

L.A. Galerie Lothar Albrecht presents:

# Peter Bialobrzeski "Heimat"

January 12 to February 19, 2006

You and your friends are cordially invited to the opening on Thursday, January 12, at 7 p. m.

The artist will be present.

*"...beauty is a problem for modern art. There's not really supposed to be any. If it's beautiful, it's suspect. Beauty is ideologically unsound. Like the concept of home. It often sounds dull. And often it carries associations of marginalization, confinement, compulsion, bizarre fixations, yearning for freedom to relax, nature mysticism, social traditionalism, etc. etc. So it's quit obvious – Heimat is a work of escapism, neo-Romantic vamping! Off to the wishing well, the idyll, then.*

*Awareness of this reflex spurred Peter Bialobrzeski on during the job. He wanted to circumvent the dogma that art has to be critical, detached, and unemotional, "cool" and cool. He wanted to challenge predictable poses and reactions. Wanted to set off in the confidence of finding things beautiful that you're not allowed to find beautiful: ordinary, splendid, uneventful, magical, prosaic German landscapes.*

Arie Hauptmeier  
in Peter Bialobrzeski "Heimat", Hatje Cantz Publisher, 2005

"Thus a typical German feeling for landscape developed, filled with all our romantic notions. We always see the German countryside through a special prism that turns it into the landscape of the soul - with all the ambivalence that implies, since our less admirable fears are there as well. But what is important is that it is never the same picture. That too is okay, because at least the right questions remain open as long as the fragmentation persists."

Edgar Reitz, Die Zeit, December 2004

Heimat

I always used to head south. Later I photographed the South East-India, Nepal, Burma, Thailand, and then the megacities of the Asian tiger economies. There I could trust myself to give vent to my fascination and even find things beautiful.



"Heimat, # 24", 2004

Around the same time, German photography developed a taste for garage doors, cardboard boxes, and pale, pimply young managers rendered with supposedly critical detachment. The pictures purported to be documentary and objective. To advocates of the style, any emotion was suspect, any touch of beauty a betrayal of the supposedly new German photography. And indeed it suited the new era. The companies of the New Economy and their journalist beaters discovered the apparent "authenticity" for themselves, thereby conferring a kind of credibility on themselves without realizing that they could no longer sell anything as old wine in old bottles. Of course, even New German Photography, whose pioneers justly attacked reach-me-down pictorial concepts with their pictures, is nothing more than an aesthetic pattern.

Later, pasty-faced young people were displayed on I hoardings outside the window of my studio in Hamburg, advertising for a large German company. This was the first time the idea occurred to me to photograph something "beautiful," though it did not have to be beautiful the German Landscape. What clinched it was my appointment to a post at the HfK art college in Bremen in 2002, which meant I would have to spend at least eight months of the year in Germany.

It therefore seemed like a good idea to get cracking with the job late that summer. I wanted to be clear in my mind what my relationship with my image of Germany is, the country that shaped me emotionally and culturally - in short, my home country. It may seem a little conservative, but the paintings of Caspar David Friedrich have influenced my notions of "German Landscape" more than those of Anselm



L. A. Galerie Lothar Albrecht  
Domstrasse 6 - II. floor - 60311 Frankfurt - Tues-Fri 12.00-19.00, Sat 11.00-16.00  
phone: +49-69-28 86 87 - fax: +49-69-28 09 12 - l.a.galerie-frankfurt@t-online.de - www.lagalerie.de



"Heimat, # 1", 2003



"Heimat, # 13", 2005



"Heimat, # 17", 2003

Kiefer. And the Monk by the Sea is for me the quintessential visual rendering of the German landscape of the soul. Depressive and immensely fun of hope. Supposedly the first "modern" picture, it corresponds to the discovery of my own "photographic modernism" - the pictures of American colour photographer Joel Sternfeld. His American Prospects in 1987 was largely responsible for my decision to abandon black-and-white photography. In the pictorial scheme for Heimat, mention is made of both Friedrich and Sternfeld, as well as various other contemporaries. That is intentional and meant as a tribute. But mine is a different theme - my photographs projection surfaces of post-post-modernist man's yearning for nature, though the silence is no longer the preserve of the solitary figure. There are always other people there, in red Goretex jackets. But when you look at the pictures, it's not a problem - in fact, quite the contrary. It is the figures and their distribution on the surface that turn the photos into pictures. That is what distinguishes the sensation you get on looking at a real landscape from looking at a picture. Although superficially documentary, with a sort of critical look (tourism and all that), the pictures are nonetheless "beautiful" as aesthetic statements. But if you probe further, they raise all sorts of questions for everyone that cannot be explained by aesthetics alone. Having a "home" means having roots, which is not the same as being rooted to the spot. The earth that contains the roots determines the code but not the substance. So Heimat is not a book about Germany as a homeland but sketches in a picture that, over and beyond the darkness of the past, reunification, and the "German disease," captures a personal piece of visual and cultural history.

Peter Bialobrzeski, March 2005

(Translation by Simone Schede)



"Heimat, # 19", 2003



"Heimat, # 25", 2004

**Peter Bialobrzski**

born 1961

lives and works in Hamburg, Germany

2002 Professor for Photography,  
Hochschule für Künste, Bremen, Germany

**Books**

- 1996 "Transit", Edition Braus, Heidelberg, Germany
- 2000 "XXXholy", Kruse Verlag, Hamburg, Germany
- 2004 "Neon Tigers", HatjeCantz, Ostfildern, Germany
- 2005 "Heimat", HatjeCantz, Ostfildern, Germany

Illustrations: "Heimat", C-Prints 2002–2005,  
120 x 160 cm and 75 x 97 cm



"Heimat, # 8", 2003



"Heimat, # 31", 2004

**PREVIEW**

L. A. GALERIE, FRANKFURT

- "Under the Sign of Scorpio", Tracey Moffatt, March 3 until April 1, 2006
- Ren Xiaolin, May to June 2006

**ART FAIRS**

Arco, Madrid, Spain  
February 9 until February 13, 2006

**NEW PUBLICATIONS**

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L. A. GALERIE, BEIJING  
No 319., Cao Chang di, Cui Ge Zhuang Village, East End Art  
Chaoyang District, Da Shanzi 71# Mail Box,  
Beijing 100015, P.R. China  
phone: 0086-10 64325093, 64325073  
info@la-gallery-beijing.com  
www.la-gallery-beijing.com