

Faces of Photography Now: Eight Under 40

A new generation of talent is pushing forward by looking back.

By Barbara Pollack

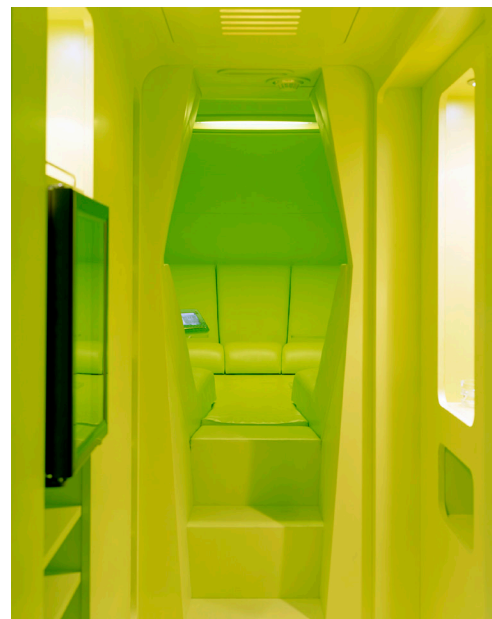
Excerpt

In the nineties photography suddenly became the contemporary art world's favorite medium, boosted by Andreas Gursky's panoramic images of commerce and culture and the cinematic inventions of Gregory Crewdson and Jeff Wall. It was the start of the digital age, and artists were pushing photography's technical and conceptual boundaries with work that was ambitious, expensive, and often billboard-size. Smitten collectors began paying sums once reserved for paintings (hundreds of thousands of dollars for the biggest names), spawning predictable hordes of aspiring Gurskys.

But in the past few years a new generation of photo artists has emerged with a different approach. Rejecting the glamour and glitz of their predecessors, they are working in ways closer to photography's beginnings, eschewing Photoshop and digital chicanery and, in some cases at least, scaling down. It's impossible to put a single label on this new breed of work. Many of the images are documentary, some even faux amateur, but they tend to be personal and intimate and celebrate the photographic process rather than mask it, as so much slick digital work does.

"Younger artists specializing in photography are moving toward more personal values," says New York dealer Yossi Milo. "And collectors are definitely responding to work that seems truly meaningful to the artist."

The eight international artists presented here, all under 40, are creating smart, complex, textured images that are altering what is considered "cutting edge" in photography. Their work mostly sells in the neighborhood of \$10,000



Lounge, 2004

instead of tens of thousands. Some of the artists are already well known, others are just emerging, but all are names to know now.

JULIAN FAULHABER

A lot of attention has been focused on Thomas Demand, Oliver Boberg, and James Casebere, artists who make photos of architectural models so precise that the results look like images of real spaces. Julian Faulhaber, a 33-year-old German photographer, turns this approach on its head. His pictures of new buildings are so pristine that they appear disconcertingly unreal.

Shooting with a four-by-five camera and using only available light, Faulhaber makes prints up to five feet across without digital manipulation. His 2004 image *Lounge* captures the claustrophobic green interior of a podlike clubroom straight out of a sci-fi movie. In *Sports Hall*, from 2005, a gym's pink floor becomes a canvas, crisscrossed with patterns of lines, boxes, and circles. These settings, freshly built and devoid of people, are too good to be true. With Faulhaber's eye for color and composition, they become vivid modernist abstractions.

Based in Dortmund, Germany, Faulhaber shows with *Hasted Hunt* in New York, where his recent work is on view from October 30 through December 13. Even before the show opened, the Metropolitan Museum of Art acquired one of the images, which are produced in two sizes, in editions of seven, and priced from \$5,000 to \$8,000. "These works," says gallery co-owner William Hunt, "glow like alien objects."