



Vibrationsalarm - About Sabine Wild's photographs

The sound that would best fit these pictures would be a strong, humming drone, like the iridescent sounds of bustling agitation emanated by swarms of bees in their hives or hordes of people mingling about. Within the pictures of Sabine Wild, however, not a single trace of life can be found: All signs of life have already disappeared beneath the rich, thick streams of color, perhaps having fled from this unreal, unsure world where even stable buildings are thrown into dizzying vibration while walls sway, windows become blind, and roofs slip off. The vistas float through the air with an effortless ease, their contours blurry and their planes of vision fuzzily ambiguous. Some scenes seem completely frozen over. Others dissipate within streaks, like opening your eyes under water – almost as if Sabine Wild has flooded the object of the photograph in order to unhinge it from reality. Indeed, the sound of an endlessly buzzing drone fits these optical phenomena with their eerie, strangely engaging effects.

Lurking just behind the streaks variegating the surface of the pictures is the familiar: Well-known icons of architecture like New York's Brooklyn Bridge, Berlin's New National Gallery and Essen's Zollverein coal mine are altered, taking on a radically different look. Sabine Wild first uses these icons as motives to produce technically flawless "old photos." In the second artistic phase of her work, she submits these photos to image editing, painting over them with a digital paintbrush so the colors bleed into one other, become multi-layered and appear rolled out like dough, entirely altering the tectonics of the space within the pictures.

This creative alteration could be seen as a process of interpretation, using a synthetic technique to call into question the reality pictured within the "old photos." The intentional blurring and cloudy ambiguity brings into focus a singular plane of the picture that was previously hidden beneath the brilliantly immaculate surface. It is strongly reminiscent of the way Gerhard Richter employs an imprecise photographic haziness within his paintings – a technique Sabine Wild once again inverts from painting back into photography to bring in a gestural strength of expression. Well-known artists before Sabine Wild have also used transformational processes to alter structures firmly established within the architectural canon: Thomas Ruff, with his series "l.m.v.d.r.," made the buildings of Mies van der Rohe disappear while Hiroshi Sugimoto let colors and forms fade and fizzle out in "Architectures." This comparison serves to reveal Sabine Wild's decidedly individual path of architectural photography even more clearly. Her objective is not the dissolution of "media icons" but the reevaluation and appreciation of the deeper facets found within the "old photos," with digitally enhanced colors and textures becoming the central themes.

Sabine Wild's latest series, „Freizeit.Architektur.NRW“ ("Freedom.Architecture.NRW") offers richly illustrative material showing the conversion of surfaces and textiles into finely tempered sentiment: Bucolic sound-colors of grass green - baby blue - rust red extracted from flora, the heavens and brick. The hollow pathos of faulty human reasoning gyrating through the wide-open heavens of an amusement park. A French fry stand positioned next to a bridge pillar like a burnished red jewel case outshining the concrete-encasement of real life. Lava found in dumps and brick-baking coal mines conjugating the shadows of hope and murky darkness.

Images of reality disintegrate into walls of fogs and melt into surreal atmospheres, dreamy picturesque landscapes and optical vibrations. Hidden deep within the photographs is the invisible source of visual sound embodying itself within the constant humming drone accompanying the view of the observer. At times the sound swells to a menacing roar; at times it is restrained to a mellifluous burble; its pitch and timber change from picture to picture. But throughout it all, somehow, the humming seems so strangely familiar...

Dr. Christian Welzbacher, 2008
art historian