

# Galerie Rüdiger Schöttle

**Elger Esser**

**Nachsommer**

**Nov 22, 2024 – Feb 22, 2025**

**Opening: Thursday, Nov 21, 2024 / 6 – 9 pm**

**The artist is present.**



Elger Esser, *Étang de Peyriac*, 2024, Mixed Media: silver-plated copper plate, directprint, shellac, 47 x 62 x 5 cm, Edition of 3 + 1 AP, © Elger Esser / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn, 2024.

The exhibition “Nachsommer”\* is Elger Esser's sixth solo exhibition at Galerie Rüdiger Schöttle. As often the case with this photographer known for his atmospheric landscapes, the title alludes to a 19th-century literature standard. Here, the title comes from *Nachsommer* by Adalbert Stifter (1857), which focuses on the perception of art. At the same time, the title conveys the clear mood of late summer and early fall vegetation and light in Central Europe, where the exhibition works were created. In the thirteen or so photographic works taken in various French coastal regions and river basins, time stands perceptibly still. Land, water and sky harmoniously and devotedly meet in these images.

Remote places such as Étang de Peyriac, Saint Ceneri en Gerai or Mont-Saint-Michel are depicted and are sometimes only recognizable by ruins. What unites all the photographic works is a landscape empty of humans yet culturally marked by their presence. Esser precisely coordinates the proportions of the sky spectacles and watery reflections in the water in relation to the landscape's unique features, which he created. In these perfectly composed works, he presents us with natural beauty in its purest form.

Through this deeper perception, all the theoretical questions of photography become clear: its proximity to painting, its history, the theme of time and the philosophical question of duration (as in Henri Bergson).

In recent years, Elger Esser has developed a photographic printing technique for the analogue photographs of such painterly places. This technique is reminiscent of early 19th-century photographs yet is very contemporary, given the machine pigment printing process on a silver-plated copper surface. Due to the rough, shimmering surface (also covered with shellac), these works almost look like paintings.

Thanks to the color-protecting technique, the photographs can be framed without glass, further enhancing their old-master character.

Elger Esser (born 1967 in Stuttgart) grew up in Rome. He returned to Germany to study in Bernd and Hilla Becher's famous class at the Düsseldorf Art Academy (1991-1997), where he still lives and works today. He belongs to the second generation of the so-called Düsseldorf Becher School. His works have long been in renowned international collections, including the Center Georges Pompidou Paris, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York, Museo Jumex in Mexico City and Lenbachhaus Munich. The Haus Beda of the Neue Galerie in Bitburg is currently organizing his solo exhibition. His photographs from Mont-Saint-Michel were displayed at L'Abbaye de Mont-Saint-Michel in the first half of 2024.

\*Translators Note: A second, extended summer. Given the wording of 19th-century translations of Stifter's work, the title of the exhibition and work have been left in the original German.

(Text: J. Singer)