

Land marks.

English version of "Ansichtskarten".

There are things and contexts which are worth to be looked at (at least this is the opinion of guides and leaders). Everything else should not even be glanced at, if the "excluded third" is taken to be a principle of logical thinking: "X is either worth to be looked at or not, and there is no third alternative". However, although a thing or a context is either worthy of being looked at or unworthy, it is possible to quantify the worthiness (value) of any given subject. Thus the Eiffel Tower is more valuable as a thing to be looked at than is a Bulgarian peasant costume, which in its turn is more valuable than is a TV antenna. Such a quantification may be coded: Eiffel Tower = three stars, TV antenna = zero stars. Thus guides (and other leaders) may affirm with regard to the three stars of the Eiffel Tower that they are worth a trip, and with regard to Naples that it should be looked at before death comes.

This opinion of guides with regard to the worth (value) of things and contexts is documented, and the documents are called "picture post cards". The German guide (Fuehrer) in fact produced such picture post cards during his youth in Vienna. It is not known whether the Italian guide (Duce) had a similar youthful creative action. Picture post cards are different from other maps by the fact that they show the landscape as a picture. A street map of Avignon may evaluate as much as a picture post card does: it may supply the Papal castle with three stars. Still: the Fuehrer was right to create picture post cards and not street maps; pictures mis-lead far better than do images of thinking (maps), because they permit their receivers to find their way without having to make any intellectual effort.

This is why one should go into a stationary shop or see a tabacconist, if one enters an unknown city, before looking about at the context. In that shop one may buy picture post cards, and thus avoid the danger of looking at things which are not worth seeing. Mephisto in Goethe's Faust teaches a pupil to cling to words, in order to enter the temple of certitude, but he said this before the invention of photos and picture post cards. Nowadays one may buy picture post cards of that temple at the stationary's, and words have become unnecessary. And should there be no picture post card showing the temple of certitude, this will be because such a temple is not worth to be looked at. This is the "Fuehrerprinzip" (the fundamental guide line): the value of every thing and every context is quantified and fixed on picture post cards, and everybody everywhere shall be guided by them.

This may be the true explanation for the title A. Mueller-Pohle has chosen for his new series of picture post cards: "Da capo". Of course: in music "da capo" means "once more from the start" and this is what Mueller-Pohle does: he starts from where the picture post card starts, from looking at things. But the things he looks at are picture post cards. Thus "da capo" comes to mean "starting with the guide", and in fact the guides in concentration camps were indeed called "Kapo". Mueller-Pohle's series starts with the fundamental guide line as it expresses itself in picture post cards, and it is out to de-capitate the "capo". An excellent example for this Guiltine method Mueller-Pohle is applying:

On the top of Corcovado mountain in Rio there stands a colossal statue of "Cristo Redentor" (Christ the Savior). It stretches out its arms over Guanabara Bay in order to lift the teeming millions who live there toward Salvation. (Whether the statue, or the One represented by it, succeed in this, is a different sort of question. The statue is worth to be looked at (it has three stars), and there are picture post cards everywhere to show this. Thus he who travels to Rio no longer needs to buy one; he has already seen it. He takes the car that will lead him to the top with the statue not to really look at it, but to compare it with the sight on the picture post card. To control whether the statue is as it should be according to the picture post card. While there he gets a view of Rio, but that view, too, is fixed on a picture post card. He may thus see with his own eyes that Rio is as it should be (according to the picture post card), and that therefore everything with Rio and its salvation is in the best of all possible orders. No need to go there.

A. Mueller-Pohle produces a picture called "Cristo Redentor", which is a photo of such a picture post card. But its size is 120x160 cm, it is silver gelatine on PE paper, and the picture post card it shows has been subject to different processes. Thus it questions this specific picture post card, and, by doing so, all the other picture post cards. And it does so using various methods. It would be too simple to claim that the photo is a meta-picture post card; that it is Mueller-Pohle's version of the views expressed in picture post cards. The fact is more interesting than this. It is a photo which demands of its receiver to make an intellectual effort. The photo imposes on its receiver questions of the type: what does it mean?, how was it made? what was it made for? Those are questions which undermine the "Fueherprinzip", which go against any guide line. And if and when the receiver begins to suspect that the photo means a picture post card, then all those questions undermine the very principle all picture post cards stand on. At that point all the guide line capitulate: da capo.

It is impossible to be too radical where this photo is concerned. Heads roll. First, it becomes necessary to review one's view of picture post cards. And then one's view of Rio. And so on; one must review one's view of the statue on Corcovado, and of the motif which has led to the construction of the statue. In another direction one must review one's view on photographing. In yet another direction one's view on the origin of views (on "opinion formation"). And possibly even must one review one's view on Salvation which the Savior means which the statue means which the picture post card means which Mueller-Pohle's photo means, and which Mueller Pohle himself means by calling it "da capo". In sum: if looked at carefully, that photo undermines all our views based on any authority of any kind, and nobody can know where this might lead to. It may even lead one to the extraordinarily painful situation, in which one is forced to form one's own views without any leader. Which of course one may then fix on picture post cards of one's own making. Thus the photo here under consideration leads the receiver on to question all views "da capo al fine".