

IM OSTEN NICHTS NEUES

G2

Andreas Mühe / Sebastian Nebe

Special Exhibition

13 October 2018 – 20 January 2019

The exhibition brings together photographs by Andreas Mühe and paintings by Sebastian Nebe. Both Mühe and Nebe make art that grapples with their roots and the places and contexts in which they grew up. At a time of political uncertainty, the demise of utopian visions, and an increasingly poisonous social climate, their works reflect on the collective and individual longings and anxieties of today.

Andreas Mühe (b. Karl-Marx-Stadt, 1979) takes photographs that challenge our complacency—and examine his own stances—by spotlighting pivotal concerns in contemporary political debates. G2 Kunsthalle showcases a selection from his oeuvre that has never been seen in Leipzig.

Deutsche Weihnacht I (9) was taken in Dresden in 2017 during a Christmas dinner served to homeless and indigent people by an organization affiliated with the nationalist Pegida movement. Isolated from the crowd below, the photographer sits on a balcony, his back but dimly illuminated as he looks down toward the many tables; needy asylum seekers were not welcome. Mühe quietly observes the scene, modeling a conscious effort to wait and see rather than editorialize. The photograph emblemizes the rift that runs through our political and social fabric, contradicting the strident and thoughtless voices that dominate the debate in an age of relentlessly fast-paced media consumption.

The elaborate staging of Mühe's photographs underscores the significance he

accords to the parameter of time. Lighting and shadow effects are meticulously arranged. Far from being snapshots, his pictures take their time and yet cut to the quick. In an analogy with processes of reflection, they reveal the ineluctable need to tolerate dissension in its intensity and duration, to face up to others' ability to think for themselves and one's own critique. Meanwhile, Mühe's pictures are often also eloquent expressions of a state of mind that is hard to put into words: have we not all at one time or another felt the sudden profound discomfort, the chilling numbness, that comes with acknowledging our deep-seated fear of impuissance?

Silence and solitude feature prominently in the panoramic large-format works on paper by Sebastian Nebe (b. Blankenburg/Harz, 1982). The diptych *Quelle* (8) shows a forested landscape with traces of man's efforts to harness its resources. On a gently sloping hillside on the left, a stream is impounded by a small dam made of rocks and other materials found on the spot; the pond is drained by a pipe. To the right, blue plastic sheeting—a detail that places the scene in our own time—covers a mound. Whatever is beneath the tarps is protected against the weather and inquisitive eyes.

One cannot but wonder whether humans live in the vicinity of this makeshift construction. The forest might be home to those who reject conventional ideas of coexistence and

communication, or perhaps to society's outcasts. Nebe suggests the presence of a nearby off-the-grid commune to limn a metaphorically charged and, it should be noted, hardly idyllic vision of the genesis of a community: a retreat from civilization, communion with the self, the tragedy of the fresh start and of irrecoverable loss.

Perhaps more than any other locale, the German forest, the magical and murky setting of mysterious, cruel, and mythical tales, lends itself to projections of the desire for solid roots and the irrational panic fear of alienation. In the three-part series *Wald* (12–14), Mühe poses a group of humans trekking across a clearing and resting under the cover of young pine trees. The woodland becomes a haven for men, women, and children. They wear hoods, hats, and headscarves that protect and camouflage them. Mühe often pushes the envelope with his pictures, and for these shots, he took up position on a raised hide in the forest, a platform from which hunters observe their skittish game. The photographer trains his lens on his motif, capturing and dragging into the light what lives in hiding, infringing on the last hope of inviolability. He makes the forest his stage and recruits members of his family to produce a play about expulsion and the hunt, escape and refuge, home and homelessness, anonymity and identity.

In Nebe's work, calamity manifests itself in dilapidation and land laid waste. *Blende* (2) shows a junkyard before a sinister forest backdrop, with a stack of battered compact cars, a large camper van, and a heap of discarded tires. The two-part composition unfurling beneath a dramatic sky is in some respects reminiscent of Romantic paintings. The dystopian scenario also evokes associations with war photography, where broken-down vehicles littering ravaged landscapes attest to the catastrophic violence of modern warfare.

