

Sies + Höke Galerie

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Taiyo Onorato & Nico Krebs ***FUTURE MEMORIES***

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PRESS RELEASE

Sies + Höke shows for the fourth time works of the Swiss artist duo Taiyo Onorato & Nico Krebs.

The future is fascinating because it offers a space of possibility that can be filled with enthusiastic utopias or dystopian horror scenarios. Our attitude toward the future has shifted from euphoria to disillusionment and fear in recent decades. When did this shift begin, and where can we find evidence of it? In their new series *FUTURE MEMORIES*, Taiyo Onorato & Nico Krebs attempt to trace these altered formations of the future with the aid of photography. This seems paradoxical at first: despite the possibilities of image manipulation and digitization, photography is tied to recording real, existing light on a light-sensitive medium or sensor at a certain point in time. Logically, then, Onorato & Krebs's new images would need to contain light from the future and allow the time frozen in the photograph to extend forwards.

"The future has an ancient heart," wrote the Italian author Carlo Levi in 1956. To elaborate a little further: it begins deep in the past, continues to evolve in the present, and is increasingly shaped by humans. In 2020, man-made matter surpassed the existing biomass for the first time. Based on these suppositions, Onorato & Krebs search their own image archive for indications of conceptions of the future. In recent years, their projects have taken them to the USA and China, traveling to countries where visions and the technologies and urban structures they require are being developed. Most recently, they were in the Maldives, where the predicted ecological crisis is already clearly evident in the landscape. With new photographs from Greece and museums, the artists expand the recorded timescale. Centuries-old temple complexes tell of a vision turned to stone long before the dawn of our era. Museum display cases reference a select, preserved past, displayed for later viewing.

In order to speculate on possible future scenarios, Onorato & Krebs collide fragments from this pool of images in *FUTURE MEMORIES*. Using a digitally programmed laser, they cut up their analog negatives or highlight the idiosyncrasies of what they have photographed. The laser's intense beam leaves a mark on the negatives, rendering their materiality visible as it burns into the emulsion layer. At the edges of the incisions, the newly assembled realities meet abruptly, just as they do with a window. At this juncture, we can draw a reference to the history of photography. Since its invention, the medium has been regarded as a window to the world that shows us a section of another reality. Indeed, the very first photograph captured by Nicéphore Niépce back in 1826 depicted a paradigmatic view from the window of his study. Subsequently, travel photographs provided vistas of distant countries and cultures. Today, Instagram tiles are nothing other than windows to countless individual realities. With *FUTURE MEMORIES*, Onorato & Krebs condense what has been observed, transcending not only space but time, too. In this way, they create visualizations of questions relating to how our relationship to the world will change in the future as we move further and further away from the earth. They speculate about which realities will play out outside our windows and the extent to which this glimpse into private spaces will tear them open, whether we need screens to perceive the state of the world and what will be museumized in the future: nature, pollution, or an artificial world where nothing of the sort exists anymore?

In the black-and-white images from this group of works, pictorial reality tilts into a poetic limbo. The light and the reactions of the photographic material take on leading roles. The only connection to reality is a technical one, through the traces left by the laser and the photogram-style imprints of geometric templates or enigmatic items. It is not at all easy to orient yourself in these images. What is depicted oscillates between microcosm and macrocosm. We could be peering into an underwater world or outer space. The only reference point for what these forms signify or when they were created is our own visual memory. Space and time are entirely suspended. What remains are images of the complete unknown, which could be part of our future.

- Christin Müller