

G E O R G K A R G L

Pressinformation

10 January 2006

JITKA HANZLOVÁ – *forest*

Georg Kargl Fine Arts

Opening of the exhibition on Thursday, 19 January 2006, 7–9 p.m.

Duration of the exhibition: 20 January – 18 March 2006

Press preview: Thursday, 19 January 2006, 11 a.m.

The exhibition *forest* shows 45 works by the Essen-based photographer Jitka Hanzlová shot in the forests of her home country Czechia, in the area close to the Carpatian mountains, during various seasons of the past five years. The photographs visualise the artist's subjective engagement with her own history. "The path I am taking leads me back so I can see the future," she says; it is a way of returning to her roots by means of photography. Clearings, marshy puddles, timber forests in the snow, fields where animals have left their tracks, clumps of trees and branches threateningly occupying the foreground give us an insight into nature devoid of humans, an environment that seems inviting and scary at the same time. The compositions are carefully planned yet look accidental, their fragile chromaticity makes the pictures appear ephemeral and fantastically tangible at once. One artistic goal the photographer's efforts seem to be geared to is direct experience of nature as she tracks down the secret of creation and transitoriness in nature.

Jitka Hanzlová is interested in the "in-between", as John Berger calls it, in the *neither-nor* manifesting itself in a kind of timeless and weightless photography. Her photographs hint at what exists in between subsoil and clearings, in between emergence, becoming and passing away, in between all life-cycles and times. Hanzlová's works are attempts at landscape representation beyond the visible, they deal with that which cannot be represented, a hidden meaning, something infinite manifested in nature as it is in flux and undergoes constant change. Hanzlová's photographs do not freeze a certain moment or show a specific point of time; instead, they rather draw the beholder's attention to events seemingly outside the relentless march of time, events which can only be sensed and felt subconsciously *as time passes*.

In his essay on Hanzlová's work John Berger writes something along the following lines: What is intangible and within touching distance in a forest may be the presence of a kind of timelessness. Not the abstract timelessness of metaphysical speculation, nor the metaphorical timelessness of cyclic, seasonal repetition.

The search for an image of nature that defies understanding, that can give us an idea of infinity, may also be read as an attempt at experiencing nature in a mythical way.

However, it is the in-between which places Hanzlová's work outside defined categories and fads, outside the glossy photographs of seemingly untouched nature in tour operator catalogues which are designed to instil a longing for the illusion that you can experience unspoilt nature in a consumer world that moves ever faster. Her work does not show the

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forest as a ubiquitous commodity available for consumption at all times but as a memory of the universal timeless metaphor for the origin of all being.

A monograph with an essay by John Berger has been published about the series of photographs *forest* by Jitka Hanzlová (German version: Steidl Verlag und Druck, Göttingen).

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Opening hours

Tue-Fri 11 a.m.–7 p.m.

Thu 11 a.m.–8 p.m.

Sat 11 a.m.–3 p.m.