

# SHANE CAMPBELL GALLERY

Artforum  
November 2006

## ARTFORUM

### Cologne

#### Margarete Jakschik

GALERIE GISELA CAPITAIN

The thirty-five trained photographs in this debut solo exhibition were small and pale, with subjects that don't reveal anything spectacular-and yet the works of Margarete Jakschik, a Polish-born artist who has lived in Germany since 1980, when she was six years old, fascinate at first sight. Jakschik completed her studies at the Kunstakademie in Düsseldorf two years ago under the tutelage of Thomas Ruff, but little connection is made here to his artistic process. Indeed, Jakschik's photographs are rather the opposite of Ruff's: subjective, intimate, contingent, passionate-even romantic.

For years Jakschik has been fascinated by the Los Angeles music scene of the '60s and '70s. "Pardon My Heart," the title of a 1975 song by Neil Young, is accordingly the title of her exhibition, in which individual photographs go untitled (all works 2006). Drawn by desire and mourning for something irretrievably vanished, she wandered the city and its environs for two months. The images yielded by these excursions are unusual. We have never seen Los Angeles this way before. No gleaming sky, no swimming pools, none of the transparency of an Ed Ruscha painting, no glossy surfaces, no fast living. Instead, calm, cautious searches, glances that only fleetingly graze what is seen instead of pretending to capture it for eternity like the billboards that inspired Ruscha. The images seem to have come about by accident, and yet they tell the story of an era of dissolution-and they tell it with great precision. It is the small details, those that don't immediately attract the eye, from which the stories are built.

Thus one sees a drowsy sky that takes over nearly the entire surface of the image; only on the lower edge can the black contours of mountains, almost invisible, be seen, and, on the lower right, the wellknown "Hollywood" sign. Thus one casts a glance into a back courtyard where neon lights have been installed, or down an alley behind the Capitol Records building where shabby furniture has been left, awaiting removal. Thus one sees a window, framed by plants, reflecting a palm and the red light of sunset.

Again and again, we're given views from the windows of various motels and hotels, often through Venetian blinds or dirty panes of glass. One window looks out over the swimming pool of the Highland Garden Hotel to the room opposite-could it be the one in which Janis Joplin was found dead? A motel interior seems frozen: a guitar

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player lies under the bed, his hand grasping the neck of the instrument, the only thing visible beneath the checkered bedspread. And then one sees a movie theater from the '60s that has been left to decay and a nearly drained canal on the damp bottom of which overturned chairs lie like corpses. Jakschik consciously stakes her images on longing, on memory; she is conscious of capturing the fleeting, of relying on her feeling for rime. The everyday objects in her images—curtains, a lamp glowing behind blinds—take on an uncanny, mysterious, timeless character, which Jakschik contrasts with the speed, transparency, "disenchantment," and "visualization" of our environment by the digital media.

*-Noemi Smolik*

*Translated from German by Diana Reese.*

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