

CLAIRE ADELFFANG

MONUMENTS

PARIS DEBELLEYME

04 Feb 2012 - 29 Feb 2012



Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac is delighted to present *Monuments*, its first showcase of French artist, Claire Adelfang's work. Born in 1984, the photographer currently works and lives in Paris, her native city. Adelfang graduated from the *Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts*, and was trained in Patrick Tosani's atelier.

The exhibition title was selected because the young photographer readily summons the Latin origins of the word *monere*, "to remind". The diversity of subjects she brings together under this heading conveys the link between the gaze and memory. In this series of photographs, the viewer experiences an almost corporeal reaction via the lens and, by extension, the artist's point of view. In *Labyrinth* (2011) and *Dry Dock - Louis Joubert Lock* (2011), the concrete and water landscapes are inspired by the tide gates located in Munich and in Saint-Nazaire. The bird's eye views and tilted shots enable Adelfang to counterbalance the perspectives and to play with the lines of the structures. The artist accentuates the surreal nature of these environments devoid of human presence. A corporeal adventure and spiritual experience, the viewer's body seems to partake in the eye's feverish descent. The play on perspectives in *Alcove* (2011) and in *Wall of Water* (2011) abolishes the horizon line and any possible assessment, from top to bottom, of dimension. It's only when one's gaze settles on the background that one confronts the monumentality and the scale of the setting. With *Cascade* (2011), the heft of the architecture contrasts sharply with the fluidity of the water. Adelfang seemingly evokes some long-lost civilisation where life, as epitomized by the water and the scarce vegetation, seeks to reach a sense of equilibrium in a completely inorganic, mineral universe.

The photograph depicting the *Synagogue Ohel Jakob* (2011)—which was inaugurated in 2006 in Munich's Jüdisches Zentrum Jakobsplatz—deepens, in a singular way, the notion of memory already embedded within the monument. This image highlights the semantic complexity of the exhibition's title, which bears both a physical and a symbolic dimension. Again the viewer is faced with the prominence of the inorganic, also present in many other shots, through the base of an architectural form evocative of Jerusalem's Wailing Wall. From this perspective, Adelfang's photographs develop an unspoken, contemplative dialogue between man and history.

Claire Adelfang's photographs and videos first received attention in 2010 and 2011 in exhibitions overseen by the association *Les amis des Beaux-Arts de Paris*, after being awarded the agnès b. prize in 2009 and the Thaddaeus Ropac prize in 2010. In tandem with *Monuments*, her work will be presented as part of the group show *The Tree and the Photographer*, at the Quai Malaquais galleries of the *Beaux-Arts de Paris*.