



PRESS RELEASE

Elger Esser: Nocturnes à Giverny

Beyond time and space - in Monet's garden paradise

Elger Esser
Nocturnes à Giverny
With an essay by
Hubertus von Amelunxen
English/French/German
48 pages, 13 color plates
ISBN 978-3-8296-0578-6
€ 39.80, £ 39.95, US \$ 55.00

It is not only thanks to Claude Monet's (1840-1926) world-famous water lily paintings that the garden the Impressionist laid out himself in Giverny in Normandy has engraved itself upon the collective artistic memory. The enchanted location has become a place of pilgrimage for artists, art historians and garden lovers. This green oasis also made a lasting impression on photo artist Elger Esser (born in 1967), master student of Bernd and Hilla Becher at the Art Academy in Düsseldorf. Schirmer/Mosel has just published Elger Esser's new illustrated book *Nocturnes à Giverny*, which for the first time presents his extraordinary photographs of Monet's garden and its enchanting water and flower scenes.

Elger Esser photographed the burgeoning flora in black and white in the evening twilight or in moonlight. He can't completely avoid a romantic view of the idyll Monet created, yet his portrayal of the much-frequented garden is devoid of all tourist overstatement. At night and in the heavy light of dusk the artist succeeds in creating a novel sense of longing. The conspicuously blurred motion in the foliage of the trees combined with needle-sharp reeds that appear to grow out of the picture in Esser's black-and-white images recall the aesthetics of early photographs. Thanks to the vintage-style photography technique of heliogravure that Esser frequently employs the artist evokes a past age – an artist's dream that has now been realized for over a hundred years.

Elger Esser is known for his ability to depict French and Italian cultural landscapes so that they resemble old, faded postcards. Like someone strolling through the history of photography he works on his own mnemonic atlas using a heavy plate camera. Time is his overriding theme. "Combray" in Esser's photo titles is the name of the fictional childhood place of the first-person narrator in Marcel Proust's literary masterpiece *In Search of Lost Time*. And indeed, direct and indirect references to the past and the imaginary are often to be found in Esser's photographs, lending the extraordinary images a sense of timelessness.

The introductory essay on Esser's Giverny series, created in 2010, was written by art historian and literary scholar Hubertus v. Amelunxen.

Further information:

Schirmer/Mosel
Press Office Munich
Ulrike Westphal
press@schirmer-mosel.com
phone +49 89 2126-700

Press Office New York
Samantha Waller
swaller@prestel-usa.com
phone +1 212 995-27520