



Teatro Comunale di Bologna I

Date
2006

Primary Maker
Candida Höfer

Medium
Chromogenic print

Description

Candida Höfer is renowned for her images of the interiors of public buildings such as libraries, palaces, banks, theaters, museums, and – as we see here – opera houses. A frequent creator of photographs of Italian spaces, here Höfer depicts Bologna's

Teatro Comunale, the world's first publicly-funded opera house and one of Italy's most important venues for opera. This large-scale photograph is one of a series of images that the artist has produced of Western theaters and opera houses that enable the viewer to consider the social, political, cultural and architectural qualities and implications of the spaces in which many theater and opera productions are staged. As the daughter of a ballet dancer and a theater critic, the photographer may have a particular personal connection to such places. Höfer studied with the important German photographic duo Bernd and Hilla Becher at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf from 1976. Famous for producing deadpan black and white images of industrial architecture, the Bechers often presented their photographs of structures such as water towers and blast furnaces in grids, creating "typologies" of common industrial forms. As professors, the Bechers influenced the style and approach of a new generation of German photographers that included Andreas Gursky and Thomas Ruff, as well as Höfer. Like the Bechers, Höfer approaches her subjects methodically, in this case photographing from the stage out into the audience's space, from the audience's point of view to the stage, and then working her way around the auditorium, as exhibited by other works from the series. Moreover, her photographs also function as a typological or encyclopedic record of a certain type of cultural and architectural space. Höfer utilizes digital technology to adjust the color and brilliance of her images, but each photograph is captured using only the available light and so are the result of long exposure times. The artist noted in an interview with the New York Times in 2015 that while her images depict uninhabited spaces, "such places are always alive – rehearsals are scheduled, alterations to the sets are being made and technicians and cleaning people are usually waiting."

Dimensions

Image: 55 × 69 5/8 in. (139.7 × 176.8 cm) Sheet: 70 7/8 × 85 in. (180 × 215.9 cm) Frame: 72 1/2 × 87 × 1 7/8 in. (184.2 × 221 × 4.8 cm)