

Catalogue – „5 question“ Interview with Julian Faulhaber, Art Magazin

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1. The perspective of the photographs oscillates between that of the insider and that of a neutral observer. Can you explain this? And how did you come up with the idea for this work?

For several years I was an assistant for commercial photographers for advertising and catalogues. Whenever you work on one of these productions, stories are constantly being played out before your eyes. For starters, there is the inner circle, which creates the desired image for the client, as well as the surrounding layer that is also involved in the creative process. I was always fascinated by how these different layers interact. When you are part of a photo shoot, you also bear witness to the construction of a lifestyle and its concomitant flood of images, to the point that you continually take out your camera to create your own documentation. This resulted in various categories and visual languages that I needed to reassess and mentally re-order.

2. Why are most of the people depicted without a face – be it models, members of the crew, or the local workers on set?

The photographer, the model, and the workers are just as replaceable as the ubiquitous advertising images that surround us. I wanted to do away with personal or recognizable traits in order to avoid the emotional pull so prominent in advertising. I also tried to avoid any similarity with catalogue images, which employ recognizable facial expressions, which are in turn a product of the commercial photographer's perspective.

3. What is your take on the slightly morbid architectural images?

In desirable production locations like Cape Town, practically every villa can be viewed in a catalogue and rented as a backdrop for film and photo shoots. By depicting these buildings from the back or side, they appear one step removed from this ideal. In these images, you don't see a perfect location, but rather the raw material, or that which lies behind.

4. In "Catalogue," you use a combination of architecture, fashion, landscape, black-and-white, as well color photography. This is a departure from LDPE, in which you worked within a much stricter framework. How can you explain this visual diversity? Would you say that there are any thematic or formal parallels to your earlier work LDPE?

The locations in LDPE are permeated by a single aesthetic. The notion of time also has a greater significance in this work. The location created by humans will never again exist in this form; the surface wears away and will be renewed at a certain time in the future, like a cycle of sorts. On the other hand, "Catalogue" depicts the creation of a surface dissolving in the distance. On a narrative level, I was aiming to accomplish this dissolving by uniting various levels and techniques in order to create a new structural arrangement.

5. Many aspects seem vague or undefined, such as the location, the models' poses, or the crew's concrete activities. Why?

At first I was a lot closer to the action, but then the imagery seemed to be trapped in its own message and had a humorous touch. In Cape Town there are commercial production teams everywhere, and that is why they are barely noticed; instead, they have become part of the scenery – as if the set were a part of nature.