

Michael Danner Projects



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Tokyo+ 1996

As a visitor exploring an unfamiliar place, I focused in this project on a public and urban environment, trying to develop my own sense of this urban space at the same time as attempting a ,reading' of the relations between the people and the city that unfolded before my eye. I avoided focusing on any preconceived and specific aspects of Japanese life, both in an attempt not to appropriate Japanese culture hastily and in order to avoid romanticising or mythologising the unfamiliar.

By walking through the streets, that is moving within the urban space, I collected and created images that reflect a developing dialogue between my position as a visitor and outsider and the ways the inhabitants of the city negotiate their positions in relation to the urban environment.

Images of the contemporary Japanese architecture form a central metaphor in the project. These buildings avoid any reference to the traditional past and their depictions stand alongside pictures of various objects decontextualised from their urban surroundings. This absence of temporal and contextual signposts is not only emblematic of my experience of contemporary Japan, but also translates into the process of photographic composition and should invite the viewer to reflect on the relations between past and present, textual gaps, and the possibility to reconstruct a possible whole in the viewing. This process gave the Tokyo+ images a strong sense of contemporaneity and defined the contemporary itself as a complex image.

In Japan, I found places and situations that had a sense of familiarity and related to my own experiences in a European urban context. I was interested in creating images of these, rather than the obvious Japanese stone gardens or shrines, because they seemed to open a space in which familiarity and difference, my subjective point of view and the radical ,otherness' of the place, could exist at the same time. This space is recreated in my photographs and it should include and invite the viewer to enter and might enable him/her to negotiate their own position within my photograph.

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About

Born in Reutlingen (Germany) in 1967, I now live in Berlin. I studied photography at the Fachhochschule Bielefeld (D) and the University of Brighton (UK) and subsequently lived in London from 1997 to 2000.

My artistic and photographic work focuses on the life-world. Here, I develop visual strategies that serve as a means of stepping back from the scene at hand, thus allowing for observation, interpretation and staging.

The distance thus achieved creates space for various levels of meaning, such as social and historical references or medial reflections. My aim is to facilitate a dialogue between image and recipient that reaches beyond the subject itself and links with the observer's life-world.

In addition to numerous publications and exhibitions, my photographic works have been entered into renowned collections and have been awarded many prizes.

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