VAN DER GRINTEN GALERIE



Karl Hugo Schmölz, Hugo Schmölz

The Essence of Architectural Photography

05.02.2019–30.03.2019

The Van der Grinten Galerie is delighted to announce the exhibition *Essenz der Architekturfotografie (The Essence of Architectural Photography)*. The show provides the welcome opportunity to present, for the very first time, all three fundamental aspects of the photographic works of the *Fotowerkstätte Hugo Schmölz* – the studios of father and son Hugo Schmölz and Karl Hugo Schmölz – in a cohesive context.

Hugo Schmölz (1879-1938), an exponent of the *Neue Sachlichkeit* (New Objectivity) school of photography, was one of a triumvirate – alongside Albert Renger-Patzsch and Werner Mantz – of preeminent German architectural photographers of the 1920s and 30s. Hugo Schmölz is represented in the show with a selection of industrial and interior architecture images from the pre-war period. Son Karl Hugo (1917-1986), who embarked on his professional training at father 's studio at the age of 17, later interpreted the pure aesthetics of the strictly objective view for the post-war era of modernity like no other, which soon brought Karl Hugo Schmölz success and acclaim far beyond his Rhineland home base.

Van der Grinten Galerie
Ackerstraße 144
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Especially noteworthy achievements in the genre are his architectural photographs of staircases, cinema interiors and night shots of display windows.

Thanks to a very small number of extant private (non-commissioned) images by Karl Hugo Schmölz a third, seldom seen aspect of the oeuvre adds a narrative layer and brings personal and historical context to the exhibition: the war just over, Karl Hugo, on his release from POW internment, returned home to a war-ravaged Cologne to find that his father's photographic archives had somehow survived the saturation bombing of the city. He selected from the collection views of the city and "portraits" of historical buildings in the center of town taken by Hugo Schmölz before the destruction. Karl Hugo then photographed the exact same places from the exact same camera position and perspective, now in their state of immediate postwar devastation. This idea, while still adhering to the "applied" principals of photography to which both father and son Schmölz always remained dedicated, nevertheless constitutes an astonishing move towards the conceptual. Some comparable examples of these remarkable diptychs were recently on view in the ‚Doing the Document / Schenkung Bartenbach' show at Museum Ludwig.

The opening on 8 February is also a book presentation for our latest publication 'Cinemas', a compilation of the iconic images of cinema interiors by Schmölz father and son. The book appears in the program of the Kettler Verlag. A literary essay by Hanns Zischler accompanies the substantial photographic content.

The publication also includes a limited collector's edition of 35 numbered copies with a modern print of the motif *'Europa Palast, Düsseldorf, 1949' (*pigment print on Hahnemuhle paper, 19 x 21 cm) by Karl Hugo Schmölz, certified by the Archiv Wim Cox.