L.A. Galerie Lothar Albrecht presents:

**Oliver Boberg**

“Corner of a Garden” and other new works

November 12th — December 31st, 2011

You and your friends are cordially invited to the opening on Saturday, November 12th, from 11 a.m.—6 p.m. The artist will be present.

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After Photography

by Ralf Christofori

The question whether a photographic image depicts reality or creates its own pictorial reality is one of the central issues of contemporary art. The work of the artists Laurie Simmons, Thomas Demand, Edwin Zwakman, Oliver Boberg and Lois Renner figures centrally in this connection. All of these artists have in common that they build models in which they (re)construct really existing or potential spaces and places. In each case the model is produced expressly for a photographic image. What ultimately remains is the photographic image of a place that no longer exists as such and, in fact, never really existed.

It is this particular relationship of image, model and reality, which is a common feature of the work of the artists named. It is important to note that these artists refer to the quality of classical photography, deliberately dispensing with the possibilities of the digital processing of images. The manipulation of the image could be said to take place prior to photography.

And yet this artistic strategy of creating photographs not of reality but of a model reality much more than just a deceptive ploy. Indeed, it captures the general assumption of photography, fulfilling a representative function at its most vulnerable point: i.e., where it has to do with the credibility of photography, its specific possibilities of representation, that is to say the specific interpretation which seems appropriate to photography. In short: it has to do with the prototypical prerequisites of photography which significantly define its production and reception.

The question whether the photographs by Oliver Boberg, ["and the other artists"] depict a model or reality certainly plays a decisive role. However, the insight that the works are photographs of models does not lead to a definitive conclusion. The US-American art historian Elizabeth Mangini wrote the following about Oliver Boberg’s photographic works: ‘Our interest does not stop when we discover they depict models. In fact, the game only really begins then.’ To be precise, it begins with the photograph trying to make us believe that we are seeing the picture of a foregrounded reality.

This is also the case in the works by Simmons, Demand, Zwakman, Boberg and Renner. But it is also not the case, since this foregrounded reality only exists temporarily as a model. And this makes us become suspicious about the entire scope of this
'game' with which we are dealing in these works. Thus the sure gaze of the observer draws support from the alleged specificities of photographic representation only to then, in the next moment, call it into question. Since the photographs depict models of reality and not reality itself, they not only irritate the assumption of what is superficially evident and visible but even the prototypical prerequisites of photographic production and reception. Or to put it differently: These pictures of models recall that photography itself can only establish the model case of a possible reality, meaning and conception. (…)

This intrinsic but also omnipresent reality and authority of the photographic image becomes particularly relevant within Oliver Boberg's image-defining process. Since we are first of all dealing with a photographic image, we tend to believe that what we have before us is the depiction of actually existing architecture. The common model used to explain photography - one which suggests being able to transcend the image with regard to the depicted object - seems to allude to this possibility. That this strategy proves successful has to do with the fact that this reality in the image strikes us as being all too familiar, that is, the general idea we have of this type of architecture allows something to be recognized. Oliver Boberg actually presents us a 'median value' of this architecture. These many different photographic models yield sketches, and often, after many months of work, the artist produces a detailed processed model. Finally the photographic image of a place that never really existed emerges. Model and image are not modelled after a concrete location. The semblance of the familiar and banal thus proves to be a strategy which in Boberg's works does not just refer to a motif but also to the technique - for instance with regard to the familiarity of an understanding of the picture. Thus, in his pictures the artist deliberately applies the criteria of documentary photography that aims at neutrality and objectivity. He also takes recourse to the standardized style of archival photography and to our personal experience. 3 All three aspects come to bear to the same extent, creating systems of reference that make people aware of common modes of perception and models of explanation in different ways. At the same time all these aspects allude to the fact that it is a photographic representation which is only able to construct something like objective, documentary value under the cited conditions. In the case of Oliver Boberg's work this presumed picture-immanent value of photography is always called into question. He thus refers to the far-reaching conventions of this prototypical case of photographic representation. In Boberg's photographic images we follow these conventions, and discover in them not just their conditioning but also ours. (…)

Ralf Christofori (c) “post_modellismus – Models in Art” 2005 for Krinzinger Projekte

1 The following text is a shortened version of several passages of the book: Ralf Christofori, Bild - Modell - Wirklichkeit: Repräsentationsmodelle in der zeitgenössischen Fotografie (Heidelberg, 2005).
3 ibid.