

Facility Skins

Facility Skins – the exterior shell of buildings is the focus of the large architecture photographs, kept mostly in black and white, by Korean artist KDK(Kim Dokyun). Additionally, the term *facility* can be seen as a synonym for weightlessness and characterizes what these illuminated facades evoke: the light as an integral component of the main motif emphasizes a playfully ephemeral moment, bestowing the rigid cover of concrete, glass or steel with a lightness that seeks to overcome the material's weight.

Initially, KDK acquired the foundation of photography during his studies at the Seoul Institute of the Arts and later as Master Student of Thomas Ruff at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf. His serial approach reminds, in combination with the works' titles, of the objectified photographic perception of the Düsseldorf School. His references to series, location and numbering in his titles suggest a strictly applied order. While considering the motifs of his series though, it becomes apparent that the artist interrupts the demure sobriety and systematic assessment of architecture through a camera. Much rather he takes this groundwork as the source of his series, in order to then determine the section, perspective, and edifice through consciously individual criteria.

The *sf-series* shows well-lit facades, depicted in darkness, or illuminated architectural elements. Although KDK illustrates a broad spectrum of public building types – theaters, museums, sport stadiums, natatorium, and business buildings – it nonetheless becomes apparent that denominating the purpose and functionality of such buildings is not his primary concern, nor is it designing a history of architecture illumination. Much rather he fathoms the artistic feasibilities of the genre architectural photography. Thus, he explores plane surfaces which unfold an impact much like that of abstract paintings, and which imply a preoccupation with such themes as space, color, and rhythm. Brightly lit structures find their localization in urban space. In his series, he observes the tension filled interplay of two- and three-dimensionality, of transparency and opacity, of strict black-and-white and brilliant chromaticity.

Whenever the function of a building is perceptible through its outer shape KDK expresses this proposition in his photographs quite pointedly. In the work *sfBe-5* the artist orchestrates Beijing's National Theater, designed by Paul Andreu, as a surreally wafting structural design, and this way opens our view onto those virtual worlds of opera and acting. Also taken in Beijing is the detail view *sfBe-3* of the National Aquatics Center by architects PTW and, with its attention on the air cushion cladding, shaded in azure blue, it brings the element of water to mind. A special

connotation is accorded to the photography *sf.Bar-1*. It shows, illuminated from the outside, the Nativity Facade of the Sagrada Família in Barcelona. The basilica, designed by Antoni Gaudí, revokes the European Cathedrals with their sky-high glass windows, where for the first time light itself became an important element of the building's function. At the same time it is capable to tie a connection to the present, since the completion time of the Sagrada Família, having started in 19th century, has reached far into the 21st century. It is erected isochronally to the other luminous facades which the other photographs of the *sf-series* constitute of.

The title stands for Space Faction or Science Fiction. It implies either the question about polytonality of space or, with their emphasis on contrasts between black and white and seemingly futuristic structures in deserted, nightly cities, reminds of science fiction sceneries. They would be a site for movies that are set in the future, and whose scripts are figured / thought out by their beholder.

Maybe the photographs from the *sf-series* not only provide frame and background, but are the plot themselves. An anecdote, with space and architecture as its protagonists, and with narrative strings of shape, color, perspective, and light.

The *sf-series* can be seen as an open photographic appropriation to a reduced architectural formal vocabulary. The photographs were shot in Asia and Europe, between Tokyo and Barcelona, in Seoul, Karlsruhe, and Celle. By his choice of topic and its clipping, KDK not only explores the buildings for their individual aesthetic value, but submits the constructions to his subjective consideration. This way, the *sf-series* serves as his personal archive, leaving space for the viewer to broaden it in his imagination and to comprehend the photographs against the background of his own psychological and cultural imprint.

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