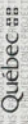




# THOMAS Tunnel

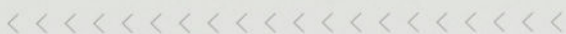
May 10 – June 25, 2006

MUSÉE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN DE MONTRÉAL



Québec





THOMAS DEMAND

**Tunnel**

1999, 35-mm film loop, 2 min

*I understand the past as a continuous  
accumulation of images.*

THOMAS DEMAND

*Tunnel* is the first film by Thomas Demand, who is known mainly for his large-scale photographs. His works, usually timeless and free of any human presence, reveal a world characterized by an enigmatic realism. His images are shrouded in mystery, and we immediately grasp that they contain much more than we can take in at first glance. < < <

Demand was born in Munich in 1964. A sculptor by training, he studied at the Akademie der bildenden Künste in Munich, the Kunstakademie in Düsseldorf and Goldsmiths College in London. He lives and works in Berlin. His artistic approach involves carefully reconstructing everything he photographs — or, in this case, films. This reconstruction process lies at the very core of his work. He is interested in the physical space surrounding initially unremarkable, ordinary-looking places, and has produced numerous views of architectural elements: *Office, Corridor and Staircase*, in 1995; *Garage and Room*, in 1996; *Balconies, Bathroom and Parlor*, in 1997; *Window and Terrace*, in 1998. < < <

Talking about *Drafting Room*, a 1996 piece, Demand explains: "I started out with the vague idea of a place where ideas take shape, a space for conceiving, making and developing in which nothing is materially produced. I was looking for engineers' offices, workshops.... I found a photo of an architect's office, the drawing office where the city of Munich was rebuilt after the war." This photo could practically have come from the family collection, since the artist's grandfather was an architect, and after the Second World War, was in charge of architecture for the city of Munich. Each of the images that Demand chooses to recreate has its own history. He looks at places where something happened, places that stand as silent witnesses to an event. From what he could

see of it in the image, he thus endeavoured to reconstruct Adolf Hitler's bunker, Leni Riefenstahl's film archives, Bill Gates's room when he was a student at Harvard. Places where someone passed through, where some fate was sealed, where a drama was played out, a historical event took place. < < <

Demand works from existing photographs, images that he finds among his family's things, in history books or the media, or that he comes across in news stories. However, he deplores the fact that "people always ask me what this is about; they always want the key to the image." So now he hesitates to disclose his sources, in order not to limit the interpretation of his work. We can always try to find out, but we should make no mistake: his work has nothing to do with a "Madame Tussaud's-style recreation," as he likes to say, referring to London's famous wax museum. When he uses images taken from current events, it is definitely not to perpetuate the chain of sensationalism. What really interests him, he says, "is the world of the media," which he sees "as a vast landscape, a virtual domain.... We are all familiar with these images, especially since some of them create contemporary myths, a new dramaturgy." He also notes: "My concern is how those images make their way to me, how I can literally make use of them ... and how they might work in a different framework." < < <

For each scene he decides to recreate, Demand researches the history of the image, tries to find out who took the picture and track down the original photograph. He disregards the people in the picture, if there are any, and, with great concern for perfection, he constructs the scene, full scale, in his studio. He literally recreates the subject of his photographs, without the nostalgic aura of human presence. "Full scale," he observes, "has its own reality, its own gravity and stubbornness. The concept of constructing realities in the studio is much stronger than faking things for the camera. They are genuine sculptures documented. I make decisions about objects first, then photograph them." < < <

For *Tunnel*, Demand built a 32-metre tunnel in his studio and introduced movement for the first time, with a small remote-control camera. "I try to do a film only if it will contain something which the still image can't. Movement through the object is an obvious one; I have always also liked the idea that the objects I picture become more three-dimensional again once they become actors in a film." Movement adds to the fiction and makes us, as spectators, enter into a spatial relationship with the place. While the "abstract" sound suggests a car driving through a blind tunnel, the dominant black and white of the film, with only a slight hint of yellow on the walls, conjures up a night-time atmosphere. < < <

