

checklist of the exhibition

Anatomisches Institut der Universität Basel, 2002
chromogenic color (Type C) print
60 x 60 inches
Courtesy of the Rena Bransten Gallery,
San Francisco

Kaiserliches Hofmobiliendepot Wien IV, 2002
chromogenic color (Type C) print
60 x 60 inches
Courtesy of the Rena Bransten Gallery,
San Francisco

Mausoleum Salzburg I (Rausoclen), 1996
chromogenic color (Type C) print
25 x 25 inches
Courtesy of Sonnabend Gallery, New York

Palazzo Zenobio Venezia III, 2003
chromogenic color (Type C) print
60 x 60 inches
Courtesy of Sonnabend Gallery, New York

Hispanic Society of America New York IV, 2001
chromogenic color (Type C) print
33 1/2 x 33 1/2 inches
Collection of Barbara and Tom Eagleton

Stadtarchiv Dresden III, 2003
chromogenic color (Type C) print
33 1/2 x 33 1/2 inches
Collection of Barbara and Tom Eagleton

Rathaus Hamburg VI, 2000
chromogenic color (Type C) print
33 1/2 x 33 1/2 inches
Collection of Barbara and Tom Eagleton

Deutsche Bibliothek Frankfurt am Main III, 1997
chromogenic color (Type C) print
25 1/2 x 21 1/2 inches
Collection of Barbara and Tom Eagleton

Königliche Bibliothek Schweden, Stockholm II, 1983
chromogenic color (Type C) print
24 x 21 inches
Collection of Barbara and Tom Eagleton

Haus der Natur Salzburg III, 1996
chromogenic color (Type C) print
25 1/2 x 21 1/2 inches
Collection of Barbara and Tom Eagleton

Rodin Museum Philadelphia I, 2000
chromogenic color (Type C) print
33 1/2 x 33 1/2 inches
Collection of Barbara and Tom Eagleton

Long Beach Public Library II, 2000
chromogenic color (Type C) print
33 1/2 x 33 1/2 inches
Collection of Barbara and Tom Eagleton

Kloster Mehrerah Bregenz IV, 1999
chromogenic color (Type C) print
33 1/2 x 33 1/2 inches
Collection of Barbara and Tom Eagleton

Bourse du travail Calais II, 2001
chromogenic color (Type C) print
33 1/2 x 33 1/2 inches
Collection of Barbara and Tom Eagleton

Bibliothèque Nationale de France Paris XX, 1998
chromogenic color (Type C) print
33 1/2 x 33 1/2 inches
Collection of Barbara and Tom Eagleton

Museo Arqueológico Madrid V, 2000
chromogenic color (Type C) print
33 1/2 x 33 1/2 inches
Collection of Barbara and Tom Eagleton

Universitäts Bibliothek Hamburg, 2002
2 chromogenic color (Type C) prints
diptych, each 24 x 24 inches
Collection of Barbara and Tom Eagleton

Städelschule Frankfurt, 1993 (printed 1998)
chromogenic color (type C) print
19 1/2 x 21 1/2 inches
Collection of Barbara and Tom Eagleton

Biblioteca PHE Madrid I, 2000
Chromogenic color (Type C) print
60 x 60 inches
Collection of Barbara and Tom Eagleton

*Biblioteca de la Real Academia de la Lengua
Madrid IV, 2000*
chromogenic color (Type C) print
33 1/2 x 33 1/2 inches
Collection of Ulrike and Tom Schlafly

Bibliothek Salamanca, 1998
chromogenic color (Type C) print
33 1/2 x 33 1/2 inches
Collection of Ulrike and Tom Schlafly

Kupferstich Kabinett Dresden I, 2002
chromogenic color (Type C) print
33 1/2 x 33 1/2 inches
Collection of Ulrike and Tom Schlafly

All dimensions reflect inside frame size.

*The exhibition is organized by the Sheldon
Art Galleries and is drawn from the St. Louis
collections of Barbara and Tom Eagleton
and Ulrike and Tom Schlafly, and from
Rena Bransten Gallery, San Francisco and
Sonnabend Gallery, New York.*

