Synopsis

Candida Höfer creates meticulously composed images of public and institutional spaces marked
with the richness of human activity, yet largely devoid of human presence. Whether a photograph of
a national library or a lounge at Volkswagen’s headquarters, Höfer’s images ask us to conduct
distanced, disengaged examinations through the windows she creates. The collected images
present a universe wholly constructed by human intention, unearthing patterns of order and logic
imposed on these spaces by their absent creators and inhabitants. The Architecture of Absence
examines Höfer’s oeuvre and its relationship to the work of other noted students of renowned
professors Bernd and Hilla Becher.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A quiet humor wanders like a ghost through the laconic photos of Candida Höfer -- no people can
be seen but via the devices of the rooms, libraries, hotels, halls, museums, canteens -- one can
suspect still the existence of human beings indirectly. With a similar humor understanding the
physicist Georg Christoph Lichtenberg once wrote: ”If the posterity of the year 35.000 (or another
planet’s class of sensible nature) would find a lady suit completely undone and if they wanted to
determine the figure of the ladies who would have been covered with that, -- what figure would
come out?” The aesthetic experiments of the German Photographer Candida Höfer activate such
associations. One of her book publications is entitled ”Room Monuments” (of course without any
human being). Before the beginning of her studies (learning from the renowned professors Bernd
and Hilla Becher in Düsseldorf, Germany) Candida Höfer had taken photographs of Turkish fellow citizens in business, tea-rooms and parks. The people then disappeared from her photos. Was this the bad influence of her studies with the married couple Bernd and Hilla Becher, who had photographed only the industry architecture of the German Ruhr district maniacally (stubbornly ignoring all that connections between Nazi-politicians and steel-industry, around Hitler and Krupp, Goebbels and Thyssen)? Or is there hiding a shock, Candida Höfer experienced, as the role of her father, Werner Höfer, a famous TV-talkmaster in the 1960's, was criticized by investigating journalists, checking his own role in the Nazi-era? Did this chase the daughter in a kind of social phobia?

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