

SEANKELLY

Tang, Jessica. "Candida Höfer's Wide Open Spaces," *The New York Times Magazine*, May 29, 2015.

The New York Times Magazine

Candida Höfer's Wide Open Spaces



"Palais Garnier Paris XXXI 2005." Candida Höfer/VG Bild-Kunst, via Sean Kelly Gallery

The German photographer Candida Höfer is often described as a photographer of empty space. Since 1980, she has focused her lens almost exclusively on the uninhabited interiors of public buildings around Europe and the United States: libraries, universities, museums, palaces, theaters, opera houses.

Critics frequently point to Höfer's studies with the German photographers Bernd and Hilla Becher, at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf — where her contemporaries included Andreas Gursky, Thomas Struth and Thomas Ruff — as the foundation for her approach. The Bechers are celebrated for their deadpan images of industrial architecture (the water towers are best known), indebted to the 1920s German realist movement known as New Objectivity.

Via email, Höfer explained that she approaches her subjects "more or less methodically: shooting from the stage to the audience, from the audience to the stage, from side to side, and then moving on to any other areas in the space that I discover during the process. One of the reasons for doing it this way is purely pragmatic: I always work under time constraints. Because I use available light, the shots tend to take a long time, and such places are always alive — rehearsals are scheduled, alterations to the sets are being made and technicians

and cleaning people are usually waiting.” This methodical approach gives Höfer’s work an encyclopedic quality; it is a catalog of Western culture seen through architecture.

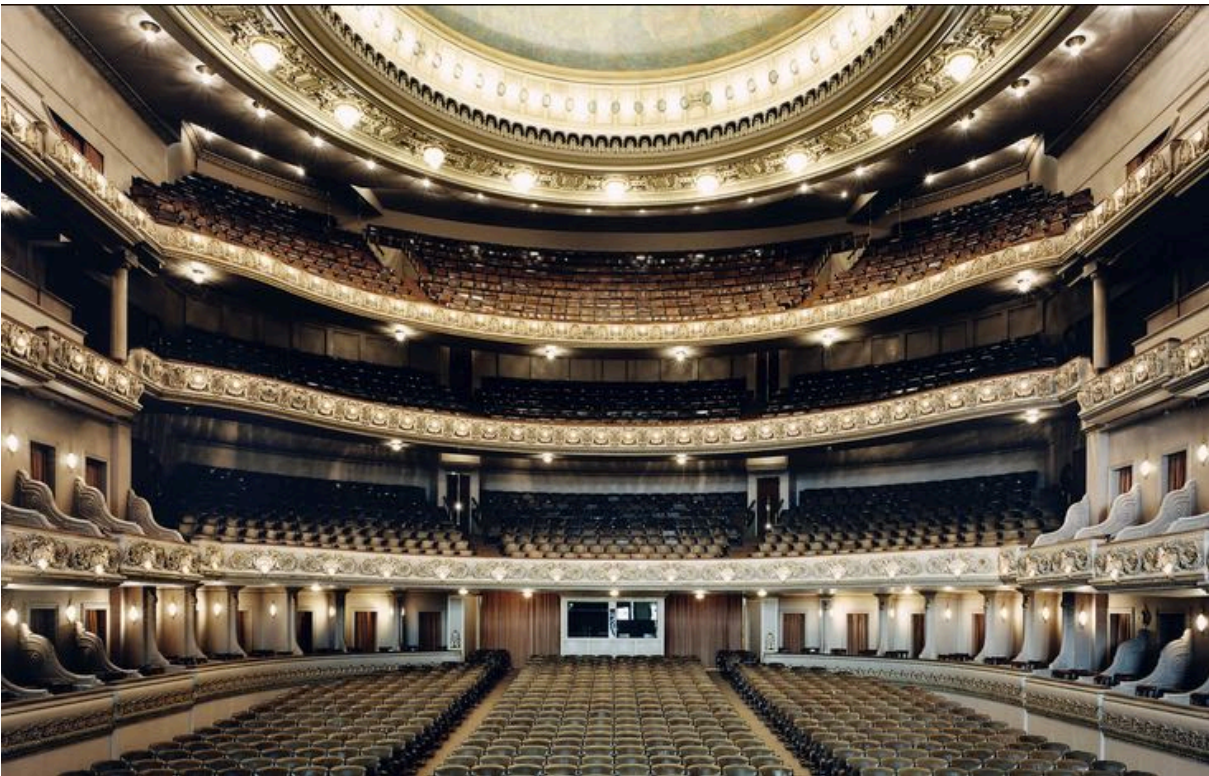
These photographs were made in theaters and opera houses around the world, from the Teatro Comunale di Bologna to the Theatro Municipal do Rio de Janeiro — the kind of spaces that Höfer, the daughter of a ballet dancer and a theater critic, has known since childhood. Some of the most recent images are included in the exhibition “From Düsseldorf,” on view for the first time in the United States at Sean Kelly Gallery until June 20.



