

An abstract artwork featuring a complex network of dark, intersecting lines that create a sense of depth and structure. The background is a vibrant teal color, with white, angular shapes that appear to be floating or layered within the composition. The overall effect is one of dynamic, geometric abstraction.

# BEYOND DECORATION

*Contemporary art begins  
where space becomes more than architecture.*

Michael Bork

# Why Do Some Spaces Stay in Our Memory ...

## ...While Others Do Not?

Architecture creates spaces.

Identity emerges  
through meaning.



**Today, companies invest significant resources in architecture, interior design, and spatial planning.**

Reception areas, meeting rooms, and workplaces are carefully designed, materials are deliberately selected, and corporate identities are translated into every visible detail. Yet these efforts alone do not necessarily create places that people remember.

Many spaces are functional, refined, and visually appealing. They communicate professionalism and fulfil their purpose. At the same time, they often remain interchangeable. After a meeting or a visit, only a vague impression remains. The space was pleasant—but it revealed little about the identity of the organisation behind it.

At a time when products and services are becoming increasingly similar, the identity of a place has become an important differentiator. Spaces communicate long before conversations begin. They express openness or distance, innovation or continuity, dynamism or calm. They shape first impressions and influence the everyday experience of employees, clients, and visitors alike.

Architecture provides the framework. Materials, light, and furniture create atmosphere. Yet it is cultural content that gives a space its distinctive character. It introduces the emotional and intellectual dimension through which a functional environment becomes a memorable place.

Contemporary art plays a unique role within this process. It does not illustrate corporate messages, nor does it exist merely to decorate walls. Instead, it invites reflection, expands perception, and creates opportunities for dialogue, memory, and individual interpretation. In doing so, it contributes a layer of identity that cannot be standardised or manufactured.

A work of art therefore changes more than a space.

**It changes the way  
people experience that space.**

And sometimes,  
it even changes what they remember long after they have left.

# Why Companies Often Choose the Wrong Art

Not every work of art transforms a space.

And not every space  
requires the same kind of art.



**Today, many organisations recognise the value of integrating art into their working environments.**

New office buildings, hotels, law firms, healthcare facilities, and corporate headquarters frequently include artworks as part of their interiors. Yet despite considerable investment in architecture and design, the artistic dimension often remains surprisingly generic.

The issue rarely lies in the quality of the artworks themselves. More often, it begins with the way they are selected.

In many projects, art enters the process only after the architecture, lighting, furniture, and interior concept have already been completed. At that stage, the question becomes what should fill the remaining wall space. Art is treated as the final decorative element rather than as an integral part of the spatial concept.

As a result, practical considerations tend to dominate. The artwork should match existing colours, fit a particular wall, complement the furniture, and appeal to as many people as possible while avoiding controversy.

The outcome is predictable. Spaces appear complete and professionally designed, yet the artworks rarely contribute an independent presence. Instead of shaping the character of a place, they simply adapt to it.

This overlooks the unique role that contemporary art can play.

Its purpose is not to confirm what already exists. It introduces new perspectives, creates emotional resonance, and adds a cultural dimension that neither architecture nor interior design can achieve on their own. A powerful artwork does not need to dominate a room. Its strength often lies in ambiguity, openness, and its ability to invite different interpretations over time.

For organisations, this requires a fundamental shift in perspective. The essential question is no longer:

*"Which artwork fits this space?"*

Instead, it becomes:

***"What story should this space tell?"***

Only then does the search for the right artwork truly begin.

At that point, art ceases to be decoration.

**It becomes part of the identity of the place.**

# Identity Cannot Be Furnished

Architecture defines a space.

**Culture gives it meaning.**



**Today, organisations invest heavily in branding, corporate culture, and employer branding.**

They develop mission statements, define values, and carefully shape every aspect of their communication. At the same time, employees, clients, and partners spend a significant part of their lives within the physical spaces these organisations create.

It is therefore remarkable that many of these spaces reflect only a fraction of what the organisation actually stands for.

A building may be architecturally outstanding. An interior concept may be flawlessly executed. Materials, colours, lighting, and furniture may all be perfectly coordinated. Yet something often remains missing.

Not because the space is incomplete.

But because it tells no story of its own.

Identity is not created through perfection. It emerges when people experience meaning. Spaces become memorable when they offer more than function alone. The places we remember are rarely defined by furniture or finishes. Instead, they stay with us because of the atmosphere they create—the subtle interaction of architecture, light, materiality, and cultural expression.

Contemporary art has a unique ability to contribute precisely this dimension.

Not by illustrating corporate values or visualising marketing messages. Its strength lies in its independence. It opens perspectives rather than closing them. It invites reflection instead of delivering predefined answers. In doing so, it creates opportunities for individual interpretation that no design concept can fully anticipate.

