

secession

Vereinigung bildender KünstlerInnen Wiener Secession
Friedrichstraße 12, A-1010 Wien
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GERALD DOMENIG



Gerald Domenig, *Stil life in old style* (detail), 2015

April 22 – June 19, 2016

Opening: April 21, 2016, 7 p.m.

Press conference: April 20, 2016, 10 a.m.

Photography, drawing, and writing (text) are the preferred genres of the Austrian artist Gerald Domenig, who lives in Frankfurt am Main. He has worked in these media since the 1970s, building a sizable oeuvre distinguished by formal consistency and thematic openness. In Domenig's work, drawing and photography figure as two registers that serve diametrically opposed purposes with regard to a construction of reality. His drawings are intended as drafts or preliminary sketches for photographs: working with the pencil may be conceived as a tentative exploration of the world. By contrast, the photographs—most of them are black-and-white—are not just snapshots capturing moments; aiming at more than a rendition of reality, they are always self-contained images of a situation, a place. Domenig, who uses an analog camera, develops the films by hand, and makes his own prints, sees photography as a technique of visual construction, of the transformation of space into surface and the resolution of what was before the camera's lens into a pictorial creation. "When I make photographs, I want to translate an image hidden in the three-dimensional world, a latent flatness, into a concrete picture," Domenig says.

Recurrent motifs (a term that should be used with caution in describing Domenig's work: his true "motif" is photography itself) include coats, trousers, houses, cars—everyday things, found objects, like the pair of gloves a child must have lost in the street. What he finds in small things he then recreates in his studio, in staged scenes that aim for the greatest possible simplicity and starkness. Unprepossessing façades and corners of houses and especially walls that bear the traces of structural alterations are of particular interest to the artist: surfaces of non-places in which he discovers painterly details that remind him of

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works by Sol LeWitt, Mark Rothko, and others. One location where Domenig has taken photographs for many years are the gorges of the Garnitzenklamm in the Gailtal region of southern Austria. In his pictures, the spectacular scenery's three dimensions undergo a peculiar collapse into a flatness that accommodates plural readings. Domenig likes to highlight formal analogies between his pictures, splicing them along what he calls a "suture" and presenting them on facing pages of a book.

Language is another important register in Gerald Domenig's art. His work on his pictures goes hand in hand with an ongoing production of texts: lectures, speeches, and catalogue essays that combine reflections on his art with anecdotal elements.

The artist's book titled *Mittendrin ein Z* containing photographs and an extensive new text by Gerald Domenig will be published in conjunction with his first institutional solo exhibition in Austria.

Gerald Domenig was born in Villach in 1953 and lives and works in Frankfurt am Main.

The exhibition program is conceived by the board of the Secession.
Curator: Jeanette Pacher