

gute aussichten 2013/2014 Exhibition Guide



This year the jury for “gute aussichten – new german photography 2013/2014” received 100 submissions from 33 institutions. As usual, “gute aussichten” offers no winner’s podium, no prize money and no ranking, just pure winners. “gute aussichten 2013/2014” – now in its tenth year and according to SPIEGEL “Germany’s most renowned competition for young photographers” – presents a unique and far-ranging synopsis in terms of both the content and style of the works created by young photographers in Germany during the past 12 months. Individual image series are distinguished by their highly diverse aesthetic, formal and conceptual approaches, providing an insight into the multifaceted themes that form the focus of young artists’ interests today.

This year’s jury, chaired by founder and art historian Josefine Raab (Wiesbaden), included jury members Dr. Wibke von Bonin, art historian and cultural journalist (Köln), Verena Hein, Curator and Exhibition Director of the Museum Stuck Villa (Munich), Mario Lombardo, Art Director, Bureau Lombardo (Berlin), Luminita Sabau, the former Director of DZ Bank’s Art Collection (Frankfurt/M), Hans-Christian Schink, internationally renowned photographer (Leipzig) and Ingo Taubhorn, Curator at the House of Photography, Deichtorhallen (Hamburg).

An espresso machine drowning in its own coffee, people tanned, branded, and scarred by their existence on the margins of society or staged in such absurd poses that the viewer is left startled and puzzled. Now in its tenth year, “gute aussichten 2013/2014” presents a range of surprisingly diverse ideas, reflections and photographic strategies, forms and media that not only depicts the current status quo but also inspires.

Yet there is an element that unites all these works: It is the way in which they do not fulfill expectations or promises, the way in which they refuse to abide by conventions, and the way that they subvert all predictions and intuitions. This refusal is the common theme throughout these nine works. Hopes are deceived, physical laws suspended, the limitations of media overcome and viewing habits turned upside down.

Nothing is what it seems. But still it is just the way it is. This generation of young photographers brings up painful subjects, by making them visible and perceptible. They bring ideas like freedom, dignity and truth back into the picture, forcing us to look at them, to ask questions and to think about these values. And – the way we see it – these ideas are essential for us and for the present age.

The seven members of the jury selected the nine prizewinners and their projects, as usual ordered alphabetically:

Nadja Bournonville: A Conversion Act (2012)

The basis of Nadja Bournonville’s work is the cluster of symptoms that used to be known as hysteria, a disorder caused by a wandering (sexually unsatisfied) uterus. Freud saw it as a conversion disorder, a transfer of a mental affliction to the somatic level. In her photographic work, “A Conversion Act”, Nadja Bournonville addresses this idea of conversion from the mental to the physical, creating two series of eight images each that complement one another.



Anna Domnick: Calm II (2013)

In her ten-part series “Calm II”, Anna Domnick grapples with the visualization of intellectual and physical disintegration. The intense exploration of landscapes, an autobiographical element which she brings into her work, is transformed in “Calm II” into an almost complete abstraction of the actual subject. Anna Domnick visualizes the process in which mental and physical disintegration go hand in hand.

Birte Kaufmann: The Travellers (2012)

“Tinker” or “Gypsy Cob” are alternative names for Irish cob horses, which are still bred by Irish Travellers, a closed community with their own rules and traditions. As recently as 40 years ago, these spotted horses

still hauled the Traveller's covered wagons across the country. With persistence, Birte Kaufmann managed to win the trust of some of these families. Her photographs, which oscillate between documentary, narration and staging, offer an authentic peek into a world otherwise inaccessible to us.



Lioba Keuck: Couve e Coragem (2012)

"Cabbage and Courage" - what sounds almost like a socialist slogan, designed to enhance work ethics, describes the reality of the lives of people who are fighting for mere survival at the margins of Portuguese society. For her work Couve e Coragem, Lioba Keuck has done research in the poverty belt of the Portuguese capital, asking the people to tell her their stories which she presents in a mixture of text, portraits, and artistic and documentary photographs.

Alwin Lay: Mod. CLASSIC (2010/2013)

"You can't make something out of nothing." This could be Alwin Lay's motto. Or else: It is rare that what is supposed to happen actually happens, but a lot still happens. "Mod. CLASSIC" is the name of a small Italian portafilter espresso machine from the 1970s that has become Alwin Lay's symbol of his creative work. The presentation of the machine is overwritten by its own activity, the production of coffee. This causes a non-fulfillment of expectations. Lay surprises the viewer in a witty and humorous way - "mod CLASSIC", one might say.

Marian Luft: Back2Politics (2013)

"When there is no revolution, one has to create one", this title of an article about Hans Magnus Enzensberger mentioning his speech on the occasion of the civil unrest in Paris in May 1968 could be applied tongue-in-cheek to Marian Luft's multi-part series Back2Politic: In a time during which there is no revolution in sight, one has to or can, at least as an artist, create one at any given moment. His spatial installation - all of which in terms of content and technique has been made with the help of a computer - samples content analogous to contemporary art and cultural production, and from this generates a completely independent aesthetic product with the help of a computer.



Stephanie Steinkopf: Manhattan - Street of Youth (2012)

Manhattan is the name of two large prefabricated buildings in a village in Brandenburg in the middle of the countryside, "Street of Youth" the name of the street. 23 years after the reunification of East and West Germany, nothing is left of the formerly coveted apartments. One of the two buildings on this street is completely empty, while in the other only twelve out of 40 apartments still have tenants. Stephanie Steinkopf's photographs tell the stories of unfulfilled hopes, agony, desolation and welfare. They show the other side of the coin that is the economic power Germany - and this side is not so shiny.

Daniel Stubenvoll: Neat Work - Part I & II (2013)

Daniel Stubenvoll is not afraid to ask the most fundamental questions: where does novelty come from, and how does it come about? A possible answer to him is that everything begins with a cornerstone - that is the foundation of every work, an idea which he sets into photography. And Daniel Stubenvoll is certain of this much: the work must be "clean," like a building. In "Clean Works" Stubenvoll curates not only work about this cornerstone from his fellow students from different artistic disciplines, but also his own-cornerstone-photography, which takes its inspiration from the diverse work of his fellows.

Christina Werner: PIPAL (2012/2013)

An herbarium case with leaves of the Pipal tree (native in India, et al.), six so-called "Betonbilder" ("concrete images"), 12 snapshots, and an MDF panel are the components of Christina Werner's installation. They form an ensemble of different spaces on both sides of the river in Ahmedabab, an emerging metropolis in the state of Gujarat in western India, and become a promenade through the city. With a clear mooring in the conceptual, Werner's work is exemplary for how it manages to circumnavigate the cliffs of expected images, offering an entirely new way of seeing.

All works are available for purchase, along with exhibition catalogs from this year and prior years.

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