In front of one of Demand's works, we might say we are standing in front of something that belongs to our collective memory. The artist shows us a scene; it is up to us to understand and imagine everything that lies hidden within this space. <

LOUISE SIMARD-ISMERT

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Thomas Demand's comments are taken from "Vik Muniz & Thomas Demand: A Notion of Space," a conversation published in *Blind Spot*, No. 8, 1996; "There is no innocent room," by François Quintin, in the catalogue published for the exhibition at the Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain, Paris (London: Thames & Hudson, 2000), p. 36 ff; and correspondence with the author.

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This screening of *Tunnel*, by Thomas Demand, is organized by the Musée and presented from May 10 to June 25 in conjunction with the event *Montréal-Munich 2006*.

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Photo © Thomas Demand, VG Bild Kunst, Bonn / SODRAC, Montréal. Courtesy 303 Gallery, New York, and Victoria Miro Gallery, London.

Design [epicentre.qc.ca](http://epicentre.qc.ca)

Born in Munich in 1964. Lives and works in Berlin.

**Main Solo Exhibitions**

- 2006 Serpentine Gallery, London, United Kingdom.  
 Esther Schipper, Berlin, Germany.  
*Klausur und Apokalypse: Max Beckmann und Thomas Demand*, MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt, Germany.
- 2005 Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, N.Y., United States.\*  
 Victoria Miro Gallery, London, United Kingdom.
- 2004 26° Bienal de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil.\*  
*Four newest photographs and most recent film*, 303 Gallery, New York, N.Y., United States.  
*Phototrophy*, KUB Kunsthaus Bregenz, Bregenz, Austria.\*
- 2003 Dundee Contemporary Arts, Dundee, United Kingdom.  
 Galeria Helga de Alvear, Madrid, Spain.  
 Louisiana Museum for Moderne Kunst, Humlebæk, Denmark.\*  
 Taka Ishii Gallery, Tokyo, Japan.
- 2002 Castello di Rivoli, Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Turin, Italy.\*  
*Hof*, Schipper & Krome, Berlin, Germany.  
 SITE Santa Fe, N.Mex., United States.  
 Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus und Kunstbau, Munich, Germany.\*
- 2001 303 Gallery, New York, N.Y., United States.  
 ArtPace, San Antonio, Tex., United States.  
 De Appel, Amsterdam, Netherlands.  
*Thomas Demand con Caruso St. John architetti*, Galleria d'arte moderna di Palazzo Pitti, Florence, Italy.\*  
*Thomas Demand: Report*, Sprengel Museum Hannover, Hannover, Germany.\*  
 Aspen Art Museum, Aspen, Colo., United States.\*
- 2000 Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain, Paris, France.\*  
 Galerie Peter Kilchmann, Zurich, Switzerland.  
 Monika Sprüth Philomene Magers Galerie, Cologne, Germany.  
 Victoria Miro Gallery, London, United Kingdom.
- 1999 *Tunnel, Art Now 17*, Tate Gallery, London, United Kingdom.\*
- 1998 303 Gallery, New York, N.Y., United States.  
 Galeria Monica De Cardenas, Milan, Italy.  
 Kunsthalle Bielefeld, Bielefeld, Germany.\*  
 Kunsthalle Zürich, Zurich, Switzerland.  
 Kunstverein Freiburg im Marienbad, Freiburg, Germany.\*  
 Schipper & Krome, Berlin, Germany.
- 1997 Centre d'art contemporain de Vassivière, Beaumont du Lac, France.  
 Monika Sprüth Gallery, Cologne, Germany.  
 Victoria Miro Gallery, London, United Kingdom.
- 1996 Galerie de l'ancienne Poste, Calais, France.\*  
 Galerie Tanit, Munich, Germany.  
 Max Protetch Gallery, New York, N.Y., United States.
- 1995 Galerie Guy Ledune, Brussels, Belgium.  
 Victoria Miro Gallery, London, United Kingdom.
- 1994 Galerie Blancpain Stepczynski, Geneva, Switzerland.  
 Galerie Tanit, Munich, Germany.

