

one that characterizes Taaffe's consistently stunning and complexly decorative body of work. —*Laurie Attias*

## Thomas Ruff

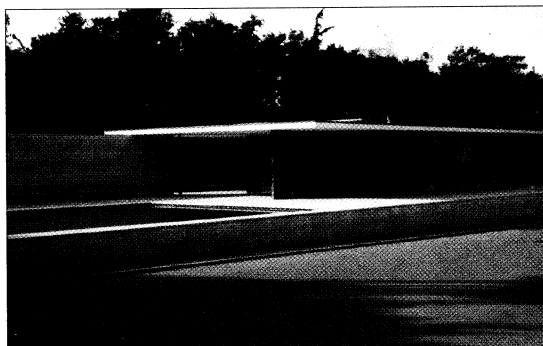
JOHNEN + SCHÖTTLE  
Cologne

The pair of residences that Mies van der Rohe built in 1928 for two merchant families in the textile capital of Krefeld, Germany, have long had a place in architectural history. In a postwar reincarnation, the twin villas, Haus Esters and Haus Lange, became venues for exhibitions of contemporary art and, most recently, the subject of a superb series of themes and variations by Thomas Ruff titled "I.m.v.d.r." (Ludwig Mies van der Rohe).

Architectural photography has become a Ruffian specialty—thanks in part to his repeated collaborations with the Swiss team of Herzog & de Meuron, designers of the Tate Modern. As a hard-core realist whose sober studies repeatedly reveal surrealistic touches, Ruff also turned his attention toward Mies's celebrated Barcelona pavilion of 1929 and toward Haus Tugendhat, completed in 1930 and still equipped with Mies-designed furniture. Yet even in this habitable space, the feeling is one of cool abstraction. Architect and photographer seem to become collaborators, even coconspirators.

Both men are obsessed with space, volume, texture, light, and shadow. Ruff himself appears in one of the shots, as a vaguely shimmering figure on a metallic pillar in the corner of Haus Tugendhat—the artist as intruder, voyeur, interlocutor.

The images of the Bauhaus master's achievements reconfirm Ruff's eminent position in the amazingly productive and influential photographic scene in Düsseldorf. For all their severity and seeming detachment (Ruff's photos of modern, white-tiled bathrooms uncannily recall images of concentration-camp shower rooms or a morgue), the "I.m.v.d.r." studies continually provoke analysis, criticism, and fresh appreciation of their subjects. —*David Galloway*



Thomas Ruff,  
*d.p.b. 01, 1999–2000*,  
C-print, 6' x 8'.  
Johnen + Schöttle.

slightly different version of a truck trailer standing near a small house. A strip of highway seamlessly lies between the truck and the house in one photo. In another, a road curves gently before them, while in yet another image, streetlights traverse the sky, suddenly rendering the scene less rural. Viewed together, the works revealed their trickery, but taken alone, each photo appeared both plausible and magical. Heer seems to capture scenes not as they actually appear but as our memory imagines them years later, colored with the emotions of the moment.

In some photos, large sections are obscured by shadowy black expanses, as if viewers were looking at the scene through their fingers. But these lacked the dark ethereality of Heer's more subtly layered pieces, whose initially believable and ultimately impossible mix of focal points and light qualities lend them an air of portentousness.

—*Marc Spiegler*



Jacqueline Heer,  
*Facing South, Site I*,  
2001, C-print,  
40" x 60".  
Galerie zur  
Stockeregg.

Javier Vallhonrat, who has had a highly successful career as a fashion photographer, creates exquisite images with provocative conceptual underpinnings. The series of photographs in this superb display of recent work fell into two categories. One group depicts 1920s Swiss railroad bridges—feats of engineering that traverse mountain passes in some of the least accessible areas of the country. The other group portrays store-bought miniature toy models of those very same bridges and their surrounding landscapes. The different sets of photos are indistinguishable from each other.

All sumptuously rendered in tones of black, white, sepia, and gray, Vallhonrat's images have the shimmering quality of 19th-century daguerreotypes. The Spanish artist's initial interest was spurred by archival photos of the bridges and the way those images reminded him of Romantic landscape painting. In his series, the inhospitable environments that he depicts are so craggy and jagged as to verge on abstraction.

Blurring—or, perhaps, bridging—fact and fiction, Vallhonrat's work can be seen as part of the contemporary trend toward constructed photographs, in which artists—James Casebere, Thomas Demand, Gregory Crewdson, for example—build quasi-realistic models and photograph them. In Vallhonrat's impressive two-pronged series, a bridge, like the medium of photography itself, magically links disjunct entities. —*George Stolz*

## Jacqueline Heer

GALERIE ZUR STOCKEREGG  
Zurich

Born in Switzerland but a longtime resident of North Carolina, Jacqueline Heer drew from her adopted home for this lively show of manipulated photographs titled "Facing South." To create her images of farmhouses, rural roads, open fields, and stormy skies, the artist took photos of her surroundings, simultaneously projected several slides of those images onto a surface, then photographed the composite scene.

In one small series, each photograph portrays a



Javier Vallhonrat,  
*Untitled, ETH, 2000*,  
color photograph,  
4' x 6'.  
Helga de Alvear.