

on View April 8 through June 10, 2000

John Davies, Angela Grauerholz, Katarzyna Kozyra, Andreas Müller-Pohle, Seton Smith

CHICAGO, April 2000 -- From April 8 through June 10, 2000, The Museum of Contemporary Photography, Columbia College Chicago, will present exhibitions by five prominent contemporary artists working with photography: John Davies (UK), Angela Grauerholz (Germany), Katarzyna Kozyra (Poland), Andreas Müller-Pohle (Germany), and Seton Smith (USA, resides in France). The works on view have never before been shown in Chicago.

In his silver gelatin prints, John Davies concentrates on investigating the modern landscape as it has evolved from natural to industrial environments. Although his work is informed by documentary photography, he does not present exclusively "objective" perspectives. He is famous for his ability to capture the "edge" between the urban and the rural, with precision and calculated detachment. These rich, black-and-white images of arresting open spaces reveal urban development both in and out of harmony with the natural environment.

Angela Grauerholz's work "Sententia I to LXII," 1998, is comprised of sixty-two images housed in a specially made wooden cabinet that resembles a piece of antique library furniture, a fine retail display case, or, when closed, a tomb. To see the images, the viewer must slide the photographs from the case one at a time. The massive cabinet suggests permanence, importance, and authority. The photographs, however, are ambiguous and moody, soft-focus images of transitional spaces: windows, doors, railroad tracks, a fleeting glimpse of passers-by. This juxtaposition of image content and an unusual presentation raises questions regarding the veracity of information housed in historic archives and underscores the role of the archive as a place of intellectual "travel."

Katarzyna Kozyra made headlines in 1999 as the Polish representative at the Venice Biennale with her video piece entitled "The Men's Bathhouse," for which she gathered footage by entering a men's bathhouse in Budapest disguised as a man and carrying a hidden camera. At The Museum of Contemporary Photography she will be exhibiting a similar piece, "The Bathhouse," 1997, shot clandestinely in a women's spa in Budapest. This video installation, comprising one large video projection and five video monitors, opens with Ingres's painting "The Turkish Bath." The painting, which depicts women as idealized figures fitting perfectly into a circular composition, provides a stark contrast to Kozyra's video footage, which follows. By presenting the nude figure in its unashamed, unabashed form, she raises issues of voyeurism and privacy rights, as well as drawing attention to the fact that uncorrected, unimproved nudity is not often visible in our culture.

Andreas Müller-Pohle, a founding editor of European Photography magazine, believes that digital work is the purest form of the photographic medium owing to its universality. His "Digital Scores I, II, and III," 1995—1998, are digital interpretations of the earliest known photograph, Nicephore Niepce's "View from his Study," taken in

1826. In these works, Müller-Pohle has digitized Niepce's photograph, which presumably had an eight-hour exposure time, translated it into alphanumeric signs, and output it as ink-jet prints. The information contained in the resulting seven million bytes has been distributed over eight squares which are hung four across and two high, with each frame installed eight centimeters apart. In contrast, Müller-Pohle's video piece "Entropia," 1996, shows an industrial shredder destroying photographs, lithographic films, and framed pictures. "What I don't see, I photograph. What I don't photograph, I see," Müller-Pohle has said.

Seton Smith's work "Pale Guide to Transparent Things," 1997, examines the convergence of spaces: interior/exterior, public/private, real/imagined, past/present. This series is presented as an installation of large-scale (six-by-four feet) color transparencies mounted on light boxes and arranged on the walls and floor of the gallery. Recontextualized in the museum, the images interact with as well as change and add to the architecture of the space itself. Smith's use of soft focus, tight cropping, and monochromatic colors alters the real objects she photographs, including Chinese-style chairs, seats in an auditorium, and institutional fluorescent lights. The resulting series of ambiguous images share a formal unity despite their disparate subjects. These images are unresolved, yet the scenes pictured seem vaguely familiar, as if recalled from dream or memory. "I create scenes, but they are open to interpretation. People project their own experiences onto them," Smith says of this work.

A public opening reception will take place on Friday, April 7, 2000 from 5 to 7 pm in the galleries of The Museum of Contemporary Photography, international hors d'oeuvres and refreshments will be served. As part of the "Words of Vision" lecture series Katarzyna Kozyra and Andreas Müller-Pohle will speak at 1 pm on Saturday, April 8, 2000, in The Museum of Contemporary Photography, located at 600 South Michigan Avenue. General admission to lectures is \$5; \$3 for students; and free for museum members and Columbia College Chicago students, faculty, and staff.

For the first time ever, from June 12 through June 24, the museum will remain open during its installation period. During this time the public is invited to visit the museum for a look "behind the scenes" as the staff (often with the artists themselves) unpacks, lays out, assembles, and hangs works by the next group of artists including Anna & Bernhard Blume (Germany), Jim Dine (United States), Flor Garduño (Mexico), and Candida Höfer (Germany). The museum is free and open to the public weekdays from 10 until 5 pm (Thursdays until 8 pm) and Saturdays from 12 to 5 pm. Gallery tours are free and available by appointment.

The exhibitions, presentations, and related programs of The Museum of Contemporary Photography are supported in part by grants from The Chicago Community Trust; The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation; the Sara Lee Foundation; the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency, and the National Endowment for the Arts. This project is also sponsored in part by LOT Polish Airlines and Halina's European Restaurant & Deli. This ongoing series of exhibitions is principally sponsored by American Airlines, the official airlines of The Museum of Contemporary Photography. Press prints are available upon request.