

ART from ESLEWHERE: Mexico City
The MOMENTUM Collection at LAGOS

OLA KOLEHMAINEN



***Sultan Ahmet 1616 IV* (2014/18), photographic print on paper, 23 x 33 cm, special edition for MOMENTUM**

In his recent photographs, Ola Kolehmainen addresses sacred spaces – namely the interiors and exteriors of mosques, synagogues, churches and cathedrals. By fragmentarily assembling several individual shots taken from different, slightly offset locations, Kolehmainen shifts perspectives, breaking the symmetries of familiar pictorial axes to create cubist-like images. The work shown here was made in Istanbul in the Sultan Ahmed Mosque, or the Blue Mosque, as it is popularly known, constructed between 1609 and 1616.

During his tenure at the prestigious Tarabya Cultural Academy in Istanbul, Kolehmainen photographed Byzantine (400–600's) and Ottoman period (1500–1600s) religious buildings for half a year. In addition to their historical dimension, the artist probes the buildings' architectural volumes and light ratios: the buildings' interiors and structural details reveal the changing light of days and seasons. The textured ornamentation of the photographs reflects historical layers and decorative interiors. Space and light are masterfully handled in Kolehmainen's images to successfully capture the sublime essence of these historic buildings, which radiate their mystical qualities. In Istanbul, Ola Kolehmainen developed an entirely new way of working, a new photographic language which he utilizes to this day.

Istanbul – formerly Constantinople - with its complexity of cultures and layers of history, embodies for so many of us the mystique of the Orient. Kolehmainen's body of work from this period is quintessentially Art from Elsewhere. It is a contemporary view onto a historic structure - an exotic other reimagined through the artist's lens. But beyond their mysticism and exoticism, places of worship have, throughout human history, played a significant role in times of conflict and war. They are places of hope and redemption where we come to pray for peace. But also – alas – they have historically represented the causes of many conflicts, from the religious wars and inquisitions of the Crusades, to more recent conflicts around the world. With the outbreak of war once more in Europe, Ola Kolehmainen's work in ART from ESLEWHERE is presented with this duality in mind. It is both a reflection on the greatness of human endeavor in building architectural marvels in the glorification of God, and the human potential for evil in destroying those same marvels in the name of dogmas and ideologies.

Ola Kolehmainen (b. 1964 in Helsinki, Finland. Lives and works in Berlin.)

<https://www.galerieforsblom.com/artists/ola-kolehmainen>

Ola Kolehmainen studied at the University of Art and Design, Helsinki (TaiK) and became one of the most visible and successful artists of the Helsinki School.

Kolehmainen is known for his large-scale minimalist abstract close-ups of architectural details such as geometric surface structures or reflective window facades. In his early series of works he deals with modern 20th and 21st century buildings by architects such as Mies van der Rohe and Alvar Aalto. In later works, his focus shifts to sacred spaces and archives. Kolehmainen's conceptual practice highlights the architectural details of materials and forms, making the viewer question the way the building is perceived, pushing both architecture and photography to new dimensions. In 2015 he was made an honorary member of the Royal Institute of British Architects RIBA.

Ola Kolehmainen is one of the leading figures in Finnish photography. His work is included in multiple international art institutions, foundations, and collections, from Germany and Spain to renowned Nordic museums such as the Malmö Art Museum and the Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma. He has participated in international Biennales, including: the 1st Kyiv International Biennale of Contemporary Art (2012), Arsenale, Kiev, Ukraine; the 17th Biennale of Sydney (2010), Australia.

