

ELGER ESSER

COMBRAY

PARIS DEBELLEYME

21 Wednesday - 05 Saturday



Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac is pleased to announce the opening of Elger Esser's exhibition, "Combray." In this new series of works, the artist reflects upon French, regional landscapes as subjects of memory, rediscovery and recognition. Having spent many years traveling to different regions in France, it is the memories of these places, often ordinary and little-known, that confront the artist in these works. Seemingly banal at first glance, the more one studies these images, the richer in detail they become—not unlike fragments of images that crystallize to form visual memories. In this way, Esser's landscapes evoke places that exist in memory alone, the only context in which their meaning is fully realized; they are intangible locations that, through the viewer's own associations, become intense, haunting images. The artist's intent is not to depict actual scenes, but, rather, visions of ephemeral places that evoke the notion of disappearance. One could find correlations between this series and the esprit of Marcel Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu* with reference to the attempt to reassemble, as a collage, numerous memories of moments and places to create a single, fictive temporality.

Despite having been a student of Bernd and Hilla Becher, Esser's works show little allegiance to the objective and documentary approach heralded by the founders of the Düsseldorf school; his photography strives for far more poetic representations of a selective memory. However, in the artist's close attention to composition, one can see evidence of his early, formalist influences that have become a leitmotiv in his work. Born in Germany in 1967, the artist continues to live and work in Düsseldorf.