

he town as a sensual body

First there are structural images, material images and colour images. Catherine Gfeller is trying to get the feel of the syntax in New York, then the clothing, in what materials and colours the town's structure manifests itself, how it dresses, how it appears, how it looks. It is a stereo view that she takes. On the one hand a structural view that records the tectonics of the town, on the other a scanned view that takes the facades of the town, sweeps its materials, feels the sheen. All this several times, behind each other, next to each other. Several fragments are finally put together like a patchwork, like a sequence, giving different perspectives, put together to give a complete view, sometimes constructed architecturally, sometimes staged like a film, sometimes with musical rhythm. The skin of the town and the structure of the town hold hands in the images.

The photographs of Paris expose these poetically analytical statics. They move, they are dynamic, they vibrate with the rhythm of the town. We plunge in, we are in the midst, life rushes past us. Scene for scene, before the changing stage image, sometimes more plain, sometimes more theatrical. It is clear that here Catherine Gfeller abandons the peaceful viewpoint, that she herself moves, that she photographs from the movement, that she brings in reflections. Movements, reflections and double lighting are superimposed on trance-like forms. Like on the roller-coaster, like from a helicopter, the town's vibrations and the photographer's movements multiply into kaleidoscopic images. You think you can hear the town in the photographs.

A contemporary «flâneuse» is what Catherine Gfeller seems to be. She goes into the town, she strokes its skin, listens to its sounds, follows its comings and goings, feels the most varied of atmospheres. She doesn't stop at the possible «Desolation of the Towns» (Alexander Mitscherlich), she doesn't turn everything into a problem, but much more - she loves the city, the people, the smells, the noise, it moves her, she gets a taste of it, she talks to it, she races through the town on her scooter. In her notes she talks about the «Intimate fragments of the town». These photographs are like a declaration of love to the town, they are an affirmation of life that, despite everything, despite all the desolation, does not want to see the joy in urban life, the poetry of city life, taken away. Catherine Gfeller opens herself up to the town, gives herself to it, strokes it, turns hardness into softness, stress into music. She brings Baudelaire into the 21st century. And, like Nobuyoshi Araki, she understands the town not as a pragmatic city, but she experiences it and shows it as a living, vibrating, erotic body.