



ZEN JOURNEY – THOMAS KIEROK

The title of the exhibition already betrays its central theme: it is about impressions of a spiritual journey, or more precisely of several journeys the artist has undertaken to Japan. Although the exhibition has a retrospective character - portraits of celebrities, among others, and impressions of a pilgrimage to India can also be seen - the main room of the exhibition, the foyer of the villa, clearly conveys the focus: **Zen Journey** - a journey to the **Zen gardens** of Japan.

The Berlin-born photographer and artist **Thomas Kierok** has been dealt with spirituality since his youth. The practice of meditation has accompanied him for almost 20 years now. It was only a matter of time until the desire arose to meditate in one of Japan's most famous temples called *Eihei-ji* (jap. 永平寺). Following the wisdom "The way is the goal" Thomas Kierok discovered the beauty of the Japanese gardens, which are laid out around the temples and through which the temple visitor "must" pass.

Zen gardens are artistically designed landscape architectures: minimalist in design, with stones, gravel or sand, or more lush with moss, trees or small woods. Zen gardens do not imitate nature, but live from the symbolic character of their design elements. Even the supposed emptiness¹ of the gardens stands for something: a space which the viewer, when he or she engages in the emptiness, in the invisible, can fill with thoughts, associations and individual pictorial worlds. It can be read as a way of encountering the self, which arises from the beauty and symbolic power of the elements of nature.

Guided by the moment of deepest bliss, Kierok begins to capture details of the gardens with the camera eye. He fragments what he has seen, photographs in detail, thus detaching the gardens from their connection to the temple architecture and inevitably increasing their abstract character. The visual language of these "nature portraits" captivates the viewer; they create the feeling of being surrounded by nature, of standing in the middle of the gardens, in accordance with the goal of consciousness in Zen: to be, in the here and now, in harmony of body and mind.

Despite the subdued colourfulness, the few colour contrasts and the desertedness, the Zen Gardens, as an expression of a feeling, an inner beauty, stand in a row with the artist's other motifs. In his series of **portraits of celebrities** and the **Hundred**, Kierok also stimulates a second look in the viewer through the use of creative means and a conceptual staging of photography, which leads away from the visible surface to something invisible, to the essential, the deeply human. With the photo series **Budda Path**, which depicts impressions of a pilgrimage through India, Kierok allows the viewer to share his knowledge of Zen Buddhism by combining versatile motifs with calligraphy.

Daniela von Damaros

¹ In Zen Buddhism emptiness is a space for purification.

Thomas Kierok

is a photographer and artist, author, teacher of photography and Zen.

- Training at the renowned Lette Verein in Berlin
- freelance photographer for over 25 years
- works as a lecturer for photography
- current photobook "Hundert" has been published by Knesebeck

Price list – Zen Gardens

- each motif in an edition of 7 + 2AP, for each material

1) Fine Art Gallery Print on handmade Asian fibre,

Provenance (mulberry tree (Kozo) and Manila hemp (Abaca)) with pigment print:

Size	Price
33 cm x 33 cm	900 €
100 cm x 100 cm	2900 €
140 cm x 140 cm	3900 €

2) Fine Art Gallery Print on Hahnemühle photo paper:

Size	Price
33 cm x 33 cm	700 €
100 cm x 100 cm	2500 €
140 cm x 140 cm	3600 €

3) Lightbox

Each motif in 1 edition

Size	Prize
100cm x100 cm	4900 €

(Prices of other photo series on request)