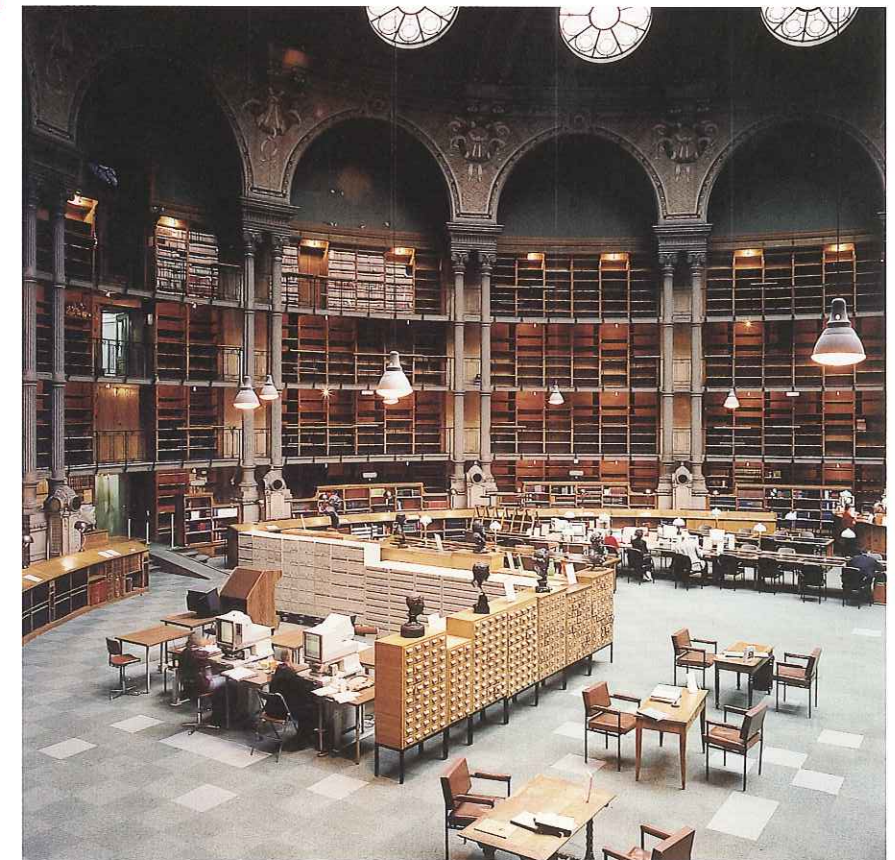
*The exhibition is sponsored by Nancy and
Kenneth Kranzberg, Eleanor J. Moore and
Anabeth and John Weil. The publication
of this brochure is made possible by Ellen
and Durb Curlee.*

*Special thanks to Tom Eagleton for the
inspiration and assistance in mounting and
publicizing this exhibition.*

The Sheldon Art Galleries
3648 Washington Boulevard
St. Louis, Missouri 63108
314.533.9900
www.sheldonconcerthall.org/galleries.asp

Gallery Hours:
Tuesdays and Thursdays Noon to 8:00 p.m.;
Wednesdays and Fridays Noon to 5:00 p.m.;
Saturdays 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and one
hour before concerts and during intermissions.

candida höfer



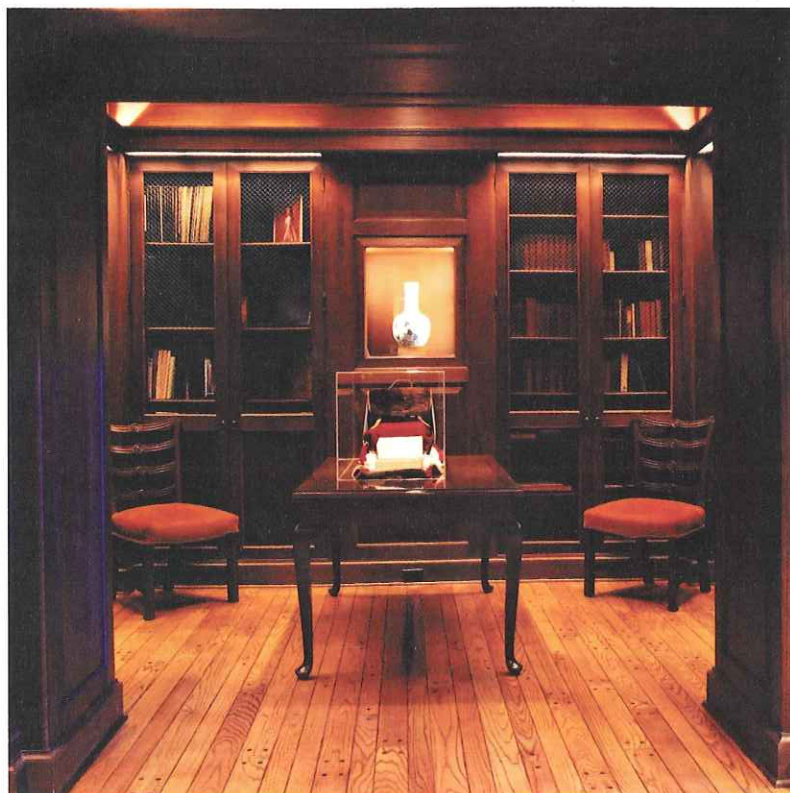
THE SHELDON ART GALLERIES



ince the 1970s, photographer Candida Höfer has investigated the private within the public, transforming bustling public places like libraries, waiting rooms, museums, and other areas of transitory migration into images that are meditative and analytic. Both grand rooms in palaces, baroque in their “wedding cake” splendor, and modernist spaces that are clean, crisp and minimal are presented with equal clarity. Höfer’s typologies have roots in a school of photography fostered by German artists Berndt and Hilla Becher, who are known for their grids of photographs of sculptural industrial structures. Höfer’s are less rigorous than those of the Bechers, however, and in her catalogue of spaces, a humanity and powerful sense of place is manifest.

