

PRESS RELEASE

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The History of Things

Who actually looks at them, the ordinary objects we handle every day - soap, scissors, hammer? Even though there is a tendency today to make an aesthetic philosophy out of anything and everything, and then package it in increasingly refined designs, never before have everyday objects had a shorter lifespan, while the number of objects piling up around us has practically never been so large as it is now.

For a long time, Claus Goedicke has been examining the nature of these things, their appearance, our relationship to them, and our concept of them. He is interested in everything we use or consume, from plastic bottles to vegetables. In his most recent series, begun in 2007, he has turned to the basic elements of our daily lives, to all of the things we cannot do without, even though - or perhaps because - we use them without actually thinking about them. They include basic nutritional items, such as bread, butter, and eggs, as well as simple tools, from cutlery and hammers to scissors. We have already seen the charm that can emanate from the latter, in Walker Evans' portfolio of photographs, produced in the mid-1950s, and about which he said, ". . . a hardware store is a kind of offbeat museum show for the man who responds to good, clear 'undesigned' forms."

Yet, not only the tool, but the many other objects Goedicke uses in his works are also primarily functional, and their forms are designed in ways that will best serve their functions. The objects in Goedicke's photographs take on a beauty and grace of their own, not least as a result of the interplay between object and the surface beneath it. This as-yet unseen combination - of the auratic thing and the familiar, yet not closely specified ground - shapes a cosmos in which the imagination is free to roam. The things have a context, and yet they remain independent; the photographs divest them of their concrete function. They become objects of observation and, as such, their physical presence is as immediate as their figurative and symbolic qualities. Through their minimalism and concentration, Goedicke's photographs invite us to delve into the history of each object.

Maren Polte, 2010

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