

Known for his black-and-white street scenes, family portraits, landscapes and culture-scapes, architectural photographs, museum and church pictures, Audience series, and industrial pictures, Thomas Struth's most recent body of work, shown at the gallery in 2010, investigated the structural complexity of techno-scientific spaces throughout Asia, Europe and the Americas.

Struth writes, *"With the previous body of work my interest was initially stimulated by a strong and painful discrepancy. It is clear that the contemporary human imagination is more easily fired by the pyrotechnics of science and technology rather than by the difficult, and perhaps now historically discredited, negotiation of political ideals. I wanted to open the doors to some of these unseen places in order to scrutinize what our contemporary world—what we—create, depicting plasmaphysics and chemistry, ship- and oil rig-building, space shuttle repair, architecture, etc., as what our minds have materialized and transformed into sculpture. Most of these machines, tools, and objects are the results of closed-group activity, yet they affect us strongly without us ever being able to really see them."*

For his current exhibition Struth presents a new series of pictures in which he again penetrates key places of human imagination in order to scrutinize the landscape of enterprise, invention and digital engineering as well as the complex hidden structures of advanced technology--image makers and industry--in relation to culture and history. Taking an archetypal site for the creation of cultural dreams and imagination, one group of pictures depicts panoramic views of Disney's theme parks in Los Angeles--an iconic place of imagination and one which has globally shaped human fantasy. A second compelling and dynamic group of works investigates new sites of technology, and provides a continuum into the charged backdrops of science and industry and our shared contemporary reality.

Struth continues, *"With the new work, I attempt to take a wider, more principled point of view. I want to reconsider how the process of imagination and fantasy works in general, how something which has built up in someone's mind has materialized and become reality. The German expression "sich etwas ausmalen"—to paint something in one's head—refers to the picturing capacity of the human brain. It is a condition, without which we cannot create anything.*

*"My thoughts about this were partly inspired by Katja Eichinger's 2008 article in the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ) about the altered perspective and reading of Disneyland since its beginnings in the 1950s. In a time when information technology and the picture-making industry accelerate their efforts to bring imagination and physical reality closer together, thus turning the passive experience of watching a screen into something more bodily, I thought it would be interesting to return to this early example of the constructed imagination, Disneyland.*

*“I went to Anaheim in 2009 to test its potential for a new body of work and returned in April 2013. My focus was particularly drawn to the ambiguity between what Walt Disney had remembered from his trips to Europe and how it was later rebuilt as a kind of latent reality in California.*

*“The six pictures from Disneyland I combine in my exhibition with other works I have made at various research or medical facilities in Berlin, at Georgia Tech in Atlanta, and at exemplary urban locations in Ulsan, South Korea and St. Petersburg, Russia. The surprise of what we have collectively created becomes more evident when one takes a more general perspective. Showing real experimental physics, a 21st-century urban landscape, or a surgical robot in action reinforces the question: How should we judge what we see? More intimately, let us consider the vulnerability of the human body and soul under these circumstances. It’s all creation; it’s made. It’s not a given.”*

*- Thomas Struth, Los Angeles, December 2013*

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