

Eberhard Bosslet

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In 1983, '84 and '87, the German artist Eberhard Bosslet visited several abandoned sites in the modern built environment of the Spanish Canary Islands and also along the Costa Brava near Barcelona. These contemporary ruins, like the excavated chambers and shards common to archeological digs, spoke to the artist of unrecovered memories. As though to reify or even honor that impression, Bosslet traced thick white lines and rectilinear black blocks of paint on barren surfaces and photographed the results.

Bosslet called the works "interventions." They were visited upon a collection of emptied maritime foundations, the flat and unornamented exteriors of abandoned concrete and stucco-surfaced buildings and the wreckage of burned-out cars along a highway. Bosslet's forensic photographic images, fixed in the literal light of the Atlantic and Mediterranean skies, are both the project--a variant of installation--and all that remains of its execution (excepting textual descriptions of the walkabout nature of his activity). The show at John Gibson, where Bosslet has exhibited regularly since 1988, consisted of handsome, large-format black-and-white photographs mounted on metal panels, produced in editions of three.

Bosslet draws attention to the planar abstraction of an erect structure's reductive surfaces or to the exoskeletal tracing of the planes of intersecting surfaces within. In the photographs of the series titled "Begleiterscheinung II" (Side Effect II, 1984), he evokes a constructivist painting placed within a barren landscape. He isolates the principal forms as he found them: horizontal "slabs" of space where windows once were and vertical incisions where doors had been set into a poured concrete wall. He duplicates their size and shape with blocks of dark paint, producing a momentary trick of perception, conflating the flat painted area with the rectilinear void. As though to draw attention to the artifice of his procedure, he allows the paint to drip along the lower edges of each block.

Bosslet's work has long included found materials, which he combines at any meaningful point of fit or contact as sculptural assemblies. For example, the images of the "Sonnenwind" series (Solar Wind, 1984), from Tenerife, show cones of industrial plastic sheeting flying like wind socks or pennants from light poles regularly placed along a barren walkway. Bosslet not only pairs these foreign elements and records the conditions of the match, but in the process seems to make them sing.