

## Thomas Demand

(Munich, Germany, 1964)

Initially interested in pursuing sculpture, Thomas Demand used photography to document his works. The passage from the three dimensions of sculpture to the two dimensional photographic image, however, turned out to be a terrain for fertile investigation. In lieu of describing reality, his camera seemed to have greater success in its transformation, where the resulting image was capable of revealing aspects invisible to the naked eye. Attracted to this inherent contradiction, since 1994 Demand has focused on an original artistic practice, building one-to-one scale cardboard models in his studio, which he photographs and sometimes films, and then usually abandons or destroys.

Concepts of reality and fiction lose significance in Demand's work; if the model is the origin of the photograph, it, in turn, is often based on a previous image published in a newspaper, found on a postcard, or preserved in an archive. On the basis of this circular procedure, each of Demand's works becomes a sort of stratification of memories layered over one another, to the point where the original is so distant it becomes legitimate to question its real existence. A possible metaphor for the omnipresence of images and their ambiguous relationship with concepts related to history, memory, reality and the transmission of information, Demand's work includes references to events of political and social relevance and questions related to the way in which they are conveyed in images destined for collective consumption.

The dissemination of information technology in the realm of the construction, transmission and archiving of data and images represents yet another subject of reflection for the artist, and is one of the themes addressed in the work *Grotto*, 2006. During his research, Demand found an ideal image in a commercial postcard of a grotto in Majorca; characterized by imposing stalactites and stalagmites, the grotto is one of the island's attractions, a place that tourists know even before they visited it. An image more potent than reality, Demand's grotto is striking in its capacity to imprison the eye in the articulation of its architecture, bringing to mind the philosophical values of the realm that Plato had chosen to indicate the unbridgeable distance from the world of ideas. (MB)