

OLA KOLEHMAINEN



Das ist der Dom in Köln I / This is the Cathedral in Cologne I (2019)
Paravent, 5 Panels: Archival matt inkjet prints, mirrors in Artist frame
226 x 777 cm , Edition 1/2



Synagoge Glockengasse 1861 (Zerstört/Destroyed 9.11.38) (2019)
Archival matt inkjet print in Artist frame
75 x 68 cm, Edition 1/6

Ola Kolehmainen is known for his minimalist abstract close-ups of architectural details such as geometric surface structures or reflective window facades. In his early series of works he deals with modern 20th and 21st century buildings by architects such as Mies van der Rohe and Alvar Aalto. In his current, cubist-like photographs, the artist deals with sacred spaces – namely the interiors and exteriors of synagogues, mosques, churches and cathedrals. By fragmentarily assembling several individual shots taken from different, slightly offset locations, Kolehmainen shifts perspectives, breaking the symmetries of familiar pictorial axes.

Places of worship have, throughout human history, played a significant role in times of conflict and war. They are places of hope and redemption where we come to pray for peace. But also – alas – they have historically represented the causes of many conflicts, from the religious wars and inquisitions of the Crusades, to more recent conflicts around the world. With the outbreak of war once more in Europe threatening to engulf the world, Ola Kolehmainen's work in *POINTS of RESISTANCE IV: Skills for Peace* is presented with this duality in mind. It is both a reflection on the greatness of human endeavor in building architectural marvels in the glorification of God, and the human potential for evil in destroying those same marvels in the name of dogmas and ideologies.

The two works on show in this exhibition - depicting archival architectural drawings of the Cologne Cathedral, and of a Cologne synagogue destroyed during the Nazi devastation of Kristallnacht in 1938 - were made in cooperation with the Rhenish Image Archive of the City of Cologne, which currently comprises some 5.4 million photographs. "These are predominantly perceived as documentary photographs for the sake of their illustrated motifs but, at the same time, as haptically tangible objects – retouched glass plate negatives, for example – they are important testimonies of photographic history. Ola Kolehmainen's approach pays tribute to both aspects in a highly exciting way. In his works, he breaks with viewing habits and, as a result, motivates conscious seeing. Kolehmainen brings the negative, so to speak, out of its shadowy existence as a means to an end into the limelight of artistic scrutinization of its own aesthetic qualities." (Dr. Johanna Gummlich, Director of the Rheinisches Bildarchiv)

BIO

Ola Kolehmainen (born in Helsinki in 1964), has lived and worked in Berlin since 2005. He studied at the University of Art and Design, Helsinki (TaiK) and became one of the most visible and successful artists of the first Helsinki School generation in the first decade of the 21st century. He is known for his minimalistic and abstract pictures of modern architecture, with a special interest in the work of modern masters such as Alvar Aalto and Mies van der Rohe.

His current more narrative works focus on exteriors and interiors of sacred buildings that he started after spending an intense work phase in Istanbul in 2014 researching buildings of the Ottoman and Byzantine Period.

The Berlin-based artist is one of the leading figures in Finnish photography. His work is included in multiple international art institutions, foundations, and collections, from Germany and Spain to renowned Nordic museums such as the Malmö Art Museum and the Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma. Galerie Forsblom has been representing Ola Kolehmainen since 2011.