

Andrina Jörg – GEORG AERNI

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Georg Aerni (b. 1959) has made a name for himself with a large body of documentary photography. His main interest as an artist is in the public space. Aerni uses his camera to explore the built-up structures of the world's megacities, for example, and trains his sights on overlandscaped zoological gardens. His series can be read as contemporary typologies of the various ways in which we have modeled our environment.

The Credit Suisse Collection brings together cityscapes from the "Slopes & Houses" series, a Diachrome lightbox containing a view of Hong Kong called *Happy Valley*, 2000/2008, glacier motifs from the "Holocene" series, and photographs from "Territories", a series which peeps inside empty zoo enclosures. Although there is scarcely a single person or animal to be seen in Aerni's photographs, there is a human presence in all of them without exception. Street canyons, leisure complexes, slopes that have been concreted over, as well as impaired natural landscapes such as retreating glaciers alerting us to global warming's dire consequences all point to a public space dependent on humanity.

Yet Aerni, who trained as an architect does not indulge in finger pointing. Most of his shots are taken in conditions that are as neutral as possible and always in the same weather. Instead of seeking out spectacular perspectives, he shows us our world in somber shades as shaped by civilization. And he stakes out his spaces from a curiously distanced proximity, not so much photographing as scanning whole landscapes and buildings so that we, too, can experience them palpably, though without ever losing sight of the larger picture. What viewers see are thus recognizable motifs - in most cases cut slightly at either end - embedded in a setting which is invisible, but at the same time thought-provoking. Being so close to the object, moreover, they can make out certain details even while viewing the composition in its entirety - an effect that animates us to be vigilant observers of manmade developments.

Andrina Jörg