

Built on Promises

Matthias Ballestrem & Anton Burdakov

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The promise of the photograph is the experience of the represented. But it goes beyond that; Through our eyes, images point past their ability to represent reality. Often exceeding the objects they capture in ability to hold our attention, photographs become the object of desire. Henry Cartier-Bresson ascribed his epiphany that turned him to photography to a single picture. "When I saw Munkacsi's photograph of the black kids running in a wave I couldn't believe such a thing could be caught with the camera. I said 'damn it,' I took my camera and went out into the street." Cartier-Bresson didn't go in search of experience. He went in search of images.

Built on Promises, the first collaborative project between architect Matthias Ballestrem and artist Anton Burdakov, seeks to question the intimate relationship between experience and image. How does the world of the sensible transmute into the second dimension? Spatial perception and the imagination this gives rise to are questioned in a series of photographic installations developed in and for PROGRAM's exhibition space. As visitors move about in the exhibition, so too will their frames of perception shift. What exists, what had existed and what might exist become blurred and challenged.

Matthias Ballestrem is an architect living and working in Berlin. He has worked for several architecture offices in Germany and abroad. From 2002–05 he worked for Barkow Leibinger Architects. Since 2006, Matthias has been an assistant professor at the Technical University of Berlin (TU Berlin) and has set up his own office. He has lectured, taught, and was part of the guest design jury at various institutions, including the Harvard Graduate School of Design, University of Arts Berlin, and the Lebanese American University. Currently, he is working on his Ph.D. and was recently selected as a scholar at the German Academy Villa Massimo in Rome, 2011. Matthias studied architecture at TU Berlin and as a Fulbright scholar at SCI-Arc.

Anton Burdakov (1982, Kiev) is a Berlin based artist. He first studied neuroscience at the University of Cambridge and on finishing his degree held a Levy-Plumb artist residency at Christ's College, Cambridge. His work focuses on communicative potential of places and situations, explored through light and spatial interventions. He has been involved in many art-and-science collaborations and exhibited in Germany and the UK, including the annual congress of the European Academy of Arts and Sciences in Liverpool (2008) and at SecondHome Projects in Berlin (2010).

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