

Temporal Dimension in Image and the Pursuit of Atmosphere

German artist Andreas Walther first visited Taiwan in 1998. Since then, he has formed strong ties with the island and has participated in various cooperative projects in the course of several long stays. Twenty years later, this small-scale retrospective at the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), Taipei, shows his photographic works from the recent years in conjunction with early video works.

Wandering between video and photography, Walther's early works share one specific feature, which is his emphasis on the temporal dimension. Although video and photography are both art forms based on image, the temporality displayed in video is fluid and open to manipulation, as one can forward, rewind and control the speed of progression; on the other hand, traditional photography represents a temporal slice captured from the flow of time. This exhibition features one particular video artwork created in 2002, in which the artist filmed a sunset on nearly the same date in both Germany and Taiwan. Due to the difference in latitude, the work shows a vivid contrast in the sunsets' duration and changes of light. The two time periods are juxtaposed to demonstrate this direct contrast, in the exhibition. In his later work, Walther has focused on the photography of landscape and nature. Attempting to break through the photographic restraints on the subject of time, he adopts the approach of digital photography and the technique of retouching, which allow him longer contemplation of inner feelings when the photographs are taken. By overlapping or juxtaposing images from different time periods, he recreates the overall atmosphere of the moment he felt moved and pressed the shutter.

The artist's exploration and pursuit of atmosphere can be detected in his more recent works as well. Starting from a subjective viewpoint, he uses photography to convey the atmosphere that he perceived when he took the photographs. Nevertheless, from the viewer's point of view, the so-called atmosphere can also be state of mind as a response to the objective environment. In this exhibition, Walther experiments with various means to visualize his artistic pursuit. In addition to large-scale single photographs, the audience can also see two-channel videos, such as the one mentioned above; an extended horizontal scroll, and works created through printing on black paper. The artist intends to transform the exhibition from a straightforward display of images into a contemplative viewing experience that gradually unfolds, and this attempt has indeed revealed a deeper layer of meaning conveyed through the exhibition title, 'Wandering'.

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