GALERIE HEINZER RESZLER

SEBASTIAN STADLER
A CLOSE UP OF A CAR, I THINK

Sebastian Stadler's work spans the media of photography and video. In his artistic practice,
Stadler often investigates the photographic image as a medium: He worked with double exposures (L'Apparition, 2015–2023), used a neural network to describe the content of pictures (Pictures, I think, 2019) or deployed found images (Scheune fing Feuer, 2017, We see the whole picture 2017 / 2022) to create striking and precise works. Examining his environment through pictures, Stadler often unearths surprising observations of our world, addressing social and cultural issues, distilling them into compelling artworks.

L'Apparition, 2015-2023

A path leading towards nowhere is superimposed with a luminous blue rectangle, seeming to form a window on the picture plane. A delicate spider web attached to a metal pole becomes sidelined by dominant geometric lines. These images are paradigmatic for „L'apparition", a series mainly consisting of double exposures. First, Stadler exposed the film to situations in the 'real', material world through photographing cityscapes or interiors. After rewinding the film roll, he superimposed these images with macro photographs of pixel landscapes from computer screens or mobile phone displays. While some of the resulting double exposures are easily recognizable as such, others are less obvious – the streaks of light could be mistaken as coming from faulty film material or broken cameras. In confronting material and virtual worlds, Stadler reflects the conditions of pictorial productions. However, the photographs not only reflect medium-specific conditions, they provoke the viewer to become proactive. The mysterious motifs, as well as the title of the series invite the viewer to connect the material, virtual and possibly even spiritual worlds, and regard the emanating lights as otherworldly apparitions.

We see the whole picture, 2017/2022

Seven small LCD screens show images of barren landscapes. While at first glance ostensibly unchanging, a closer look reveals slight, minute modifications in the pictured backroads: Fog gathers and evaporates, cars suddenly emerge the light changes. For „We see the whole picture", Sebastian Stadler downloaded thousands of webcam images provided by the Finnish transport authority. The webcams serve to monitor the road

conditions in sparsely populated areas of Finland and their images are only visible online for a short time before being deleted. Stadler meticulously composed the image sequences, creating narratives that tell of everyday moments such as changing weather conditions or the backcountry version of rush hour – three cars on one stretch of road. He succeeds to condens still images into a telling portrait of a specific landscape while playing with the traditional genre of landscape photography, turning away from the idolizing view of glorifying nature to painting an austere image of a landscape intersected by roads. Nevertheless, the images have a poetic side, for instance when dawn makes itself visible in the different hues coloring the snowy landscape: tinted orange by the streetlamps at first, the first streaks of blue and pink announce the light of day. This poetic side also pays testimony to a more personal reading of the work. „We see the whole picture" also acts as a subtle nod to the artist's mother's longing for her native country, leading her to check the street conditions of Finnish backcountry roads.

Sebastian Stadler (Swiss and Finnish) was born in 1988 and lives in Zurich. He studied photography at the Zurich University of Arts (ZHdK) and the University of Arts in Lausanne (ECAL). His work has been exhibited internationally, with solo exhibitions in Switzerland at institutions such as the Photoforum PasquArt in Biel or Kunstmuseum St. Gallen. Stadler has been the winner of awards including the Swiss Art Award (2013), the grant of the Canton of Thurgau (2017) and the Manor Art Prize (2019). In 2021, he published his first monograph „A close up of a large rock, I think" with Kodoji Press.

_____