

MYRIAM THYES - BEYOND GLASGOW

Opening: 18 August 2013, 11:30 am

Exhibition: 18 August - 15 September 2013

In her solo show at Kunstverein Aurich, the Dusseldorf based swiss artist Myriam Thyes will exhibit her photo series GLASGOW STYLES and her new video APOTHEOSIS OF GLASGOW HIGH-RISES.

The video will be projected at the ceiling of the central space of the pavilion.

The groups of photographs (C prints mounted on aluminium) will be placed in the two side rooms of the pavilion.

Some photos will be shown in larger lightboxes - for example in the alcoves below the video.



GLASGOW STYLES

Myriam Thyes, 2009. www.glasgow-styles.de

Photo series, about 80 images in all, inkjet print on Aluminium DiBond, each 60 x 40 cm (and a few different formats).

This series of photos and photomontages reflect the artist's impressions of the post-industrial city of Glasgow and her inhabitants. Thyes has drawn a social portrait and created a kind of contemporary "Historienbilder" (historical paintings). The current modernisation and reorganisation of the city stands in sharp contrast to the residential periphery with its high-rises and small family homes, and as well to the living scottish traditions, like Pipe Bands and highland games. While a part of the population works hard and with enthusiasm transforming Glasgow into a centre for services, tourism and culture, many descendants of the former working class remain without jobs and depend on social security. The formerly many and important dockyards for shipbuilding, for example, now only get a commissions from the military and the petrol industry ... The narrow lanes in the centre of Glasgow alternate with the larger roads and show the "backs" of the goodly victorian blocks - here employees have a cigarette and coffee break, a chat, beside the rubbish containers. The omnipresence of surveillance cameras, even in the most humble residential areas, struck the artist as much as the high number of (too) young mothers. In the typical scottish weather with its fast changing light, Myriam Thyes caught views of buildings, people and urban accessories. She combined photos to diptychs, triptychs and groups. And she used some photomontage, placing large persons - photographed in the shopping zone - "back into their living area". This and the geometrical image formation give these series a certain monumentality and strength.

From the text by Michael Staab 'The Whole Picture. Second Take':

'... Now, in her series entitled Glasgow Styles, Myriam Thyes takes the consistent next step, and combines the realistic, serial and documentary potential of photography with the formative, allegorising and metaphor-creating traditions of the fine arts. She compiles individual snapshots into sequences that make lapses of time and changes of perspective visible, and also mounts photographs taken at geographically differing locations and at staggered points in time into altogether new pictorial inventions. The citizens of Glasgow, some of them mounted into the original pictures, happened to be at other locations in the same town at the time the pictures were taken. Thus the right people are in the pictures, only, as stated above, at a different place and at another time. So residents of the socially weaker outskirts push their prams through their own home surroundings in the photo-montages, although Thyes photographed the people concerned while they were out shopping in town. The divergence thus highlighted between space, time and individual remains tangible in Thyes's works, and conveys to the viewer a profound sense of the mood of the people in this city. ...'

From the text by Malcolm Dickson 'Glasgow Styles':

Myriam Thyes 'Glasgow Styles' delineates how Glasgow as a contemporary city reflects its past through the present. Initially what seems like a random visual derive is coherently held together through a detailed narrative that the artist has perceptively encountered and which helps to inform Thyes' personal topography of our city. This topography is the city's changing face – a place historically and contemporaneously of contrasts and tensions. [...]

Several of Thyes' images include high-rise tower blocks. Glasgow has a higher concentration of high-rise buildings than any other city in Britain which were built as a fast and cost-effective solution to the problem of overcrowding. But these were often poorly planned and constructed on the cheap, which has led to them to deteriorate and become 'insanitary magnets for crime and deprivation'. From the early 1990s, the municipal authority however have been undertaking a programme of demolishing the worst of these and this continues with the gradual dismantling of the Red Road estate (interestingly it is also here that there exists an innovative partnership to deliver a range of arts based programmes and residencies).

Apotheosis of Glasgow High-Rises

Myriam Thyes, 2013, HD video, 8:00, color, stereo, for projection at the ceiling.

www.thyes.com/political-symbols/apotheosis-glasgow/



Gazes into the often changing sky of Glasgow: In the city centre, Victorian buildings stand in a grid of streets filled with cars and buses. Towards the periphery, high-rises are dominating the landscape; the tower blocks stand in the never ending noise of the urban motorway M8. Once, these high-rises were ultra-modern and popular, but meanwhile they are old and neglected, partially abandoned, and many of them are being demolished. Some former inhabitants romanticise "their" good high-rises, others don't want to see them anymore and prefer smaller family homes. An apotheosis of changing ways of urban life...