Selected recent solo exhibitions include: 2020: "Back to Square Black" Galerie Forsblom, Helsinki, Finland. 2019: "Sacred Places" Mirko Mayer gallery, Cologne, Germany; "COELN" Cathedral of Light, Rheinishes Bildarchiv as Guest in Kaune Contemporary, St. Joseph Chapel, Cologne, Germany. 2018: "Sacred Spaces" BGE Contemporary Art Projects, Stavanger, Norway & Galerie der Moderne, Munich, Germany. 2017: "Sacred Spaces" Helsinki Art Museum HAM, Finland; "Sketches of Spain" Studio Session, Galerie Forsblom, Helsinki, Finland; "Sinan Project" Borusan Contemporary, Istanbul, Turkey; "It Never Entered My Mind" Gallery Brandstrup, Oslo, Norway; "Sketches of Spain" Galeria Senda, Barcelona, Spain. 2015: Purdy Hicks Gallery, London, UK; "Sense of volume" Galerie Forsblom, Helsinki, Finland. 2014: "Geometric Light -including color installation by Sauerbruch-Hutton Architects" Haus am Waldsee Museum, Berlin, Germany; "Reason and Intuition" Museum Pitzhanger Manor House and Gallery, London, UK. 2012: "Traditions" Galerie Forsblom, Helsinki, Finland; "Enlightenment" Alvar Aalto Museum, Jyväskylä, Finland; Gallerie Brandstrup, Oslo, Norway. 2011: „Rohmaterial: Sauerbruch-Hutton“ Gallery TaiK, Berlin, Germany. 2010: Deutsche Werkstätten, Dresden, Germany; „Alvar Aalto“ Galeria Senda, Barcelona, Spain; „A Building Is Not a Building“ KUNTSI, Museum of Modern Art, Vaasa, Finland; „Colour Urban Structures“ Galerie Artfinder,

Hamburg, Germany; Galerie Vanguardia, Bilbao, Spain; Galerie Brandstrup, Oslo, Norway.

Recent major group exhibitions include: 2020: "Inspiration" Stockholm's National Museum; Ateneum, Helsinki, Finland. 2018: "Unboxing" Photographs. Arbeiten im Fotoarchiv, Kunstbibliothek, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin, Germany. 2017: "Lichtblicke" Kunsthaus Potsdam, Germany; "Summer exhibition Art Goes Logomo" Makasiini Contemporary, Turku, Finland; "Dreamaholic" Weserburg, Museum für moderne Kunst, Bremen, Germany. 2016: 90 Jahre Rheinisches Bildarchiv: "Fotografien für Köln und die Welt" Rheinisches Bildarchiv, Cologne, Germany; "Berlin Raum Radar. New architecture photography" Neue West, Berlin, Germany; "SCRIPT" Borusan Contemporary, Istanbul, Turkey; "Freundschaftsspiel Istanbul" Freiburg - Museum für neue Kunst, Freiburg, Germany; "Art from Elsewhere"-International Contemporary Art from UK Galleries Bristol Museum & Art Gallery, Bristol, UK & Galleries Towner, Eastbourne, UK; "Deck Voyage" Borusan Contemporary, Istanbul, Turkey; "Lines of Passage" Municipality of Mytilene Art Gallery, Halim Bay Mansion Lesvos, Greece. 2015: "Freude schöner Götter Funken" Galerie Abtart, Stuttgart, Germany; "The Alvar Aalto Library of Vyborg" Salon Dahlmann, Berlin, Germany; "Lichtbild und Datenbild. Spuren Konkreter Fotografie" Museum im Kulturspeicher Würzburg, Germany; "Desire: A Selection from the Borusan Contemporary Art Collection" Borusan Contemporary, Istanbul, Turkey; "I plunge into black holes and emerge intact" Gallery Taik Persons, Berlin, Germany. 2014: "Verzweigt. Bäume in der zeitgenössischen Kunst" Altana, Germany; Kulturstiftung, Sinclair-Haus, Bad Homburg, Germany; Swedish Grace, Jacksons Design, Berlin, Germany; "Le vol en provence d'Helsinki" Le19 Centre Régional d'Art Contemporain, Montelébard, France; "Art From Elsewhere" Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow, UK; "Summer Group Show" Gallery Bryce Wolkowitz, New York, NY, USA; "Topological Constellation Art and Architecture I" DNA Galerie, Berlin, Germany; "Within / Beyond Borders" European Investment Bank & Banco de Portugal, Lisbon, Portugal; "Splendid Views" -Works From the Miettinen Collection, Salon Dahlmann, Berlin, Germany; "Encounters with Aalto" Jacksons Design, Berlin, Germany; "Spuren der Moderne" Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, Germany; "Reason & Intuition: Alvar Aalto & Ola Kolehmainen in Soane" Pitzhanger Manor House & Gallery, London, UK; "Common Ground: Earth" Borusan Contemporary, Istanbul, Turkey; "mirror, mirror..." Galerie Stefan Röpke, Cologne, Germany.