

DER TAGESSPIEGEL

Kultur

Forgotten by time

Photographs of American Artist Jay Mark Johnson at Galerie Deschler

When it comes to computers and images, everything seems possible. Photographs can be easily scanned and readily manipulated. Images become so distorted, so unreal, that reality itself loses its power to amaze. Such is the case across the spectrum of contemporary imagery until one comes upon the large-scale photographs by Jay Mark Johnson and learns that they are not digitally manipulated. His works are akin to untouched images from a conventional camera with one distinguishing difference - to produce his unmodified figurations he employs unconventional equipment. Johnson uses a so-called slit-scan camera, the same that is used commercially at the finish line of horse races and car races, to capture a brief duration of time.

But the use of this camera by the U.S. artist is anything but commercial. In his most recent works, which can be seen at Galerie Deschler, Johnson experiments with contrasting effects, producing images of the highest accuracy but viewed from unimaginable perspectives. In the resulting images, the element of time seems to have fallen out of the frame while background spatial references are dissolved into abstract horizontal streaks. The artist's apparent motive - the obliteration of place in modern urban life. Appearing like toys on a landscape of shifting contours, the trains, cars and people of Belgrade have all been "swept away". A reality with surreal elements presented by a magician without tricks. One needs to get closer for a better look.

- *Christiane Meixner*

Galerie Deschler, Auguststr. 61; to 17.1., Tue-Sat 12-18 clock, closed on 23 December to 2 January 2009

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