Nebe's pictures exude the gloom inspired by conditions of degeneration, a quiet melancholy that recalls Stefan Zweig's last book, *The World of Yesterday*. Despairing over the

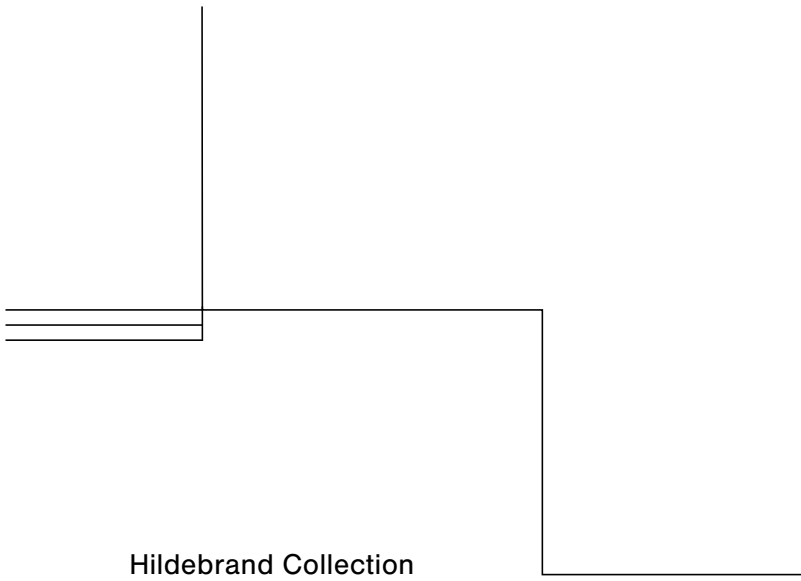
darkness that had enveloped the contemporary world and the regression into barbarism in the war launched by Nazi Germany, Zweig, writing in exile in 1942, describes his feeling of having lost his place in the world: "And so I belong nowhere, and everywhere am a stranger, a guest at best. Europe, the homeland of my heart's choice, is lost to me."

In this light, Nebe's landscapes and Mühe's portraits may be read as visionary and yet intimate memoirs of complex circumstances. In 1980, Maurice Blanchot opened his study *L'écriture du désastre* with the observation that the disaster "ruins everything, all the while leaving everything intact." The dark of night gives way to a sunrise; where there is shadow there is light; decline sparks hopes; after every end comes a new beginning. In this spirit, the moody twilight of Nebe's *Kiefernwald* (1) once again brings Zweig to mind. In his farewell letter, he wrote: "I salute all my friends! May it be granted them yet to see the dawn after the long night!"

