

Images without Images

An installation by Mario Reis in the ghost town of Ironton

In 1992, while searching for unusual rivers, Mario Reis discovered the Red Mountain Creek in the Southwest of Colorado, USA. The spring of that mountain creek is the Red Mountain Pass, from there on it meanders through the landscape in a bright orange color. When Mario Reis explored the locality, he came upon an accumulation of derelict buildings, the ghost town of Ironton. Both, the rivers of that historic gold mining area, one of the highest and roughest parts of the Rocky Mountains, and the ghost town of Ironton took possession of him. For more than 12 years, Mario Reis came back to that location, where he created his Nature Watercolors. Always, he camped out in direct vicinity to Ironton. Finally, in 2003 Ironton itself became part of his art. Mario Reis created an installation that encompasses 4 buildings. He fitted the buildings with empty stretchers, which he installed on the walls in a dynamic configuration. Each building was set up with an individual installation of mounted frames. The spectator, while exploring the ghost town, will inevitably come across the same stretchers and add them up to one whole installation. While doing this, he fills the frames with imagination, with pictures. The empty frames are, so to speak, empty spaces for the fantasy of the viewer without having the possibility to rely on given patterns. Therefore, the perception of the installation involves always some of the spectator's own history.

The installation "Images without Images" can be perceived on different levels: It is an installation that deals with space itself. In a sensitive manner it changes the specific rooms motivating us to a more conscious feeling about the room, in which we stand. At the same time the whole installation is a site-specific work. The different installations in the buildings are formally connected. They link the buildings together, emphasizing the town as a town. In that sense the installation invites the viewer to a deeper analysis and understanding of Ironton and the surrounding area. Also, the empty stretchers are projection surfaces for our own imaginations. They stimulate the fantasy. Simultaneously, the process of imagination becomes more apparent. Mario Reis weaves the different layers of meanings of that installation together in a poetic manner, one that deals with memory, imagination, images, history and histories.

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