

PRESS RELEASE

November 22, 2022

Out of Sight Andreas Gefeller Photographs

3/3/2023-14/5/2023

Andreas Gefeller examines the human environment and reveals unknown worlds: the Düsseldorf-based photographer explores our technologized society and human-dominated nature. The NRW-Forum Düsseldorf presents the first retrospective of his work from 3 March to 14 May 2023. From Gefeller's beginnings in analogue and digital photography to his most recent works, which are reminiscent of 3D renderings, the exhibition includes 60 works spanning his entire oeuvre from 2000 to the present. The presentation illustrates his experimental approach to the medium, in which the photographic process itself is the subject.

Andreas Gefeller challenges visual perception: categories such as large and small, light and dark, coloured and colourless are redefined, while the relationship to reality is constantly changing. His way of working includes collaging together individual digital images, using long, short and overexposures, and taking shots at night as well as from great heights and unusual perspectives. In this way, he draws out hidden images from seemingly familiar locations. Stage-like snapshots of holiday resorts at night, constructed views of urban spaces, and cityscapes drowned in light encapsulate the phenomena of modern society. In this search for traces of human influence, civilization is revealed, although humans themselves remain absent.

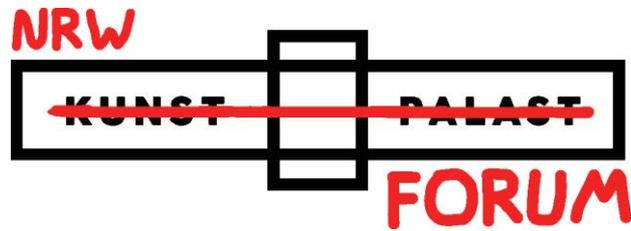
The earliest series in the exhibition, ***Soma*** (2000, Gran Canaria), takes us to the limits of our vision. Gefeller photographs empty sunbeds on the beach, deserted apartment complexes, or the sea sinking into the black of night. He works in the dark and uses long exposures to reproduce colours with the camera that remain hidden to the human eye at night. The series ***Blank*** (2010–2016) subverts the purpose of artificial light to make things visible: Gefeller

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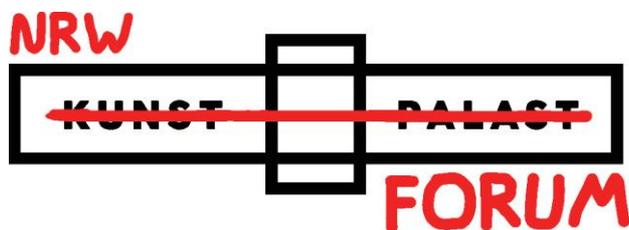
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takes a closer look at industrial sites such as motorway junctions or refineries at night and overexposes them to such an extent that only their skeletal fundamental structures can be seen. He uses light as a metaphor for information and over-information, in which we humans are drowning in the digital age.

Social networks, the cloud, digital algorithms – the images in the series ***The Other Side of Light*** (2016–present) are visualizations of abstract processes in the modern world. They are a search for traces of the digital in the natural. Raindrops forming ripples on the surface of water, razor-sharp plant formations, or fine lines of light reflecting on water represent the phenomena of our digital life for which there are no existing images.

The series ***Clouds*** (2019–2021) also experiments with visibility. The clouds were photographed at the cooling towers of coal-fired power plants. Gefeller views them as symbols of global warming and environmental pollution caused by humans.

Taken from a height of two metres and in thousands of individual digital images, the works in the series ***Supervisions*** (2002–2015) depict urban spaces such as prefabricated high-rise flats, a car park, or the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin. Gefeller assembles the resulting photographic material into a large-format work that reveals new connections through their unusual perspective and richness of detail and depicts a long period of time instead of a single moment. In ***The Japan Series*** (2010), he also works with changes of perspective, turning his gaze upwards by 180 degrees to photograph electricity pylons and domesticated plants. The shots are reminiscent of delicate drawings or Japanese characters. The metal wires of the electricity pylons take on an organic life of their own, while the plant growth appears lifeless and restricted due to human control.



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In his new series **Flames** (2022), exhibited here for the first time, forms become visible that are reminiscent of 3D renderings or X-ray images. Short exposures lend the flames a physicality and a visual presence. Dead or alive, gaseous or solid, real or digital – *Flames* portrays a real yet strange, almost uncanny world beyond the visible. The series **Dust** (2022) is about combustion as a new beginning, the life cycle of substances. Gefeller uses a high-speed flash to photograph slag, which is produced when residual waste is incinerated, as it is thrown into the air. The tiny particles frozen in movement are reminiscent of cosmic structures. Energy crisis, climate change, the exploitation of raw materials – this series touches on contemporary issues and yet goes beyond them. Human civilization becomes the proverbial speck of dust in the universe.

Born in Düsseldorf, Andreas Gefeller studied communication design and photography at the Folkwang University of the Arts in Essen. His work has been exhibited internationally, including in Amsterdam, London and New York. Gefeller lives and works in Düsseldorf.

The exhibition is curated by Judith Winterhager, NRW-Forum Düsseldorf.

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