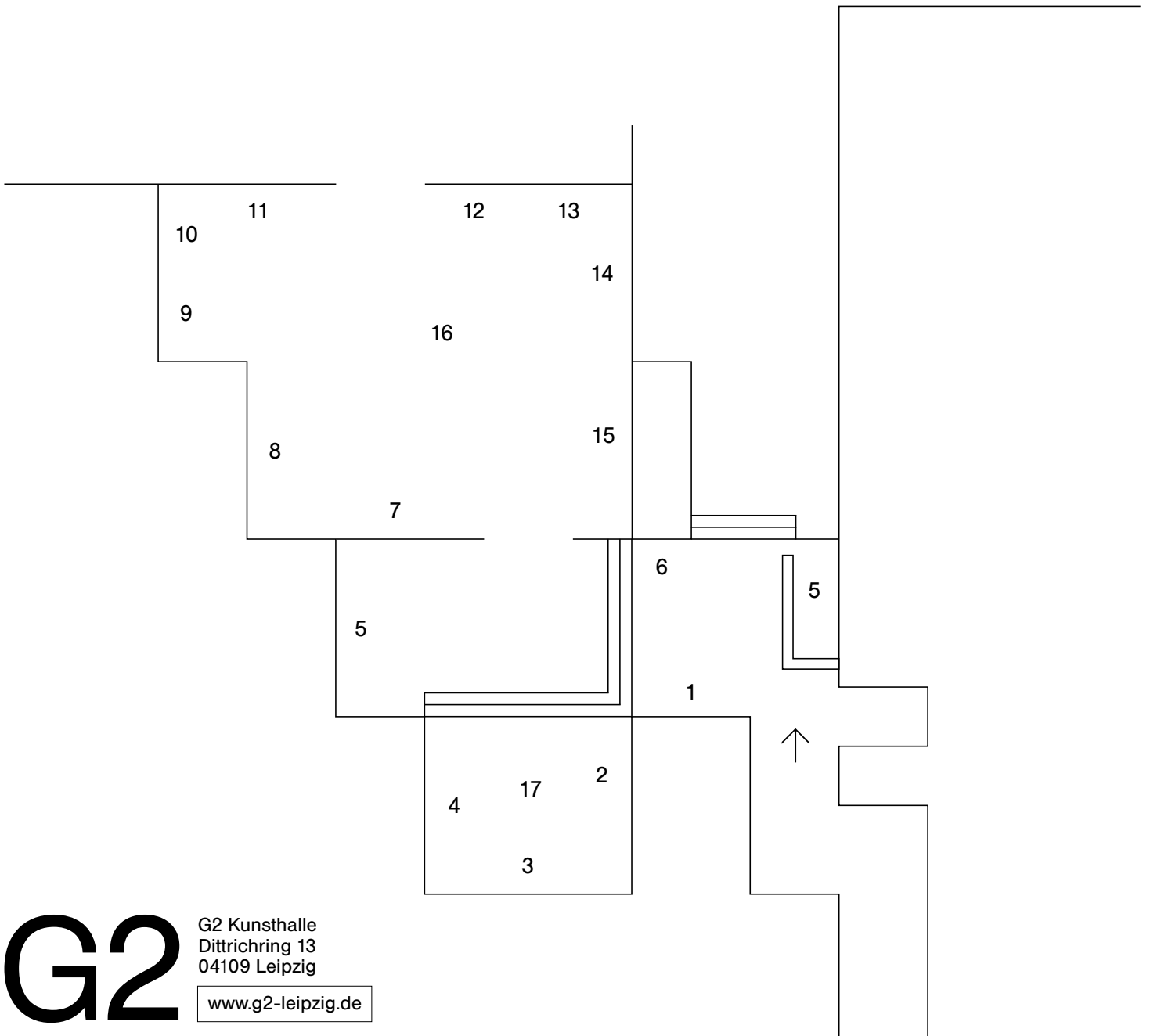
Text: Anka Ziefer

Translation: Gerrit Jackson

IM OSTEN NICHTS NEUES



Hildebrand Collection



G2

G2 Kunsthalle
Dittrichring 13
04109 Leipzig

www.g2-leipzig.de

ANDREAS MÜHE

Andreas Mühe, b. Karl-Marx-Stadt, 1979. He lives in Berlin and has worked as a freelance photographer since 2001. Lead Awards 2008, 2014 & 2015 (Portraitfotografie des Jahres), 2013 Art Directors Club 2013: (Fotografie – Bildjournalismus), 2012 Deutscher Reporterpreis (Grand Prix), 2010 Hansel-Mieth-Preis. Selected solo exhibitions: 2018 Red Brick Museum Beijing, 2018 König Galerie Berlin, 2018 König Galerie London, 2017 Kunstverein Ulm, 2017 Deichtorhallen Hamburg – Haus der Photographie, 2016 Kunsthalle Rostock. Selected group shows: 2018 Galerie Eigen + Art Berlin, 2018 Museum für Gegenwartskunst Siegen, 2017 G2 Kunsthalle Leipzig, 2015 FOMU Fotomuseum Antwerpen, 2015 Benaki Museum Athens, 2014 Martin-Gropius-Bau Berlin, 2012 NRW-Forum Düsseldorf.

