

Anton Kern Gallery

Marcel Odenbach

October 27 – December 17, 2022

Third Floor Gallery

In his eighth exhibition at Anton Kern Gallery, German artist Marcel Odenbach allows the viewer a precise glimpse into his multi-faceted practice. The exhibition consists of a video installation entitled *Tropenkoller* (tropical frenzy) and a wall-papered environment that includes two large paper collages and a set of silkscreen prints.

Tropenkoller is a haunting two channel video installation that contrasts archival material from Togo's colonial history with images of the persistence of colonial structures in the West African Nation today. The larger of the two collages entitled *View of the House of the Wannsee Conference* depicts a deceptively picturesque view of the place where, on January 20th, 1942, the implementation of the so-called "Final Solution of the Jewish Question" was formalized. The companion collage called *The Library of Babel* is based on a snapshot the artist took during his travels in South America depicting the spines of an unlikely collection of books. The title alludes to the eponymous short story by Argentine author and librarian Jorge Luis Borges conceiving of a universe in the form of a vast library. The wallpaper imagery and the prints are based on a selection of Odenbach's *Schnittvorlagen* (cutting templates), a pictorial atlas the artist has accumulated since 2001 and which was recently published in book form and presented in a comprehensive exhibition at the Museum Ludwig in Cologne.

Viewed at a distance Odenbach's collages convey a sense of tranquility and casualness, however upon closer inspection, the subjects' latent histories are slowly revealed through hundreds of images that make up the larger work. Odenbach focuses on social issues and human struggles that resonate with his own personal history. Continuing themes include German history, German-Jewish culture, civil rights, social justice, freedom of expression, as well as colonial and postcolonial histories. The dialectical pull of an enticing overall image and the contrasting complexity of the underlying social issues and narratives is characteristic of Odenbach's approach to both video and collage. These seemingly disparate practices share a similar process. The highly methodical way Odenbach works with paper (transferring, cutting, sorting, compiling, and layering found images) mimics early analog video editing techniques.

Marcel Odenbach (b.1953), lives and works in Cologne, Berlin, and Ghana, and is Professor for film and video art at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf. Recent exhibitions of Odenbach's work include solo shows at MAIAM Contemporary Art Museum, Chiang Mai, Thailand (2022); Museum Ludwig, Cologne; Kunstsammlung NRW K21, Düsseldorf (both 2021); Kaiser Wilhelm Museum, Krefeld; Kunsthalle Nürnberg (both 2020); National Gallery of Modern Art, Mumbai (2019); National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi (2018); Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna (2017); Tel Aviv Museum of Art; Museu de Arte do Rio Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre, Brazil (both 2016); Museu de Arte de Lima (2015), and Kunstmuseum Bonn (2013). His work is included in numerous public collections such as Museum of Modern Art, New York, National Gallery of Canada, Centre Pompidou, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris, Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin, Kunstmuseum Bonn, Museum Ludwig, Cologne, Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich, Netherlands Media Art Institute, Amsterdam, and Kunstsammlung NRW, Düsseldorf among others. In 2021, Odenbach was awarded the Wolfgang Hahn Prize.

In conjunction with the exhibition, Anton Kern Gallery will present MO_RO_20, a compilation of Odenbach's film soundtracks of the last twenty years by the composer, producer, and musical collaborator Richard Ojijo. Available on 12" vinyl or digital download via boomkat or bandcamp.



just because there is an order does not mean that everything is in order

Marcel Odenbach, *View of the House of the Wannsee Conference*, 2022
Collage
82 5/8 x 106 1/4 inches (210 x 270 cm)