

MAI 36 GALERIE

Zurich, August 2007

PRESS RELEASE

ROE ETHRIDGE

25 August – 29 September 2007

We are pleased to present new photographs by the American artist Roe Ethridge (born 1969 in Miami, Florida, lives and works in New York). The works by Roe Ethridge are regularly exhibited in museums and galleries in the US and Europe with recent solo exhibitions in Boston, Palm Beach and Philadelphia, as well as in galleries in Los Angeles, New York and London.

The photographer Roe Ethridge regards all motifs as equally worthy of being photographed, whether a cemetery with plastic flowers, a glimpse into a back yard, shops in the town, advertising inscriptions, a relaxed fireman gazing lazily out of a fire engine, a romantic, lascivious portrait of a woman in a pink dress, or a quiet street in late summer; finally, a zoom of a wall bond, surfers riding the waves, or forks in the motorway. Roe Ethridge reproduces these motifs in large formats and combines them to form small series, some of them contextually close, others only loosely connected. At first glance, the photographs appear to resemble the traditional genres of landscapes, still lifes and portraits or documentary scenes. Ethridge integrates motifs from fashion and advertising into his artistic context and blurs the borderlines between high and low until they become diffuse and irrelevant. Thus Roe Ethridge's pictures do not differentiate between art and press photography, between constructed and documentary scenes, between cool-technical and moving scenes. Photographic methodology or concepts are not his line. On the contrary, in view of the variety of photographic motifs, the fluidity of the medium and the living rhythms, he is enthusiastic about the double life of photography, its artistic and commercial aspects; also, the fact that it is omnipresent and polymorphous and can be addressed simultaneously to specialists and dilettantes.

Whereas the architectural photographs reveal the influence of Bernd and Hilla Becher, with whose style Ethridge became acquainted at the College of Art in Atlanta, it is frequently uncertain whether a specific portrayal is a mere picture or whether it conceals a deeper meaning. At times he works as a commercial photographer for newspapers and magazines, including the New York Times, or he photographs for advertisements, posters and book covers, or he travels as an archivist or a roving narrator. He reflects the role of photography and its significance in our image-satiated world. In the ability of his pictures to exist in varied contexts, Ethridge sees on the one hand an enormous potential that can, on the other hand, become a burden when pictures, belonging to different discursive categories become impossible to classify. When Ethridge combines everyday subjects with the technically precise methodology of the Düsseldorf school, or instils nostalgia into a street scene or a seaside resort, new and unexpected connections are revealed in the simultaneity of the heterogeneous motifs, connections that light up poetic moments.

[Text: Dominique von Burg | Translation: Maureen Oberli-Turner]

The opening is on Friday, 24 August from 6 to 8 p.m. You are cordially invited to meet with the artist. We are pleased to provide you with visual material on request (milena.oehy@mai36.com).

We look forward to welcoming you to the exhibition and thank you for your interest.

Mai 36 Galerie