SEBASTIAN NEBE

Sebastian Nebe, b. Blankenburg/Harz, 1982. He lives and works in Berlin. From 2002 to 2005 he studied at the Burg Giebichenstein – University of Art and Design Halle/Saale, 2005–2009 Diploma at the Academy of Fine Arts Leipzig, 2012 Meisterschüler (postgraduate) of Astrid Klein at the Academy of Fine Arts Leipzig. 2013 Leipziger Volkszeitung Art Award. Selected solo exhibitions: 2016 Galerie Kleindienst Leipzig, 2014 Salon Rauch Hamburg, 2013 Museum der bildenden Künste Leipzig, 2013 Centre d'art contemporain Passerelle, Brest. Selected group shows: 2017 Kunstverein Tiergarten Berlin, 2017 Refshaleøen Copenhagen, 2016 Bikini Berlin, 2015 Auf AEG Nürnberg, 2015 Kunstraum Ortloff Leipzig, 2011 Georg-Kolbe-Museum Berlin.

WORKS

1. Sebastian Nebe
K I E F E R N W A L D , 2015
Oil on paper, 182 × 141,5 cm
2. Sebastian Nebe
B L E N D E , 2017
Oil on paper, 194 × 296 cm
Diptych
3. Andreas Mühe
O B E R S A L Z B E R G -
P O R T R A I T S , 2012
18 photographs, C-Print
54,8 × 48,8 × 4,2 cm (each)
Edition: 1/7 + III A.P.
4. Sebastian Nebe
O . T . (D I E N A C H T) , 2017
Oil on paper, 197 × 294 cm
Diptych
5. Andreas Mühe
W E I H N A C H T S B Ä U M E , 2016
38 photographs (1979–2016)
C-Print, 54,8 × 48,8 × 4,2 cm (each)
Edition: 1/7 + III A.P.
6. Andreas Mühe
M Ü H E K O P F E , 2018
C-Print, 142,8 × 112,8 cm
Edition: 3/3 + III A.P.
7. Andreas Mühe
K Ö P F E , 2018
20 photographs, C-Print
54,8 × 48,8 × 4,2 cm (each)
Edition: 1/7 + III A.P.
Wemhöner Collection
8. Sebastian Nebe
Q U E L L E , 2018
Oil on paper, 200 × 300 cm
Diptych
9. Andreas Mühe
D E U T S C H E W E I H N A C H T I
2017
C-Print, 226,4 × 181,4 × 5,5 cm
Edition: 1/3 + III A.P.
10. Andreas Mühe
H U G E N O T T E N I , 2017
C-Print, 226,4 × 181,4 × 5,5 cm
Edition: 3/3 + III A.P.
11. Andreas Mühe
W A N D L I T Z , 2011
20 photographs, C-Print
54,8 × 48,8 × 4,2 cm (each)
Edition: 1/7 + III A.P.
Sammlung Wemhöner
12. Andreas Mühe
W A L D I , 2016
C-Print, 181,4 × 226,4 × 5,5 cm
Edition: 1/3 + III A.P.
13. Andreas Mühe
W A L D I I , 2016
C-Print, 181,4 × 226,4 × 5,5 cm
Edition: 1/3 + III A.P.
14. Andreas Mühe
W A L D I I I , 2016
C-Print, 181,4 × 226,4 × 5,5 cm
Edition: 1/3 + III A.P.
15. Sebastian Nebe
S A N D , S A L T A N D H A I R
2016
Oil on paper, 182 × 459 cm
Triptych
16. Sebastian Nebe
H O L L Y W O O D S C H A U K E L
2011
Powder-coated steel
200 × 120 × 200 cm
17. Sebastian Nebe
L I E G E S T U H L , 2013
Powder-coated steel
205 × 85 × 115 cm

All art works: courtesy the artists

IM OSTEN NICHTS NEUES
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G2 Kunsthalle, Dittrichring 13
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OPENING HOURS:
Wed 3 – 8 p.m.

PUBLIC GUIDED TOURS:
German Thu–Sun 3 p.m. / Mon 11 a.m.
English Sun 4 p.m. / Mon 12 p.m.
Registration: www.g2-leipzig.de

ADMISSION FEE:
Regular 5 Euro
Reduced 3 Euro