



P R E S S R E L E A S E

BERND & HILLA BECHER

A Survey: 1972 - 2006

7 May – 3 July 2009

Fraenkel Gallery is pleased to announce **BERND & HILLA BECHER**, a survey of the work of the influential German artists spanning the years 1972 to 2006. The exhibition will be on view from May 7 to July 3, 2009.

Through approximately twenty works in various formats, the exhibition will present a concise array of the subjects of primary importance to the Bechers over their long career. At the same time, the works on view will highlight the artists' evolving modes of presentation, from their diptychs of the early 1970s, through ambitious multi-part typologies, and the large-format single images first introduced in 1990 in a renowned exhibition at the DIA Art Foundation in New York. The most recent works to be exhibited were made in 2006, the year of Bernd Becher's death.

Since Bernd and Hilla Becher began photographing together in 1959, their work has focused on capturing a range of impressive industrial structures in Western Europe and America. Water towers, blast furnaces, gas tanks, coal mine tipples, and grain elevators - each of their photographs isolates a large structure and describes it with the frontality and exactitude of an engineer's diagram. They would generally photograph on overcast days in the spring and fall, which provided them an even light with a vast tonal range. This effect captured the structures in remarkable detail with intensified clarity, as if documenting the neglected relics of the industrial era. This strict template furnishes the building blocks of what the Bechers came to call "typologies" - grids of pictures that reveal the basic forms of common functions while simultaneously highlighting the unique details of each particular specimen.

Bernd and Hilla Becher's work is represented in many permanent collections including the Museum of Modern Art, New York, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, the Guggenheim, New York, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, among many others. Their work was shown in Documentas 5 (1972), 6 (1977), 7 (1982), and 11 (2002). Their teaching has influenced a generation of younger artists such as Thomas Ruff, Andreas Gursky and Thomas Struth.

Fraenkel Gallery is located at 49 Geary Street, 4th floor, San Francisco.

Hours are Tuesday through Friday, 10:30 am - 5:30 pm, & Saturday 11:00 am - 5:00 pm.

For further information and press photographs, please contact Dan Cheek at 415.981.2661 or dcheek@fraenkelgallery.com.

*Bernd & Hilla Becher, *Water Tower, Béziers, Hérault, France*, 1984.