

**JOSEF HOFLEHNER**  
NIGHT WORK

Open Doors on Sunday, 25<sup>th</sup> March 2018, from 11 AM to 5 PM  
Book Signing with Josef Hoflehner, from 3 PM to 4 PM  
23<sup>rd</sup> March - 21<sup>st</sup> April 2018

Being fascinating and threatening at the same time "the night" has always been a source of inspiration for philosophy, literature and the fine arts alike. In his fourth solo-exhibition at the gallery **JOSEF HOFLEHNER** (\*1955, Wels) presents the theme's photographic realisation, achieved through highest technical precision and artistic virtuosity.

Leonardo da Vinci describes in his treatise on painting (circa 1490) the difficulty of capturing darkness and distinct colour- and lighting moods. The dramatic application of light is part of the aesthetic of the dark: while in the past the moon, stars and candle light have created compelling contrasts, nowadays artificial luminaires additionally counterbalance the absence of light. Due to its light sensitivity, photography seems to be the ideal medium to explore the newest technical possibilities: from the first attempts of the French-Hungarian photographer Brassai, who captured the Parisian nightlife in the 1930s in black and white, to Ansel Adams iconic depiction *Moon and Half Dome, Yosemite Valley* (1960) to the photographs of our exhibition, one can see a constant development. Brassai and his plate camera were dependent on artificial lighting to capture restless night owls in and outside seedy establishments. Through long exposure, the photographic pioneer Ansel Adams was able to shoot the moon as a three-dimensional, detailed object: an outdoor night photograph was taken at dusk on 28<sup>th</sup> December 1960.

Half a century later, **JOSEF HOFLEHNER**, accompanied by his son Jakob, who is a photographer himself, embarks on a journey throughout the USA for his project **NIGHT WORK**. With his digital camera he translates encountered night scenes into a composition of pixels. Like Ansel Adams he uses lengthy exposure times. Since this procedure intensifies existing light, one can see lighting atmospheres that are usually not visible to the naked eye. The moving melancholy of nocturnal loneliness turns trivial motives such as single-family houses (*Casper, Wyoming/Cold Night, Denver*), road signs (*Mississippi*), phone booths (*Roadside*) and parked cars (*Deville, Los Angeles*) as well as highly prominent skylines of metropolitan cities like Los Angeles, New York and San Francisco to exceptional works of art that exude a sacral allure. **JOSEF HOFLEHNER**'s masterful staging bans the night's daunting emptiness and darkness and attests to human presence. His main objective is to show that "the world looks completely different by night, it is more thrilling and the saying *all cats are grey in the dark* holds no truth whatsoever".

Salzburg, March 2018

Katja Mittendorfer