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Review: Julian Faulhaber at Hasted Hunt Kraeutler

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By: Jeong Gwang  
May 24, 2010



When you see Julian Faulhaber's photography you're tempted to think that if you were to pry off the plexiglass sheet from the photographic paper there'd be no image left, because it's actually somehow contained in the plastic. Lest we misunderstand us here, that's a compliment. If there's any doubt about the merits of "Diasec," seeing these photographs should put them to rest - here, it works beautifully. Faulhaber's current show at Hasted Hunt Kraeutler (on view until June 26, 2010) offers a good opportunity to see the work. It is called "Lowdensitypolyethylene II" (of course!), and it's a bit of a guilty pleasure. (more)

Faulhaber's work looks a bit like a Demand style world, except that everything is made of plastic - which it well might be, except that the artist did not take part in the building. All those places exist somewhere, in places like Germany, where people love the mix of modernity and discomfort that you might be familiar with if you've ever been to, say, the Frankfurt airport. Everything is so unbelievably shiny! It's almost as if there are laws against the use of non-man-made materials at German airports (actually, there might be, so I better not joke about it - because I'm sure to read about it in emails).

It's those kinds of dystopias that Faulhaber depicts, in the most beautiful colours. It's all so neat and clean and shiny and terrifyingly beautiful! In part this is because the artist takes the photos before all of these dystopias are being put to use.

It is important to realize that the beauty here is not quite as superficial as it might appear: the images might be very decorative, but they also increase the viewer's level of discomfort. Everything simply is too neat and clean, too artificial, and one shudders to imagine actual human beings having to deal with them. If you've ever had a five-hour layover at Frankfurt airport you know what I mean.

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