- 1992 Förderkoje Art Cologne, Cologne, Germany.  
 Galerie Guy Ledune, Brussels, Belgium.  
 Galerie Tanit, Munich, Germany.

### Main Group Exhibitions (since 1999)

- 2006 *Why Pictures Now*, MUMOK Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, Vienna, Austria.  
*Zwischen Wirklichkeit und Bild: Positionen deutscher Fotografie der Gegenwart*, MIMOCA Marugame Genichiro-Inokuma Museum of Contemporary Art, Kagawa, Japan.
- 2005 *Out There: Landscape in the New Millennium*, MOCA Cleveland Museum of Contemporary Art, Cleveland, Ohio, United States.
- 2004 *Memory and Landscape*, La Casa Encendida, Madrid, Spain.  
*Berlin-Moskau/Moskau-Berlin 1950-2000*, State Historical Museum, Moscow, Russia.\*  
*Love/Hate: From Magritte to Cattelan*, Villa Manin Centro d'arte contemporanea, Passariano, Italy.
- 2003 *Archive and Simulation*, Centro Cultural de Belem, Lisbon, Portugal.  
*Imperfect Innocence*, Contemporary Museum, Baltimore, Md., and Palm Beach Institute of Contemporary Art, Lake Worth, Fla., United States.\*  
*Biennale di Venezia: Sogni e Conflitti: la dittatura dello spettatore [=Dreams and Conflicts: Dictatorship of the Viewer]*, Giardini, Venice, Italy.\*  
*Horizonte*, Museum Franz Gertsch, Berthoud, Switzerland.
- 2002 *True Fictions*, Ludwig Forum für Internationale Kunst, Aachen, Germany.  
*Moving Pictures: Contemporary Photography and Video from the Guggenheim Museum Collections*, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, N.Y., United States and Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao, Spain.\*  
*2002 Taipei Biennial: Great Theatre of the World*, Taipei Fine Arts Museum, Taipei, Taiwan.\*
- 2001 *Trade*, Fotomuseum Winterthur, Winterthur Zurich, Switzerland.\*  
*Photography from the KPN Collection*, Huis Marseille stichting voor fotografie, Amsterdam, Netherlands.  
*6<sup>e</sup> Biennale de Lyon: Connivence*, Lyon, France.\*  
*Und keiner hinkt*, Museum Kurhaus Kleve, Kleve, Germany.  
*Public Offerings*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, Calif., United States.\*
- 2000 *Vision and Reality*, Louisiana Museum for Moderne Kunst, Humlebæk, Denmark.\*  
*Supermodel*, Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, North Adams, Mass., United States.  
*Clip City/City Vision*, Media City Seoul, Seoul, Korea.  
*Age of Influence: Reflections in the Mirror of American Culture*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, Ill., United States.  
*Small World: Dioramas in Contemporary Art*, Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, San Diego, Calif., United States.\*  
*Open Ends*, Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, N.Y., United States.\*  
*La forma del mondo/La fine del mondo*, Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea, Milan, Italy.
- 1999 *Kraftwerk Berlin*, Aarhus Kunstmuseum, Aarhus, Denmark.\*  
*1999/2000 Carnegie International*, Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, Pa., United States.\*  
*Great Illusions: Thomas Demand, Andreas Gursky, Ed Ruscha*, Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami, Fla., United States, and Kunstmuseum Bonn, Bonn, Germany.\*  
*Photography: An Expanded View – Recent Acquisitions*, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, N.Y., United States.

\* The asterisk indicates exhibitions accompanied by a publication.