absences and presences

Figures are rarely included in Höfer’s compositions, but the rooms Höfer chooses to photograph still signal a palpable human presence: chairs, surrogates for the human body, stand silently anticipating visitors or appear just to have been vacated; lamps on tables seem to have just been moved into position; computer monitors sit poised and ready; cozy and grand libraries assert their presence as vast reservoirs of knowledge and custodians of human history. Only one recent image, titled *Palazzo Zenobio*



Venezia III, 2003, makes direct reference to the photographer. A self portrait, the photograph shows Höfer (barely) reflected in a large gilt mirror, dwarfed by her surroundings and seemingly about to be swallowed by the marble floor. There is also humor in her photographs as she finds odd juxtapositions: taxidermied animals and other fauna and flora are presented within the confines of beautiful display cases; a gaggle of chairs in varying styles on a large display lift appear ready for performance; and the Burghers of Calais gather together in a parade in the sculpture hall of the Rodin Museum in Philadelphia. It is in the subtle details she records that humanity emerges.

capturing space/ undermining grace

In her photographs, Höfer moves between balanced compositions with centrally located vanishing points and off-center counterpoints to those, in which she undermines the expected by subverting compositional norms. As one views Höfer’s images, they morph from reductive formalism to an illustration of animated anticipatory presence: at one moment they are viable spaces of human habitation and in the next they solidify into a Mondrian-like collection of rectangles and squares. Höfer heightens this effect in her careful selection of viewpoint and in the elements that occupy the picture’s frame. Harmonically balanced are images like *Bourse du travail, Calais IV*, 2001 or *Kloster Mehrerah Bregenz IV*, 1999. Others are quietly claustrophobic in their hermetic balance. Dark and oppressive, the walls and ceiling of the room depicted in *Long Beach Public Library II*, 2000 press heavily against the floor. Relief comes in the form of a vase, dead center, which floats in the darkness of the room, encased behind glass and lit like a sacred vessel.

Light is an important compositional element in Höfer’s photographs. Acting as a release for the eye, luminous counterpoints animate otherwise heavy rooms and compositions. In *Kloster Mehrerah Bregenz IV*, a stained glass window at the end of a long set of dark wooden stacks allows our eye to escape from the confines of the narrow hallway. In both *Bourse du travail, Calais II*, 2001 and *Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris, XX*, 1998, skylights glow and animate the otherwise heavy architectural forms.

Not all of Höfer’s photographs are delectably balanced. In some, she undermines her own penchant for the grace of balance with subtle compositional subversions; notably, *Rathaus Hamburg VI*, 2000 ñ an image with a strong horizontal arrangement of forms whose corner is slashed by a red rope across the lower right corner. Another disturbing compositional element is found in *Mausoleum, Salzburg, I (Rausoclen)*, 1996, where the arch of a sculpture’s niche is amputated at the top, leaving us slightly uneasy. In *Palazzo Zenobio*, the floor is disconcertingly expansive and takes up far too large a percentage of the picture’s frame. These compositional choices destabilize the comfort we traditionally garner from balanced compositions, animate the image and rip us from our reverie.

the moment before

The absence that Höfer captures in her photographs is an anticipatory one. Although devoid of the crowds that one normally expects to find in public places such as these, we know they will soon again be filled with life. The impossibility of this pictured absence is almost more palpable than the quiet that these images make us believe is possible. Höfer’s brand of “architectural photography” is more about the transitory nature of public spaces. It is a private, alternate existence that is revealed in which the buildings hum with their own internal presence. Not like the clinical architectural documents free of human presence that are “eye candy” for those selling design ideas, Höfer’s photographs instead offer a sensitive metaphor for the ebb and flow of life.

Olivia Lahs-Gonzales, Director
The Sheldon Art Galleries



biography

Born in 1944 in Eberswalde, Germany, Höfer lives in Düsseldorf, Germany. She was one of Berndt and Hilla Becher’s first students from 1973-1976 at the Kunstakademie, Düsseldorf. The Bechers, known for their typological studies of watertowers, grain elevators and other buildings of the industrial era, built their legacy of influence in students like Höfer and more recently Thomas Ruff, Thomas Struth, Andreas Gursky and others. From 1976-1983 she worked with the Bechers, and has exhibited internationally since 1976. Her photographs are found in many important public collections including the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, France; the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France; Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, Spain; Kunsthalle Basel, Basel, Switzerland; Museum Folkwang, Essen, Germany; The Museum of Modern Art, New York, New York; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, California and The St. Louis Art Museum, St. Louis, Missouri, among others.

Cover: *Bibliothèque Nationale de France Paris XX*, 1998
chromogenic color (Type C) print
Collection of Barbara and Tom Eagleton,
Courtesy of Rena Brandsten Gallery, San Francisco

Facing page: *Long Beach Public Library II*, 2000
chromogenic color (Type C) print
Collection of Barbara and Tom Eagleton,
Courtesy of Rena Brandsten Gallery, San Francisco

Above: *Haus de Natur Salzburg III*, 1996
chromogenic color (Type C) print
Collection of Barbara and Tom Eagleton,
Courtesy of Rena Brandsten Gallery, San Francisco

Left: *Palazzo Zenobio Venezia III*, 2003
chromogenic color (Type C) print
Courtesy of Sonnabend Gallery, New York