

Ulrich Gebert

## Amerika

11/02 – 12/15/2007

Ulrich Gebert's work revolves around terms that seem at first abstract and intangible, but which define substantially social thinking and action. In his artistic context he maps pointedly and makes comprehensive the problems of thinking in systems, hierarchies, and mechanisms of power. When "Ulrich Gebert conceives his series of photographs on normative categories and modern fantasies of order, the pictures are always accompanied by the certainty of their own constructedness."<sup>1</sup> In his meta-phoric image-cycles and series he pursues fictive documentations of crime or the human drive of grasping our environment and taming nature. He finds images for what is often unspeakable. Depending on the context he avails himself on staged, filmic, documentary or portrait-like methods of depiction in order to find the constructions and contents of his images. Ulrich Gebert combines this media-referential approach with the mindset of a critically thinking artist.

For his current work he has scrutinized the organization and working processes during the orange harvest in Southern Spain and developed an image-cycle of three parts. As in former works the relation of man towards nature plays a crucial role. Like this "topos (...) was the quintessential Romantic motif, used by artists of the period to oppose the alienating effects of industrialisation, for Gebert, this relationship seems to become a medium through which to describe the role of the individual within globalisation and turbo-capitalism".<sup>2</sup> When 'Freischneider' (2003) and 'Typus' (2005) still had a laconic-sarcastic undertone, 'Amerika' turns into a place, where "the ways people treat each other, the mechanisms of their power and control over one another, are played out."<sup>3</sup> This conflation also reflects formally in his work. We are witnesses of a systematic transport, organization and employment process, in which the individual moves to the background and is about to be swallowed by its environment. The small-sized images of part 1 encounter us as an almost filmic sequence. Shot from a distance and appearing almost graphical the images densify in the middle of the series. In contrast to it, the lush tableaux of ripe oranges in part 2 do not offer any point on which the eye can concentrate. The images convey in their presence a metaphor of abundant nature that seems almost paradisiacal in its richness and beauty. As if souled with personality it steps out from the images and provides a glimpse of its entropic character after the imago of the first impression. The final triptyche reinforces consistently this notion. It takes the spectator back to civilization and darkness. Only illuminated by the cold glow of the spotlight an assembly point can be detected where a bare desk stands lonely as a metaphor of the latently present system of order.

Without lurid impetus trusting the small-sized format and the mechanisms of seeing and understanding Ulrich Gebert lines up a microcosm that points to social coherences questioning sustainably the motive of longing for the land of honey and milk.

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<sup>1</sup> Constanze von Marlin, 2007

<sup>2</sup> Ellen Blumenstein: Spurensuche – Über das Verhältnis von Mensch und Natur in den Arbeiten Ulrich Geberts, 2007

<sup>3</sup> ibid.

## **Ulrich Gebert**

(1976) lives in Leipzig / 2005 graduation as Meisterschüler at Prof. Timm Rautert, Leipzig /  
2006 Master of Photography am Royal College of Art, London

### **Exhibitions (selection)**

2007 AMERIKA , KLEMM'S, Berlin (s) / Arbre(s). Des regards photographiques – Images au  
Centre '07 im Château de Fougères-sur-Bièvre, France (g) / Changing Faces, u.a. Scheltama,  
Leiden, The Netherlands, MUVIM, Valencia, Spain (g) / Überwensch (sic!) with Fabian  
Reimann, AMERIKA , Berlin (s)

2006 New Photography from Leipzig, archeus, London (g) / A thousand leaves, AMERIKA ,  
Berlin (s) / Les moments immobiles, with Göran Gnaudschun, Goethe Institut Paris (g) / Zeit  
Raum Bild, 10 Jahre Dokumentarförderpreis der Wüstenrotstiftung, moving exhibition a.o.  
Kulturforum Potsdamer Platz, Berlin (g)

2005 The Leipzig Lens, German Embassy, London + Glasgow School of Art (g) /  
Streiflichter, Städtische Museen, Zwickau (g) / A2, AMERIKA , Berlin (g) / Typus, ASPN,  
Leipzig (s)

2004 Kalte Herzen, Kunstbunker Tumulka, Munich (g) / Fritz, Karl und Ilse, Kunstverein Jena  
(s) / Just Good News for People Who Love Bad News, Galerie Eigen + Art, Leipzig (g) /  
Werke im Dialog, Kunstsammlungen, Chemnitz (g)

2003 Silver & Gold, 20.21 Galerie Edition Kunsthandel, Essen; Palais für aktuelle Kunst,  
Kunstverein Glückstadt; Städtische Galerie Wolfsburg (g) (cat.)

### **Scholarships and Awards**

2007 Marion-Ermer-Preis (cat.) 2006 working stipend of the International Photography  
Research Network EU Culture 2000 / 2004 scholarship of DAAD für studying abroad in  
London

### **Publications**

2007 Künstlerbuch AMERIKA , Kerber Verlag, edition young art  
2005 artist folder TYPUS , edition 50