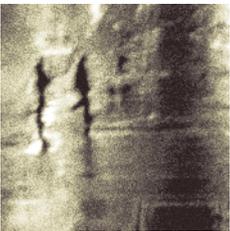


Dark Days - New York

Photographs of
Gabriele Peters



Dark Days New York

The topic of this work of art is the isolation of the modern human being in today's big cities. Three photographs show scenes of crossroads in New York. They were taken from a large distance at night. The humans shown in the photographs are not visible in the negatives with the naked eye. Only an extreme enlargement makes them visible. The images may evoke feelings of a lost past or a memory of a personal emotional incident in the past of the observer. The depicted pedestrians are heading for another place away from this dark and cold crossing. The Russian filmmaker Andrej Tarkowskij takes the view that by giving an account of a hopeless world, an artist can arouse the feeling of the opposite ideal. In this context the photographs can be regarded as criticism of the inhospitable spaces of our today's (and future?) cities, often connected with notions such as fast, sharp, precise, (digital?!).

These photographs are a small excerpt of about 70 works which emerged from journeys to several cities in the Winter of '05/'06, among them New York, Prague, and Venice. The whole cycle is called „Dark Days - Venice, Prague, New York“.

The Technique

The estranged reality of today's city inhabitants is expressed by stylistic devices such as coarse grain, blur, and camera shake. A joined combination of slow, traditional photographic techniques and modern digital image processing methods have been applied to obtain these effects. The photographs were taken on panchromatic film. The relevant sections of the negatives have been scanned with high resolution (4000 ppi). After applying basic image enhancement techniques, artificial grain has been added to the images to further exaggerate the effect of the film grain. Only after this the images are scaled up to their final size. It is important that the grain is added before the enlargement, because otherwise the pointilist effect, especially interesting from different viewing distances, is missed. Finally, a triplex filter with some yellowish and purple tones is applied to the black and white image for atmospheric reasons. Summarizing, the fast, sharp, and precise digital techniques have been combined with the slow, vague, grainy historic techniques to obtain the intended effects. After all, even pure digital art, first of all, has to be art. A work of art, either digital or not, has to express an artistic statement. It has to hook onto something deep-running in our nature. „Dark Days - New York“ tries its hand at this.

The Artist

Gabriele Peters is a professor for Visual Computing at the University of Applied Sciences and Arts, Dortmund, Germany. She received her diploma in Mathematics in 1996 from the Ruhr-University Bochum. For her research on the perception of three-dimensional objects she received her Ph.D. from the Faculty of Technology of the University Bielefeld in 2002. For six years, she has been working on image processing and computer vision at the Graphical Systems Department of the Technical University Dortmund. In 2004/2005, she took part in the development of new techniques for the generation of photo panoramas at the California Institute of Technology.

For the last ten years, she has been active as an artistic photographer, as well. Her photographic and artistic education she received at the Center of Art and Music at Ruhr-University Bochum. She has had the chance to present her works and projects in several group and single exhibitions; for example, in the Museum Bochum, the museum of arts of the city of Bochum.

Homepages: Science: ls7-www.cs.uni-dortmund.de/~peters/
Arts: www.eyeszeit.net