

Press release

Thomas Hirschhorn

A Ruin is a Ruin

28. Januar bis 31. März 2016

In der Galerie Susanna Kulli, Dienerstrasse 21, CH-8004 Zürich

Vernissage: Mittwoch, 27. Januar 2016, ab 18h

Öffnungszeiten: Di - Fr 13-18h, Sa 11-16h

A ruin, as such, is a deserted place, a dehumanized place. A ruin is an abstract, timeless place, free of values. By using black/white technique I wanted to simplify the poster's statement and strengthen its mission as a poster. My work opposes ruin fetishism and ruin tourism, because a ruin is a form. A ruin is something which has been shaped, it's not an aesthetic, a reproduction or a reconstruction – a ruin is pure form. There is nothing to gain from speculating or questioning: what was there before? Why does it look like this? A ruin "is", a ruin "is" itself, it stands on its own, a ruin is "Ruin". As a beginning, a ruin is an assertion and affirms its form as "Ruin". Could everything, the entire universe, have come from destruction, and started from a ruin and chaos? Could everything have developed from chaos? Could there have been nothing before, but a "Ruin"? Therefore, the ruin I am interested in is nothing other than the form "Ruin". In this regard, the quote of Antonio Gramsci's Prison Notebook, no.8: "the content of art is art itself." Art is not journalism or an illustration of a fact. Confronting a work of art means making an experience. A new experience, an experience you may not want to make, but an experience nevertheless. As an artist, I want and must work out the conditions that such an experience can happen. Therefore I cannot operate suggestively with examples or comparisons, I have to work it out, I have to work, fight and engage, I have to give a form coming from myself. Only when completely committed to my form, do I have a chance to touch the truth. The truth is the "Ruin" that stands on its own, that refers to nothing other than itself and asserts itself as a form.

The ten works are posters. They are posters like those that one hangs on a wall in a room, and therefore they require a certain size. On the ten posters there are images of small or large ruins combined together. By using different sizes for each element, I want to emphasize, reinforce and clarify the assertion that "A Ruin is a Ruin". On the collage I pasted together – the technique is the collage technique – what is meant to be distinct: age difference, provenance difference, subject difference, value difference. What really counts is that no ruin is "innocent". All ruins connect beyond time and beyond location – a ruin is universal and timeless. The charged and complex meaning of a ruin gives it – as a form – density, dynamic and, above all, its necessity.

My interest in ruins comes from the fact that they say something. Their meaning is multifaceted and complex, even hyper complex. Before showing us "why", each ruin shows us that it "is" a ruin. A ruin points to: archaeological ruins, corruption, natural disaster, fire, water, construction failure, cultural-, political-, aesthetical-, or economic collapse, material weakness, neglect, accident, bombing.

Thomas Hirschhorn, January, 2016