

# Pictures of nothing and nowhere

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Two German photographers showcase photos of life-size paper creations and renovated art museum

By Park Min-young

German photographer Thomas Demand takes photos of places he has never been to, or things that no longer exist.

The control room at Fukushima nuclear power plant and a parcel bomb sent to the U.S. from Yemen are clearly visible in his photos. But the photographer has never seen either with his own eyes. How is that possible?

The secret reveals itself upon closer inspection: The photographer created life-size subjects out of paper.

"I want to create images of places that one could not go to or things that one could not see so that viewers could see and visit them through my photos. Photography is not about capturing the real but about reproducing imagination and memory of the intangible," he told media in Seoul on Wednesday.

He is showcasing 10 of his latest works at PKM Trinity Gallery in Cheongdam-dong, southern Seoul.

His deft paper model-making skills come from his studies in sculpture at Dusseldorf Academy. It usually takes him few months to create a set, photograph it and destroy it.

"Control Room," based on a model of the Fukushima nuclear power plant, depicts the tiniest details including scotch tape and office phones. The damaged ceiling implies that an earthquake just hit. It was inspired from an image he saw in the news after the deadly earthquake hit Japan earlier this year.

Another photo titled "Haltestelle"



Thomas Demand  
Albrecht Fuchs/ Cologne

shows a bus stop in Loitsche, a small town in east Germany, where the members of a popular German band Tokio Hotel first decided to form their group. As the news spread, ardent fans came from as far away as Japan to see the bus stop. The city, being poor, decided to sell it on e-bay. No one showed interest when it was on sale as a whole, but when the city chopped it up to a A4-size pieces, every piece soon sold out.

"I found it meaningful that it is not just simply gone but gone in pieces," said Demand.

Knowing the hidden stories behind his photos definitely make them more interesting.

To the suggestion it is a pity there is no explanation accompanying the

works, however, Demand was nonchalant.

"As an artist, I don't think I have to explain my works. But I know exactly why I created them."

Another established German photographer, Candida Hofer, also points her camera to meaningful spaces and things instead of people. In her case it is because she is shy, explained a curator at Kukje Gallery in Sogyeok-dong, central Seoul, where the photographer is holding a solo exhibition.

As she spent time in people-less venues where she could concentrate on her works alone, however, she nevertheless spotted traces of people and time. Neues Museum Berlin was one such case.

The museum was constructed between 1841 and 1859 but was severely damaged during World War II and was left deserted for more than 60 years. The building was only renovated in 1997, having been neglected for a long time in East Berlin, but was listed by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site in 1999, recognized for its Prussian architectural style.

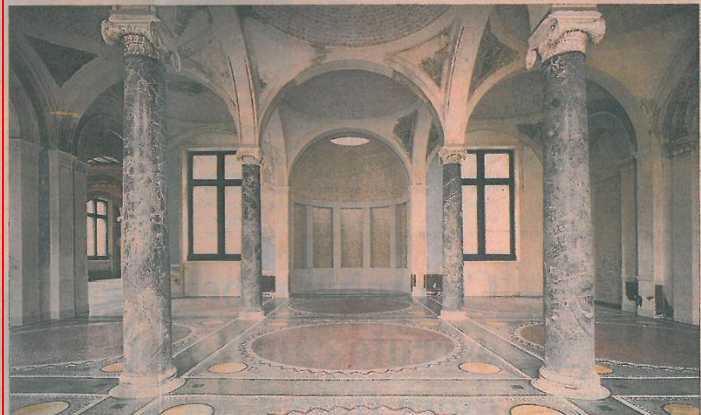
David Chipperfield, the English architect who was in charge of the renovation, asked Hofer to take photographs of the restoration process.

Hofer's series not only explores every nook and corner of the museum, expressed in a remarkably bright tone despite the gloomy atmosphere of the museum at the time of the renovation, but also captures subtle traces and memories of people who once stopped by. Photos from the series are found at Kukje Gal-



"Kontrollraum/ Control Room" by Thomas Demand

Thomas Demand/ PKM Gallery



"Neues Museum Berlin XVI" by Candida Hofer

Candida Hofer/ Kukje Gallery

lery.

Hofer's exhibition runs through Dec. 25 at Kukje Gallery in Sogyeok-dong, central Seoul. For more infor-

mation, call (02) 735-8449 or visit [www.kukjegallery.com](http://www.kukjegallery.com).

Demand's exhibition runs through Jan. 10 at PKM Trinity Gallery in

Cheongdam-dong, southern Seoul. For more information, call (02) 515-9496 or [www.pkmgallery.com](http://www.pkmgallery.com).  
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