultural identity crisis

by

LEA SILVERMAN

1/15/2003

A photograph of a German man dressed in American Indian costume might suggest a case of an identity crisis to the viewer. However, when this image is displayed with photographs depicting an American town built in Bavarian style and traditional European architecture constructed in Africa, they represent -- strongly -- the global phenomenon of displaced culture.

In "The Transportation of Place," a new exhibit at The Museum of Contemporary Photography at Columbia College in downtown Chicago, photographers Andrea Robbins and Max Becher document communities that have been drastically influenced by a foreign culture. The exhibition, which opened Jan. 10, will be running through March 5.

"There is not a proportional relationship between distance and difference," Becher said. The photographs "are examples of [traveling] far, expecting [the] culture to be very different and finding it very familiar."

Robbins and Becher's interest in cultural anomalies arose from their personal experiences. Robbins grew up in a Jewish family that lived in an English-settled Massachusetts town. Becher was born in Germany and immigrated to the United States. The two photographers are now based in New York City.

"In America, any place you grow up is a new place composed of other places," Robbins said.

An extreme example of this is recorded in "Bavarian by Law," a series of photographs of Leavenworth, a small town in the Cascade Mountains of Washington state that imposed a mandatory Bavarian architecture style in order to attract tourists.

"Bavaria by Law" shows a German-style town in America," said Natasha Egan, associate director of The Museum of Contemporary Photography and the curator of this exhibition. "This is the New World trying to look like the Old World."
Robbins and Becher often photograph people and places that are stereotypically considered to be tourist attractions. However, their straightforward presentation includes a commentary on globalization, explained Egan.

In the series "Colonial Remains," Robbins and Becher photographed remnants of German architecture in Namibia, Africa. Although the deteriorating European-style architecture is a popular tourist attraction, Robbins and Becher intend their photographs to draw attention to the meaning behind the presence of these buildings.

"I think the main message is to show how there are these old forms of globalization," Egan said. "Most people think about this word in terms of the Internet or Starbucks, but colonialism has been around in different forms."

Although Becher notes that the West has colonized more than any other culture in history, the series "German Indians" documents a completely different genre of cultural appropriation. These photographs show Germans dressed as American Indians. According to the photographers, American Indian culture is extremely popular in Germany.

"Cultures overlap each other everywhere you turn; it is a very large subject," Egan said. "[Robbins and Becher] are interested in the reverse -- where the stereotype is not what you would expect."

Egan identified Robbins and Becher’s work as part of a current trend in contemporary art and photography that involves geopolitical commentary.

"Earlier photographs were based in exoticism and the study of people who are different," Egan said. "You still get that with National Geographic showing exotic places. We can't avoid interest in exotic places -- in contemporary art, someone is analyzing that."