

Press release, November 2011

Berlin-Mitte Mai 1979

Early photographs by Hans Martin Sewcz

Press preview: Friday, November 25th 2011, 10am -1pm

Exhibition opening: Friday, November 25th 2011, 6pm - 9pm

Exhibition: November 26th 2011 - March 2nd 2012



Hans Martin Sewcz (*1955), Oranienburgerstraße, Berlin 1979, Gelatin silver print, printed 1979
12,7 x 29,4 (23,4 x 30,5) cm, Copyright Hans Martin Sewcz

The **Collection Regard** once again opens the door on a unique period in the history of Berlin. After „Hommage à Berlin“ - the highly regarded premier exhibition of photographs of post-war Berlin in ruins, Collection Regard now showcases the early photographs of **Hans Martin Sewcz** from 1973 -1981. The exhibition begins on November 26th and is a thoughtful presentation by collector Marc Barbey of another photographer eminently worthy of re-evaluation.

Antonio Panetta, the Collection's artistic director, also curated this exhibition.

An important segment of the works on show were shot in May 1979 with a Russian Horizon camera in the Spandau Quarter in the Mitte district of Berlin. The 120° field of view panorama photographs immerse the viewer in a time that has long since faded from memory.

The horizons of Hans Martin Sewcz:

As a 20-year-old student in 1975, Sewcz moved into an apartment in Tucholskystrasse in the Berlin of the former communist East Germany. He kept the apartment during his studies at the Leipzig Academy of Visual Arts. Sewcz was fascinated by the Spandau Quarter's "unintentional authenticity"; the dilapidated pre-war buildings, the large swathes of fallow ground, the massive firewalls and the dark brick buildings. His district was all the more intriguing precisely because it couldn't boast the imposing Soviet constructions lining the Karl Marx Allee or Alexanderplatz. The quarter had been earmarked for an overhaul, but the renovation only happened after German reunification and then, in a manner completely different to that which had been envisaged in the communist era.

For this reason, Sewcz's photographs are like fragments or artifacts. He himself says that his work at the time seesawed "between the poles of aversion and identification". He was also intrigued by the then prevalent atmosphere that "enabled creating photographs between the mystical and the abstract." Besides impressive panorama pictures, Hans Martin Sewcz's oeuvre includes portraits (such as the portrait of renowned German actor and activist Ulrich Mühe), early "Street Photography" and his "Architecture Portraits" of the Spandau Quarter with the former Scheunenviertel.

The "**Berlin-Mitte Mai 1979**" exhibition places Hans Martin Sewcz's early Berlin photographs alongside the work of photographer Will McBride and excerpts from the DEFA film "Berlin Auguststrasse" (1979) from director and film researcher Günther Jordan.

Hans Martin Sewcz was born in Halle an der Saale in 1955 in the then communist East Germany. He began consciously using photography as a means of expression at the age of 18 and earned his degree in photography from 1975-1981 in Leipzig. In 1988, just over a year before the fall of the Berlin Wall, Sewcz was granted his exit visa from the GDR after a 4 year long application process. He turned to conceptual art, produced installations and movies. Today, his work can be seen in the Deutsche Historische Museum, in the German parliament and in the Neue Berliner Kunstverein as well as in the photography collection of the Berlinische Galerie.

Sewcz's focus was always on every day life. His early oeuvre comprises portraits, street photography and detailed views of stone covered surfaces. His pictures are communicative, subtle and resonate with the poetry of the unintentional. During the 1980s, he tightened his focus and shot more directly, evincing a similarity to the work of Henri Cartier-Bresson, Helen Levitt, Helga Paris, and Gabriele and Helmut Nothelfer.

His "Self-portrait with Agnes B. in front of Gorbachev Limousines" is part of a series that came about during the young CPSU leader Gorbachev's visit to East Berlin in 1987. Sewcz enlarged parts of the contact so that even the perforation remains visible. Working with sequences he effects an almost cinematographic look which is ultimately broken up by its own fragmentation.

Sewcz reflection on the city of Berlin - in periods of stasis as well as rapid change - is the leitmotif that underscores his entire photographic journey. His early work attains an even deeper significance in light of all that Berlin is today.

The Collection Regard:

As its' French name „Regard“ suggests, the collection hopes to inspire a deeper gaze towards that which is being viewed. Founder Marc Barbey sees his Collection Regard less as a gallery and more of a photographers' salon. "It's about creating a space in which people can engage in a meaningful exchange with each other and with the work." Situated on the Steinstrasse in the Mitte district of Berlin within the Spandau Quarter and just 10 minutes away from Alexanderplatz, the Collection Regard has become a magnet for collectors and enthusiasts. Significantly, it's also a showcase for the (re)discovery of important photographers and their work.

The 40-year-old Marc Barbey has been collecting photography in earnest since 2005. He's sought out gems from the earliest beginnings of the form up to the 1970s, concentrating on German photography and Berlin in particular as motif. To date, Collection Regard administers the substantial oeuvre of Hein Gorny and holds work by Lotte Jacobi, Siegfried Lauterwasser, Heinrich Riebesehl, Toni Schneiders, Friedrich Seidenstücker and Will McBride as well as select pieces by Paul Almasy, Bruno Barbey and Robert Capa.

Marc Barbey is delighted to be able to present the publication "BERLIN-MITTE MAI 1979" with an introduction by Katharina Hausel at the vernissage on November 25th 2011.

Collection Regard
Marc Barbey
Steinstraße 12, 10119 Berlin
Öffnungszeiten: Freitag, 14 – 18.00 Uhr
und nach telefonischer Vereinbarung
www.collectionregard.com



Hans Martin Sewcz (*1955), Tucholskystraße, Berlin 1979, Gelatin silver print, printed 1998
12,7 x 29,4 (23,7 x 30,5) cm, Copyright Hans Martin Sewcz

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