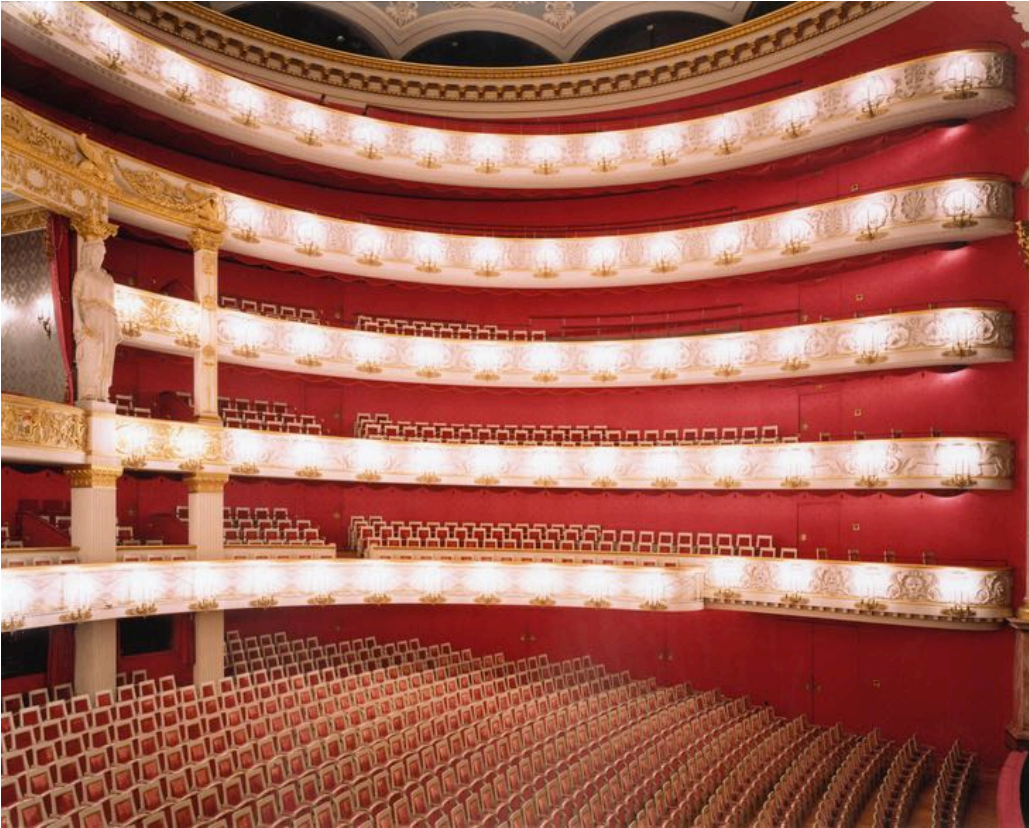
“Palais Garnier Paris XXVIII 2005.” Candida Höfer/VG Bild-Kunst, via Sean Kelly Gallery



“Teatro Nacional de Sao Carlos Lisboa I 2005.” Candida Höfer/VG Bild-Kunst, via Sean Kelly Gallery



“Theatro Municipal Rio de Janeiro II 2005.” Candida Höfer/VG Bild-Kunst, via Sean Kelly Gallery



“Bayerische Staatsoper Munchen I 2005.” Candida Höfer/VG Bild-Kunst, via Sean Kelly Gallery



“Teatro di Villa Mazzacurati di Bologna II 2006.” Candida Höfer/VG Bild-Kunst, via Sean Kelly Gallery



