As if time were sleeping

Daniela Keiser is exhibiting new artworks with a wide range of content, as well as a wide range of media. Initially, they appear very different, but they share a sense of drifting, dreamlike, between past and present. This creates a distinct impression, as if time itself were sleeping.

In 'Rad' or 'Cartwheel' (2015), a girl turns cartwheels - by the sea, among mountains, on cobbled streets, and in many other places. The individual images flow slowly one into another, tracing the progress of her cartwheels; the deceleration of the film transports us into another reality. The dematerialisation of the images and the exclusion of colour reinforce this impression, as if this scene were removed from our tangible reality. The gentle superimposing of the images creates moments when the body of the girl 'branches', with multiple arms and legs visible. There is an anxious moment, as we wonder whether the disassociated body will come back together. In this space-filling video installation, a spontaneous expression of playfulness and sporting ambition becomes a timeless metaphor for *joie de vivre* and the urge to build one's one world when one is growing up. As she turns cartwheels, the girl leaves the solid ground, turning on her own axis, only to land again on the ground – but now it is a new ground, won through her own efforts. At first, the artwork sounds playful and not very spectacular, but upon more thorough examination, it reveals an existential dimension.

In the 55-part photographic series 'bergen' or 'hills' (2011-2013), Daniela Keiser (*1963, Neuhausen) has created a panopticon, in multiple voices, of seemingly inconsequential natural features, also incorporating settlements seen from a distance. These small black-and-white photographs show dreaming, soft, peaceful landscapes, with individual youths losing themselves in the landscapes, and, over and over again, a child turning cartwheels, scattering playful innocence in the wild meadows. When one realises that these images were taken at various rubble piles in Berlin and the surrounding area, it suddenly becomes chillingly clear that there is a charged past sleeping beneath the romantic, lush grass.

A 40-part photographic mural series entitled 'Cyanogarten' or 'Cyano-garden' (2015), whose title references the rare cyanotype technique, spreads out a horizonless landscape of small farmed fields and wooded hills. This artwork's intensive monochrome blue distances it from purely representational intentions, and transforms the present into the latent past, whose frontiers with the present – and with the daydream state – are fluid and entangled. The artwork's vast size immerses viewers in this alien/familiar territory, and causes them to forget whether they are awake, dreaming, or sleeping.

Markus Stegmann
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