

Unrestricted Views

Christoph Brech Photographs the Vatican Museums

The world-famous museums in a new light

Christoph Brech has enjoyed a privilege unlikely to be granted to anyone else any time soon. For three years he was allowed to photograph the halls and galleries of the Vatican Museums at day- and nighttime unbothered by the never-ending throngs of visitors. His photographs depict deserted corridors, artworks observed within the context of their surroundings, unexpected perspectives, and hidden details—views that are restricted for ordinary visitors. In this way, the world's oldest public museum becomes a place of wonder and contemplation. A selection of historical black-and-white photographs from the Vatican archives augments the volume. Arnold Nesselrath acquaints us with the history of the collections, expressing at the same time his concern about the future of "the museum as an institution." Christoph Brech's "unrestricted views" encourage his viewers to take a second look, a look that penetrates the surface.

Christoph Brech (b. 1964 in Schweinfurt/Germany) a graduate of the Akademie der Bildenden Künste (Academy of the Fine Arts) in Munich, has received numerous awards and grants, among them the scholarship of the Villa Massimo in Rome. His work includes video art, installations, and art in public space. In recent years, Brech has also concentrated on photography. His work has been shown in major museums and exhibits worldwide, as in MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt on the Main, Goetz Collection, Munich, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden, Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich, and the Vatican Museums, Rome.

Prof. Arnold Nesselrath has been deputy director of the Vatican Museums since 1995, and he is a professor of Art History at the Humboldt University in Berlin.

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