

Hanns Lennart Wiesner, « Christophe Berhault: 250 000 Paintings, Marta Herford, 2020 »

250 000 Paintings by Christophe Berhault (born 1958 in France) is a photo archive of 250 000 digitally reproduced analogue amateur photographs, that were taken from family albums and photo boxes found on flea markets and antique shops in Berlin. The photos cover roughly a century: 1890-1995. They appear in non-chronological order and only for a short moment of 10 seconds. Berhault chooses the photographs from among thousands, subjects them to his very own perspective, and digitally reproduces a selection. According to Berhault is it the very course of life that files past in front of us, its celebrations, anniversaries, love-stories and holidays. A century of history too, wars, tragedies, the dividing of a country in two, and its reconstruction. Personal stories join hands with history, for this hypnotizing link-up of shots saved from oblivion.

By digitally rephotographing them and by blowing them up through the projection on the wall, Berhault is lending these small shots for a short moment the status of an artwork. In other words, only their enlargement discloses their artistic dimension.

Some shots are failures as photographs and rather remind the viewer of impressionist or abstract paintings. Classical painting genres, that could also be applied to photographs: A face in movement with three mouths, like a painting by Francis Bacon or a door, that reminds the viewer of a painting by Mark Rothko – so blurry, one doesn't even know where it ends and where it begins. For these connotations it is crucial to take into account the particular perspective, are you looking at the composition, the texture, the contrast, or the light?

While the museum is presenting its collection within the safety of the museum's inside, Berhault's collection is projected as a slide show onto the museum's representative shell. Both the presentation in the public sphere as well as the shift from inside to outside raise questions about the museum's conventional activity of collecting: What enters the collection? Who is in charge of this decision and how is the collection presented to the public?

On Friday, October 30th, 2020 started the projection *250 000 Paintings* by Christophe Berhault at Museum Marta Herford. The program accompanies the opening of the exhibition *Deceiving Images – A Play with Painting and Photography*. Berhault's work is projected onto the outer shell of Frank Gehry's museum architecture and is only visible from dusk till dawn and runs through till November 28th.