“Teatro Comunale di Bologna II 2006.” Candida Höfer/VG Bild-Kunst, via Sean Kelly Gallery



“Teatro Cervantes Buenos Aires IV 2006.” Candida Höfer/VG Bild-Kunst, via Sean Kelly Gallery



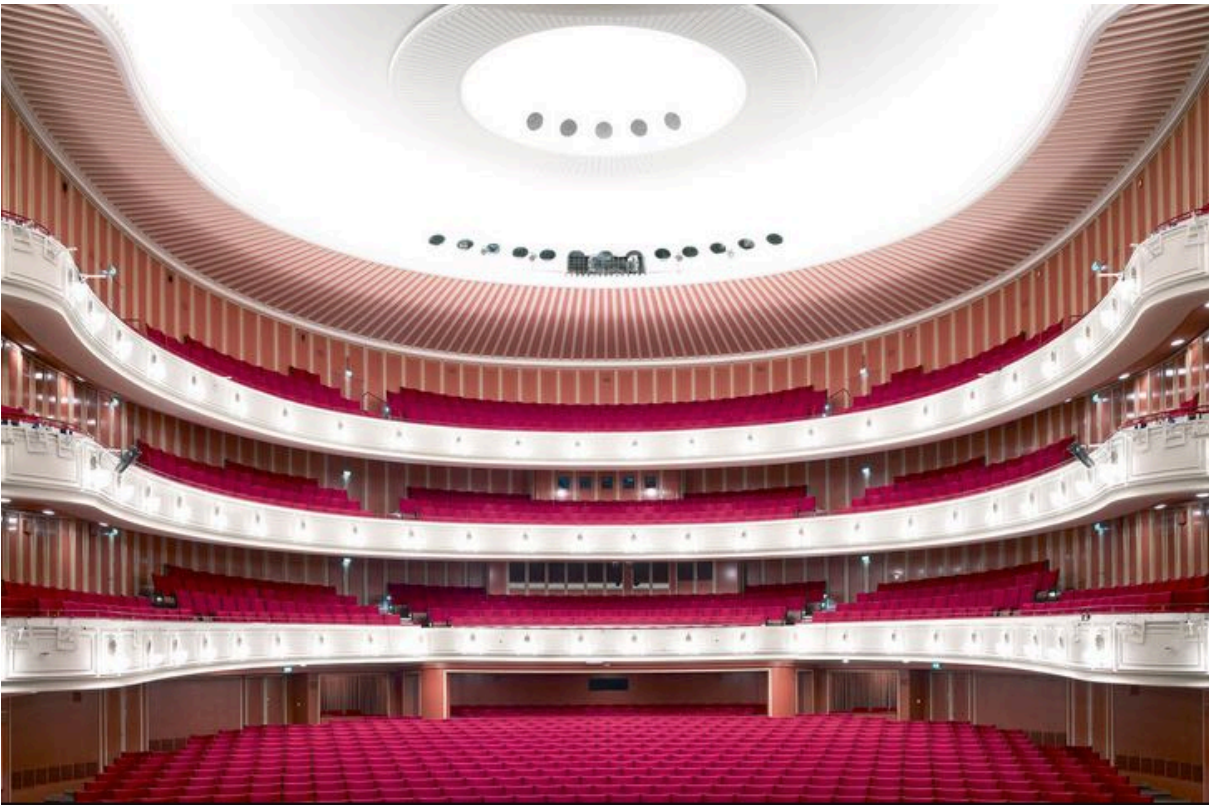
"Opernhaus Köln II 2007." Candida Höfer/VG Bild-Kunst, via Sean Kelly Gallery



"Théâtre de Montansier Versailles IV 2007." Candida Höfer/VG Bild-Kunst, via Sean Kelly Gallery



"Teatro San Carlo Napoli | 2009." Candida Höfer/VG Bild-Kunst, via Sean Kelly Gallery



"Deutsche Oper am Rhein Düsseldorf | 2012." Candida Höfer/VG Bild-Kunst, via Sean Kelly Gallery



“Schauspielhaus Düsseldorf | 2012.” Candida Höfer/VG Bild-Kunst, via Sean Kelly Gallery