

*Marina Gadonneix (b. 1977, France) turns her lens on the scenes behind the scenes. From empty photography studios to museums, Unseen talks to her about seeking out spaces that exist to house other stories.*

What are you showing at Unseen?

I am presenting a group of images from my series *After the Image*. The pictures show the set-ups of several photography studios dedicated to the documentation of artworks. I have been working in several places, including museums and auction houses. The idea was to take pictures of the set-ups right after the photographer had shot the artwork. The captions of the images relate to the artwork that was there just a few minutes before. The only thing that remains is its aura.

How did this work come together?

The main part of the work consisted of research, and then began the very unexciting job of getting authorisation. From its beginning, photography always tried to show what was hidden, so I guess this authorisation task, is part of the mystery. For *After the Image*, I was obsessed with the structures you find in a photo studio: cubes, lights, neons and stands. I wanted to question these trivial accessories. In the pictures, they are facing the (invisible) presence of a major work of art. Under a very controlled light, the sacred meets the functional. Looking at the pictures, I cannot help but think of Eugène Atget's 'scene of the crime' idea. The actual act of photographing the artwork has been committed. Then I come, as if I was looking for evidence. In French, we use the expression 'théâtre du crime' for a crime scene. But with a 'théâtre', there is this idea of a stage, a place built in order to commit the actual crime. That is where these places get their very sculptural dimension.

Do you have an overarching theme in your work?

I have always been interested in places for their ability to describe today's society. My previous work, *Landscapes*, dealt with the Chroma key process (green screen), a surface designed to disappear. With *After the Image*, I have continued to search for uncertain places that are made to have the least identity possible, or none at all. Their reason for existence is to fade away in order to make another image. *All and nothing* was the title of a text by Amaury da Cunha written for *Landscapes*. I loved the title as soon as I read it and I think it is very connected to my work. The studios in *After the Image* carry a strong sense of narrative and I like to play with that. I was also very inspired by each place itself and the architectural dimension of the photo set.

Can you tell me about the line between fiction and un-staged images in your work?

I have always been fascinated by documentary photography. The reality is sometimes so unbelievable. The work of Lynne Cohen was a great influence because she was able to add the touch of a human presence to documentary photographs. My work starts with the desire to document a time and a place. I don't build these places. I just look for them, hidden as they are in today's modernity. When shooting, I make almost no modifications to the place, but they are locations where anything can happen. They literally favour fiction, as they were built to promote fantasy and mystery