

Matthias Hoch
BER

For the first time, German photographer Matthias Hoch presents his comprehensive series "BER" (2017–2020), a visual exploration of the unfinished new airport for the reunited capital. The exhibition comprises a selection of twelve colour photographs and a three-channel video installation. In 2012, only a couple of weeks before the new Berlin airport was supposed to commence operations, the opening was suddenly cancelled due to construction defects and finally took place last year, 2020. Having conceived the idea right after the initial delay, Hoch was only able to begin his project in 2017: in three years, he captured all areas of the airport with an analogue large-scale camera and a digital film camera. Once Europe's biggest building site, still devoid of finish and function, the airport had at that point laid dormant for a decade.

Meticulously composed with a keen eye for light, colour, and geometric structure, the photographs show the vast spaces of the airport and details of the deserted infrastructure in a state of latency: thick layers of dust covering the stylish but outdated airport furniture, high-end technology like ten-year-old scanners partly ripped out to be replaced by up-to-date models, display cases are covered in wood and thus reminiscent of rows of minimalist sculpture, an empty train station frequented only by ghost trains to prevent mould. Characterized by a sharpness and the utmost attention to detail, although starkly reduced in their motifs, Hoch's lucid compositions open up photographic depiction to metaphor and accomplish the paradox of translating documentary photography's topographical precision into abstract images. Hoch is careful to exclude or conceal any detail that make it possible to clearly locate or identify his motifs. Like his renown series of train stations in East Germany from the late 1980s, for which he was one of the first artists in the GDR to use colour photography, the works constitute what Thomas Weski calls "analytical cuts through time."

The photographs and even more so the hallucinatory video installation are reminiscent of tableaux vivants, the precursor of freezing life that would eventually become possible with the nineteenth-century invention of the photographic apparatus. In Hoch's images deliberately devoid of any human beings, the switched-off equipment and the unmoved objects become actors. Thus rendered as still-lives, reality becomes distant and de-familiarized, providing room to observe and critically analyse the spaces around us. The airport, the epitome of modern nation-states' high paced economic success, technological progress, and global exchange, is caught in a state of eerie standstill, a place with a lost vision, somewhat fallen out of the linear order of time

Matthias Hoch was born Radebeul (near Dresden) in 1958 and lives and works in Leipzig. His solo exhibitions include Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst Leipzig, Fotohof Salzburg (both 2016), Kunstmuseum Magdeburg, Museum Kurhaus Kleve (2013), Ludwig Forum für Internationale Kunst Aachen, Guardini Galerie, Berlin (both 2006), and Kunsthalle Bremen (2002). Recent group exhibitions include Kunstsammlungen Chemnitz (2020), Kunstmuseum Magdeburg (2019), Centre de la photographie Genève (2018), Paço Imperial, Rio de Janeiro (2017), Busan Museum of Art (2015), Moscow Museum of Modern Art (2014), Fotomuseum Winterthur, ZKM Karlsruhe (both 2013), and Los Angeles County Museum of Art (2009). His works are part of several important public collections, such as MoMA, New York, Albertina, Vienna, Museum der bildenden Künste Leipzig, Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden and Berlinische Galerie, Berlin. This is Matthias Hoch's third exhibition at Galerie Nordenhake.

Matthias Hoch's photo book BER with essays by Kathrin Röggla and Thomas Weski will be published by Spector Books this July. A book launch with the artist and Spector Books will take place at the gallery on September 3, Fr 6pm.

Gallery Weekend Summer Special: June 18-20, Fr–Sun 12am–7pm
Artist Talk Matthias Hoch with Florian Ebner (Centre Pompidou, Paris), June 19, Sa 5pm

Exhibition: June 18–September 4, 2021, Opening hours: Tue–Sat 11 am–6pm
Please contact the gallery for further information and press images



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