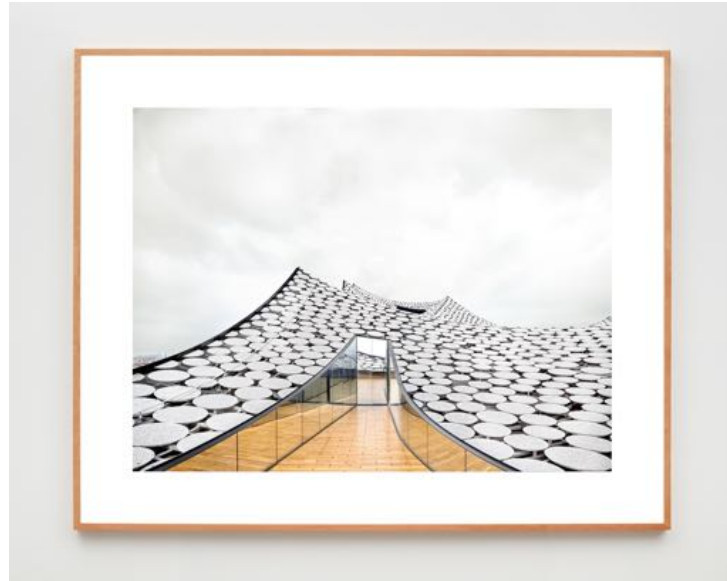


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Candida Höfer

Heaven on Earth

Curated by Toshiko Mori

Sean Kelly, New York

February 24 – April 15, 2023

Opening reception: Thursday, February 23, 6-8pm

Exhibition walkthrough with Toshiko Mori at 7pm

Sean Kelly is delighted to present *Heaven on Earth*, an exhibition of work by Candida Höfer curated by award-winning architect Toshiko Mori. Spanning nearly thirty years of Höfer's practice, Mori has selected images that exemplify the range of spaces Höfer has photographed throughout her career from libraries and museums to public theatres and churches. There will be an opening reception on Thursday, February 23, 6-8pm. Candida Höfer and Toshiko Mori will be present. Toshiko Mori will lead a walkthrough of the exhibition at 7pm.

In the text below, Toshiko Mori describes her selection process and viewing Höfer's work through an architectural lens:

It is the ultimate wish of an architect to create an idealistic spatial experience for each project. We compose the aspirations of humanity into the static form of buildings by arranging proportion, detail, materiality, and sequencing into an orchestrated experience. Many times, we aspire to transcend further and transport inhabitants into the realms outside of daily life. These hidden agendas may not relate to the efficient function of buildings, but as architects, we can weave them into the programs of our architecture by adding to the breadth and depth of ineffable elements and creating silent yet visceral experiences of place.

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Candida Höfer's photographs distill these moments of architects' aspiration. To create a sense of 'heaven on earth' - moments of sublime spatial experience - our eyes and bodies must 'feel' completely, sensing the temperature of a space, smelling it, reading its colorations, and seeking the depths of its chiaroscuro. We may be visiting a concert hall, we may be reading in a library, or we may be in a place of worship; our present is always experienced emotionally and even spiritually. These are the moments which are often difficult, if not impossible, to describe.

Candida presents these moments objectively and with detachment. Yet, ironically, her work itself is inviting and habitable. Often devoid of human presence, these images become an empty vessel for our imagination. We enter into Candida's photographs. We look at her art and imagine being there, vicariously experiencing all of the details, materials, and light within. For the same reason, there is a sense of melancholy and fragility, even of nostalgia, in her work. We do not know how these spaces will survive. Photography captures fluid time as a static image; it is always about a past moment, ephemeral and elusive. The original program and intent of buildings will continue to evolve with our ever-shifting societies. Libraries were once the bastion of protected knowledge; today they have been transformed to fit the needs of contemporary society, becoming beacons of accessibility by providing free and democratic distribution of knowledge.

I call this exhibition *Heaven on Earth* because Candida captures these fleeting moments in a sober light, as if the architectural experience itself is an object to marvel at. While majestic and grand in scale, Candida's photographs have an appeal that is powerfully personal and intimate. To architects, attraction to her photography is natural, not only because of the transcendent power of her subject matter, but because Candida captures our hope that our buildings act as silent witnesses to civilization, speaking volumes through architecture and light. We hear the voice of architecture through her photographs, projecting architects' desire to create heavenly moments during our short life on earth.

Candida Höfer lives and works in Cologne, Germany. Her internationally recognized work has been shown in solo exhibitions at the Paul Clemen Museum, Kunsthistorisches Institut Bonn, Bonn, Germany; Museum of Photography, Berlin; Hall Art Foundation | Schloss Derneburg Museum, Derneburg, Germany; the Kunsthalle, Basel; the Museum Folkwang, Essen; the Louvre, Paris; the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin; and the Kunstmuseum, Luzerne. Her work has also appeared in group exhibitions at The Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Power Plant, Toronto; Kunsthaus Bregenz; Museum Ludwig, Cologne; the Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao; and Documenta XI, Kassel. Höfer represented Germany at the 2003 Venice Biennale. Her photographs are included in major public and private collections worldwide.

Toshiko Mori is the principal of Toshiko Mori Architect, and founder of VisionArc, a think-tank promoting global dialogue for a sustainable future. She is the Robert P. Hubbard Professor in the Practice of Architecture at Harvard University Graduate

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School of Design since 1995 and was chair of the Department of Architecture from 2002 to 2008. She is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences as well as the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Her recent awards include the 2022 MASTerworks Award for Best Restoration for the Brooklyn Public Library Central Branch, the Isamu Noguchi Award in 2021, the Louis Auchincloss Prize in 2020 from the Museum of the City of New York, and the AIA/ASCA Topaz Medallion for Excellence in Architectural Education in 2019. Mori was featured in a 2022 film by ArchDaily titled *Women in Architecture*, a semifinalist at Cannes Film Festival, and is the guest editor for *Domus: the Magazine for Architecture, Design and Art* in 2023.

For additional information on Candida Höfer please visit skny.com

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Image: Candida Höfer, *Elbphilharmonie Hamburg Herzog & de Meuron Hamburg IV* 2016, C-print, framed: 72 7/16 x 89 3/4 inches, edition of 6 with 3 APs © Candida Höfer Courtesy: Sean Kelly