

Joachim Koester | *Photographic works 1994 - 2019*
January 31 - March 21 | 2020

Galleri Nicolai Wallner is very pleased to present a solo exhibition *Photographic works 1994 - 2019* by Joachim Koester.

Through the media of photography, film/video and installation Koester has explored cinema, history, performance, drugs, trance and the dream life of capitalism. Each of his works can be seen as a technique to trace fractures in the order that structures our surroundings and to put pressure on, or activate, these fractures. And perhaps for beginning to understand the historical forces that determine which events are remembered, and which are forgotten. Koester has previously called this "the invisible index of things".

Spanning twenty-five years, the subject matter of the exhibited photographic works includes references to 16th century scientist John Dee's obsession with the occult, the 2008 financial crash, Copenhagen's infamous free-state of Christiania, the otherworldly appearance of modern cannabis hybrids, praying mantis subcultures, 18th century explorer Nordenskjold's travels in Greenland and the Manson family's Barker Ranch residence in Death Valley.

Through Koester's practice, the photographic medium becomes a tool in itself. Playing with the assumed objective nature of photography, documentation blurs the line of storytelling and narration, as Koester's works reveal themselves layer after layer. The deeper we go, the more that it feels as if we are becoming part of a kind of expanding, group consciousness in which each work opens up something else in another.

In the first room, we are presented with images of obstructions, boarded up windows and houses, and the recontextualisation and repurposing of buildings and abandoned paths. Situated within this are two of Koester's earliest works, *Day for Night, Christiania, 1996* (1996) and *Untitled (Boarded Up Windows)* (1994). Hints at possible narratives left behind in the physical remnants of what once was are teased out by Koester, as we are encouraged to bring our own layer of interpretation.

In contrast, the second room feels more intimate and perhaps more intense. The feeling present in the first room of being on the outside looking in is replaced by a more focused, close view. Portraits of praying mantises, microscopic images of plant morphology, aesthetically alluring marijuana plants and the surface of John Dee's magic mirror and crystal ball draw us in, almost as if we are witnessing what happens behind closed doors or the surface of reality.

The duality felt between the two rooms gives way to a tension that you can feel throughout all the works, as Koester reminds us that within each moment of decay, abandon or destruction, there is room for creation of something new.

Joachim Koester (b. 1962, Denmark) is highly regarded as one of the most important conceptual photographers of his generation. He has had many critically acclaimed solo exhibitions, notably at the National Gallery of Denmark (Copenhagen), Bergen Kunsthall (Bergen), Turner Contemporary (Kent), MIT List Visual Arts Centre (Cambridge), Centre d'art Contemporain (Geneva), Palais de Tokyo (Paris), Institut d'art contemporain (Villeurbanne), Kestnergesellschaft Hanover (Hanover), BAC Beirut Art Centre (Beirut), Camden Art Centre (London), S.M.A.K. (Ghent), Museo Tamayo (Mexico City), and The Power Plant (Toronto). In 2005, Koester was included in the Danish Pavilion as part of the 51st Venice Biennale. In 2008, he was shortlisted for the prestigious Hugo Boss Prize. In 2013, he was awarded the Camera Austria prize for photography. His work can be found in public collections around the world, including MoMA (New York), Centre Pompidou (Paris), Tate Modern (London), KIASMA Museum of Contemporary Art (Helsinki), S.M.A.K. (Ghent), Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia (Madrid), Carnegie Museum of Art (Pittsburgh), Museum Boijmans (Rotterdam), Museo Jumex (Mexico City) and the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York) among many others.