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Electronic version

URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/critiquedart/25653>

DOI: 10.4000/critiquedart.25653

ISBN: 2265-9404

ISSN: 2265-9404

Publisher

Groupeement d'intérêt scientifique (GIS) Archives de la critique d'art

Printed version

Date of publication: 15 May 2017

ISBN: 1246-8258

ISSN: 1246-8258

Electronic reference

Julie Jones, « *Armin Linke* », *Critique d'art* [Online], 48 | Printemps/été 2017, Online since 15 May 2018, connection on 30 April 2019. URL : <http://journals.openedition.org/critiquedart/25653> ; DOI : 10.4000/critiquedart.25653

This text was automatically generated on 30 April 2019.

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Armin Linke, d.r., with the courtesy of the artist

- 1 Armin Linke (1966, Milan) lives and works in Berlin. An artist and major curator on the international art scene since the 1990s, his photographs, films and videos have been shown in many group and solo shows.¹ From his early commissioned works to his most recent personal pieces, Linke's interest has been rigorously and systematically focused on the spaces, forms and effects of globalization. His archive, which today boasts several hundred thousand images, forms a colossal visual inventory of post-industrial societies, and illustrates the exponential de-materialization of goods and activities alike. Public and

private centres of power, changing infrastructures, platforms of financial and commercial exchange, and digital data platforms, all these forms of architecture are witnesses to and players in the transformation of our contemporary environments. Usually closed to the public, they are the theatre of ceremonies and representations which Armin Linke regularly has access to by way of commissions. So in 2006, at the request of the Italian Ministry of the Heritage and Cultural Activities, the artist photographed the interiors of historic buildings in Rome housing several public institutions.² In 2013, prompted by the Institute of Political Studies in Paris (Sciences Po), he embarked on a series about normally inaccessible places forming essential links in France's major political, cultural and economic authorities.³ Power in action may never be so perfectly perceived as in the organizations accommodating it, but its history is revealed just as much in abandonment and ruin: so in 2009, in collaboration with the architect Srdjan Jovanovic Weiss, Armin Linke conducted a survey of abandoned socialist buildings in former Yugoslavia.⁴

- 2 For publishing and exhibition projects, the large numbers of images forming the Armin Linke archive are regularly subject to selection and editing by the artist, various associates (artists, researchers, philosophers),⁵ and the public.⁶ As nothing less than extensions of curatorial processes, these perforce active personal readings counter the passiveness expected of spectators and re-enact the interrelations of activities inherent in the global economy. If Armin Linke thus encourages a collective awareness, his work and the readings they give rise to are never subordinate to the seduction of pathos. The power of Armin Linke's thoughtful way of looking at the world stems from his almost modest, seemingly neutral, and unemphatic distance in the face of often alarming situations: "In these pictures, the photographer's gaze remains steady, even unblinking, taking no umbrage and making no excuses."⁷

NOTES

1. <http://www.arminlinke.com/>
2. *Armin Linke: Il corpo dello stato*, Zurich : JRP|Ringier, 2010
3. *Armin Linke: Inside/Outside*, Amsterdam : Roma, 2014
4. *Id.*, and Srdjan Jovanovic Weiss, *Socialist Architecture: The Vanishing Act*, Zurich : JRP|Ringier, 2012
5. *Armin Linke: The Appearance of That Which Cannot Be Seen*, Leipzig : Spector Books, 2017
6. See in particular the projects: *Book on Demand*, 50. Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte, Biennale di Venezia, Venice, IT (2003) and *Phenotypes / Limited Forms* (ZKM|Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie (Karlsruhe, 2007-2009)
7. Forster, Kurt W. "Field Visit: Armin Linke", *Tate Etc.*, n° 16, summer 2009