

“OSTKREUZ CROSSROADS” – People of(f) FhainXberg

The District's History of Tomorrow

The next chapter in Günther Schaefer's photographic Berlin Cycle has been opened with the works now at hand. Following the long-term observation of the metropolis over 25 years under the title "Berlin - images from two millennia", there begins a new systematic photographic phase under the project name “OSTKREUZ CROSSROADS” – People Of(f) FhainXberg, accompanied by a new exposition concept.

In his previous 25 year creative phase, Günther Schaefer dedicated his black and white photography mainly to the time of and after the so-called German reunification, the people of the city and the traces they left, and the curiosities and phenomena that the melting pot Berlin produced.

In 2014, the 25th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin wall, he is making the first presentations of his new photographic concept, which is primarily dedicated to the "next generation" of this metropolis. Artists of all genres represent the city's diverse artistic scenes in the creative triangle of Friedrichshain, Kreuzberg and Neukölln. These new, avant-garde creators of art cry out for colour photography. To answer this call, Günther Schaefer, as a passionate black and white photographer, made peace with the medium of colour after more than two decades.

A further important component of Günther Schaefer's new concepts deals with the unmistakable and ever increasing gentrification gripping these city districts. The boroughs of Mitte after the German reunification in the 90s and Prenzlauer Berg in the 00s exemplify how rapid gentrification and "turbo-capitalism" pushed aside the young, creative people crucial in defining the local flair and streetscapes, stole their existence, and finally forced them to leave. This development has been apparent for some time in the three city districts first mentioned.

The post-wall generation assertively shaped the public places that form Günther Schaefer's photographic backdrops. They are today an integral part of these boroughs' identity - the flood of international visitors, who also explore this facet of Berlin, perceive them likewise, are inspired by them and spread their experiences around the world. Günther Schaefer: "This prevailing form of "street art" will become a victim of the continuing gentrification, just as it became in other places. Thus my new photographic theme deals today with a substantial part of Berlin's art history of tomorrow. The locations, a fascinating kaleidoscope of trash, high-class trash, graffiti, morbid architecture, the remnants of a GDR past and shrill, attractive individualists will soon belong to the past here as well. Everything will become sleek, clean and tidy, and for a young, creative person no longer affordable. All this will go hand in hand with the loss of the extraordinary magic these city districts exude by day and above all in a pulsating night life."

The second part of Schaefer's exhibition concept comprises studio images; shots that appreciatively express the model's natural personality with classical photographic technique. The constant goal of these sessions is the realisation and workmanlike implementation of jointly developed ideas - impulses uniting the photographer's very own handwriting and the model's creative potential in a joint productive process,

resulting in a photographic synthesis.

Future presentations will embody these aspects conceptually in the form of "dynamic exhibitions". The coming expositions always comprise several events that go beyond a pure presentation of photography: Vernissage, finissage and one or more special events belong in future to Schaefer's standard programme. The basic idea is not only to present as many creative genres as possible but also to coalesce them. Literature,

film, music and performance art play a large role in this and testify to the creative spectrum of the culture metropolis Berlin in live shows. The artists in these events are predominantly those serving as models in the exhibits and presented in portrait. In its widest sense, each exposition creates a specific form of "three-dimensionality": the visitor can so to say hear and experience the photo through live acts and audience dialogue - in contrast to the "digital 3D hype" these days - and thus grasp it quite naturally.

Günther Schaefer: "A further mainstay in the concept of the "dynamic exhibition" is the running exposition's continual replenishment with topical, brand new photo material; so no presentation ends with the same image dramaturgy as the vernissage. From event to event, the exhibition will be modified and extended with works from the latest photo sessions. This will produce an additional tension for all participating actors and consumers and visible signs of wear on the audience can be avoided. In addition, these multi-media events will be continuously accompanied by slide-shows and film documents about my work and its creative environment. Berlin, for generations a constant inspiration and inexhaustible elixir for all the senses. "See thinking – think seeing".

Günther Schaefer June 2014 (Lectorate: C. Balbach, Translation: P. Cooksey)

More information: <http://www.berliner-mauer-kunst.net>



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