

Press release of 25 February 2013

Christian Peter Imhof: «Welcome to Civilization!»

«Welcome to Civilization!» – Christian Peter Imhof was greeted with these words as he crossed the border from Bolivia to Chile. They defined the subjects he photographed on his journey around the world.

The Chilean bus driver's greeting inspired **Christian Peter Imhof** (*1976) to explore the deeper meaning of civilization. Who defines what civilized is and what it is not? Are civilized people superior? If yes, to whom? Where does civilization begin and end?

He sought answers to these questions in the moments and situations captured on his journey alongside civilization. The individual photographs and series exhibited originate primarily in Asia. As images of social structures and living conditions they express various forms of civilization.

The artist's eye attests to curiosity, humour and a feeling for unique details and surprising perspectives. At the Gate of Heavenly Peace on Tiananmen Square one sees both the grey sky of Beijing and the kitsch sky blue of a monumental digital advertisement for holidays in Tibet. The view of the Hong Kong Island skyline in soft evening light is radically cropped from above by a parking deck. Surrounded by high peaks, the nomadic town of Dat, in the Ladakh region of India, is like an oasis of civilization in a sparse desert landscape. The "Red Bull" can on a house wall in the small, former caravan town of Shaxi serves as an incense stick holder, thereby showing that traditions and trends can exist side by side.

In Imhof's pictures old and new, nature and culture and town and country thus complement and contrast with each other. Here, tradition and modernity, religiousness and consumerism collide. The development of supposed paradises is addressed, as is the desire for a return to nature in a world that is being civilized at an ever-increasing pace. Imhof's photographs not only add a question mark to the bus driver's statement but also encourage the questioning of one's own points of view and assumed standards and values.

We warmly invite you and your friends to the exhibition preview on Thursday 7 March 2013, from 17.00 to 20.00. Christian Peter Imhof will be present.

The exhibition «Welcome to Civilization!» runs from 8 March to 11 May 2013.
Aperitifs will be served in the company of the artist on 4 April 2013, from 18.00 to 20.00.

Opening hours: Wednesday to Friday 12.00 to 18.00, Saturday 11.00 to 15.00, or by appointment.
Closed from 22 to 27 April 2013.

Further details are available from:

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Christian Peter Imhof

Background

- Since 2002 Self-employed artist and set designer
Art Director, Gato Bizar Dans & Film, Rotterdam/Netherlands
- 2009 – 2011 Class assistant, Zurich University of the Arts, specialism scenography
- 1999 – 2002 Bachelor Degree in Fine Art, Media Art, FHBB / HGK

Exhibitions

- 2011 «Regionale 11», Kunstverein Freiburg i. Br. (D)
- 2009 «Regionale 9», Kunsthalle Basel
«High Voltage», Markthalle Basel
- 2008 «Orakel», Messeplatz Basel
- 2007 «Pay'n'Pray», Messeplatz Basel
- 2006 «Frischfleisch», Messeplatz Basel

Set design

- 2008 «Backstage» (dance theatre, NL)
- 2007 «Stunthero», Schweizer Fernsehen SF (television series, CH)
- 2006 «Vlucht van de Valk» (short film, NL)
«Songs from the Roof» (opera, NL)
- 2005 «Never let go» (short film, NL)
«True Love» (dance theatre, NL)
- 2004 «Hit the Road» (dance theatre, NL)

Selected works

1. Christian Peter Imhof, *Tiananmen Square, at the Gate of Heavenly Peace*, Beijing, China, 2012, inkjet print, 30 x 40 cm.
2. Christian Peter Imhof, *Hong Kong Island*, China, 2012, inkjet print, 30 x 40 cm.
3. Christian Peter Imhof, *Dat*, Ladakh, India, 2012, inkjet print, 30 x 40 cm.
4. Christian Peter Imhof, *Shaxi*, Yunnan, China, 2012, inkjet print, 40 x 30 cm.