

BEN BROWN

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Matthias Schaller –Controfacciata

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Matthias Schaller presents an enigmatic insight into a city that has evoked powerful reactions to produce astonishing achievements in the history of culture. Venice; the city of life, lights and death, is famous for its abundance of art, literature and architecture. Matthias Schaller's photographs are a contemporary representation of the bittersweet paradox that is Venice as a city and how this then transcends into a philosophy of humanity.

Ben Brown Fine Arts is pleased to present the German Photographer Matthias Schaller, showing for the first time in Britain, a series of photographs depicting The Controfacciata ('the back of the façade'). The series was executed between Ponte di Rialto and Piazza San Marco in Venice from 2004 -2007.

For Matthias Schaller these are not just interiors but still lives, the exterior becomes the interior, as the water that surrounds Venice will eventually become Venice. All of the rooms are photographed on the *piano nobile*, where the composition creates a metaphysical transition from the building to the being that inhabit it. The view he creates can become the head-space from which it is understood. The windows, as the view points to the city, signify the relationship of exterior to interior and how it is understood. The icy sharp colours stimulate the atmospheric tension of the season and the presence of the water is evident in the reflections of the ceilings and floors. We are shown the effects of nature during winter on the stunning Venetian architecture and as a result, a landscape creates the tincture of the portrait.

Associated with the school of Bernd & Hilla Becher and likened to the manipulation techniques of Andreas Gursky, he uses a digital camera to photograph the interior and constructs the image with Photoshop. He approaches the subject of Interior Photography with a poetic understanding to produce a contemplative series of work, that marvel in precision, to reveal not only the glory of Venice but the mysteries and complexities in the relationship of nature to mankind. Schaller has photographed in a city that is disappearing as we exist, parallel to the very nature of life itself and what some believe to be the essence of Photography.

He has had many successful solo exhibitions such as "Studio Gursky", Goethe-Institut, New York City and "Werkbildnis", Biennale di Architettura, Venezia (Italy) and also holds an MA in Cultural Anthropology. He lives and works in both New York and Venice.

Catalogue available with text written by Richard Dyer.

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