

Venice in Solitude

solo show by Christopher Thomas

Fifty One Fine Art Photography is pleased to present "Venice in Solitude", the second solo show of Christopher Thomas (b. 1961). This German based Photographer creates black and white images of cities in a state of rest, deserted, like the metropolis is holding its breath. In former projects the artist already photographed his hometown Munich and urban giant New York. Today he is turning his large-format Polaroid camera towards Venice, a city renowned for its history and grandeur, but notwithstanding one of the most important art centers in the world.

This new series embraces a sense of nostalgia, due to the romantic character of the images. Nevertheless, it hints at a contemporary feeling of desolateness.

The serenity and emptiness that these photographs evoke is not what we would expect of this vibrant city. By shooting before dawn, Thomas is able to reveal the essence of the city, portrayed in its purest form, free from any distraction. In addition he makes long exposures in order to delete the slightest movement or any presence of life. This gives the photographs a ghostly, uncanny character, like the artist has brought the world to a standstill. Moreover they convey, for all their apparent emptiness, a sense of commencement and guarded expectation, a feeling that corresponds with this predawn moment.

In this accumulation of unique photographs, Venice is revealed anew, the artist genuinely succeeded to open up the public spaces of the city. A place so illustrious and absorbed by its powerful history is now stripped down to its bare essence. Like a surrealist flaneur, Thomas takes the viewer on a solitary tour through Venice. So he can discover the city's many architectural splendors, the Piazza San Marco, the misty waters with empty gondolas and the beautifully lit bridges and palaces on his own pace, as if the city is his own.

During his productive career, Thomas has worked for magazines such as Geo, Merian, Stern and Süddeutsche Zeitung Magazin. He has also written numerous photo essays and received international awards for commercial and fine art photography. As an alternative to such commissioned works he began to make nighttime cityscapes on his own initiative. The artist felt the urge to - as he puts it - "get back to the roots". The accompanying publication for his photographs of New York, "New York never sleeps: Photographs by Christopher Thomas", (was awarded by the Deutcher Fotobuchpreis (German Photobook Award).

"Venice in solitude" offers a new perspective on a grand city, which is reduced and dismantled to the essential elements of its world famous architecture. Nevertheless it shows the city as it was intended to be: a brilliantly planned, poetic haven of tranquility.

*Exhibition from 16 March until 5 May 2012 at Fifty One Fine Art Photography.
Opening on Thursday 15 March from 6 pm.*

The accompanying book "Venice in Solitude" will be available at the gallery.