

MAI 36 GALERIE

Jitka Hanzlová

Opening: Friday, 15 March 2013, 6 to 8 p.m.
Duration: 16 March - 20 April 2013
Hours: Tues-Fri 11 a.m. to 6.30 p.m., Sat 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

In the early 1980s, Jitka Hanzlová left former Czechoslovakia for Germany, where she studied Photography and Visual Communication in the city of Essen. Her first photographic series, *Rokytník* (1990 – 1994) brought her critical acclaim and her work has since been exhibited internationally, e.g. at the Fotomuseum Witerthur in 2001. In 2006, we presented her *Forest* series at our gallery. More recently, in 2012/2013, her works have been shown at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery in Edinburgh and at the Fundacion Mapfre in Madrid. Following their presentation at major international institutions, many of the photographs in the present exhibition can now be seen for the first time in a more intimate gallery setting.

In the early 1990s, Hanzlová returned to her Czech childhood homeland to make the *Rokytník* series. The place and its inhabitants appear to be frozen in time in these images that already bear all the hallmarks of the direct and undistorted gaze with which Hanzlová, even then, portrayed people and their surroundings. The presence she accords to her subjects and the precision with which she frames them have come to typify Hanzlová's forthright approach to reality, which is in no way disrespectful, but an expression of particular care and attentiveness.

Our exhibition presents four different groups of works by the artist, some of them created in parallel over the course of recent years. These include images of the German city of Essen, where she lives, from her series *Hier* (1998 to 2010), which follows on from her *Rokytník* series, as well as the cycle of portraits *There is something I don't know*, begun in 2007, in which Jitka Hanzlová creates contemporary portraits whose handling of light and dark backgrounds evoke the centuries-old aesthetics of Renaissance portraiture in a fluid convergence of past and present. Another series in the exhibition, *Flowers*, features images of withered and wilted plants that encapsulate their faded former beauty, while at the same time showing the architectural structure of the blooms that once served as vessels for new seeds and thus symbolise the continuing cycle of life.

The powerfully visceral imagery of her new series *Horses* shows the wild and dynamic side of these creatures in spite of centuries of domestication. There is no sign of human dominion over the animals in these images, but only of untamed nature. Hanzlová's close-up views of them are uninhibited, fearless and direct. The sheer physicality of the horses is captured in cropped shots charged with dynamic motion, reflecting Hanzlová's fascination for these animals and her love of them. It is this silent communication, this approach to the animal, that is increasingly disappearing from our high-tech world and is so important to Jitka Hanzlová.

The opening is on Friday, 15 March from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.. Jitka Hanzlová will be in attendance.

For visual materials, please contact us at (office@mai36.com).

We look forward to seeing you at the gallery, and thank you for your interest.

Mai 36 Galerie
Victor Gisler

March 2013