This has become increasingly important for organisations. Workplaces are no longer merely environments for productivity. They have become places of encounter, collaboration, and corporate culture. At the same time, clients, applicants, and business partners increasingly seek authenticity. They want to experience what an organisation stands for—not simply read about it.

The identity of an organisation is therefore expressed not only through its communication.

It is also experienced through its spaces.

Contemporary art contributes to this identity not as decoration, but as a cultural expression of openness, reflection, and individuality.

It does not simply make spaces more attractive.

**It makes them more authentic.**

# Art Is Not Interior Decoration

A space does not become meaningful  
because art hangs on its walls.

It becomes meaningful  
when art becomes part of its identity.



## **Companies acquire works of art for many understandable reasons.**

They seek to enhance the quality of their interiors, create a welcoming atmosphere, or express the values of their organisation. All of these intentions are legitimate.

Yet they address only part of what art is capable of achieving. The true purpose of art is not to decorate a space. Its purpose is to transform the relationship between people and that space.

Furniture serves a function. Lighting shapes atmosphere. Materials define character.

Art introduces another dimension. It invites people to pause. It encourages observation without directing it. It creates moments in which individual associations, memories, and interpretations become possible.

This is what fundamentally distinguishes contemporary art from decorative imagery.

Decoration is designed to complement an interior. It seeks harmony, familiarity, and immediate visual appeal. Its impact is often strongest during the first encounter.

Contemporary art follows a different principle. It does not need to please everyone. It does not seek to provide definitive answers.

Instead, it embraces ambiguity, invites curiosity, and rewards repeated engagement. Its value lies not in instant comprehension but in its ability to reveal new meanings over time.

For organisations, this difference is significant. Spaces in which art serves only a decorative purpose are rarely remembered. Spaces in which art stimulates conversation, reflection, and individual experience create lasting impressions.

They develop a cultural presence that cannot be manufactured precisely because it emerges naturally.

This principle applies regardless of industry or organisational size.

Whether in a law firm, a hotel, a creative agency, a technology company, or a family-owned business, wherever people meet, spaces communicate. Contemporary art enriches these encounters without dominating them. It becomes a quiet expression of an organisational culture that values openness, individuality, and intellectual curiosity.

For this reason, selecting an artwork should never begin with questions of colour, size, or style. It should begin with a more fundamental question: *What should this place express about the people behind it?*

Art communicates without explanation.

**Its presence is its language.**

# When Art Becomes Part of Corporate Culture

Art does not change organisations.

But it can change the way  
people experience them.



## **Corporate culture is not created by mission statements alone.**

It emerges through everyday interactions, leadership, shared values, and the environments in which people meet.

Every space communicates.

A meeting room reflects how conversations are conducted. A reception area shapes first impressions. Shared spaces reveal how much an organisation values exchange, collaboration, and openness. Whether intentionally designed or not, spaces continuously express aspects of organisational culture.

Within this context, contemporary art is often misunderstood. It is neither a branding tool nor a visual translation of corporate values. Great art does not reinforce predefined messages.

It expands perspectives.

This is precisely where its strength lies.

A work of art encourages curiosity, invites dialogue, and allows different interpretations to coexist. Rather than providing answers, it creates opportunities for reflection. In doing so, it contributes a dimension that extends far beyond aesthetic enhancement.

Organisations that integrate contemporary art into their spaces therefore make a cultural decision rather than a decorative one. They demonstrate that openness, reflection, and independent thinking are not merely communicated—they are embedded in the environment itself.

This quality cannot easily be measured.

But it can be experienced.

Employees work in surroundings that acknowledge more than efficiency alone. Visitors encounter spaces that communicate more than economic success. Clients and partners experience an organisation that understands cultural quality as part of its identity.

Contemporary art thus becomes more than an expression of prosperity.

It becomes an expression of organisational culture itself.

Perhaps this is its greatest value.

Not what it explains.

**But what it makes possible.**

# Between Decoration and Meaning

Not every artwork  
creates the same experience.

What matters is not its style,  
**but its ability**  
**to transform perception.**



**For centuries, art has accompanied architecture.**

It decorated churches, expressed power in palaces, and narrated stories in public buildings. Today, we encounter art in museums, galleries, and increasingly within corporate environments. Yet its role has fundamentally changed.

Contemporary art is no longer expected to illustrate ideas or communicate fixed messages. Instead, it remains open. It asks questions rather than providing answers. It encourages viewers to form their own interpretations.

This is what distinguishes it from decoration.

Decoration seeks harmony. It aims to integrate seamlessly into its surroundings, to create comfort, and to provide immediate visual satisfaction. Its effect is often immediate—and quickly exhausted.

Contemporary art follows a different path.

It embraces ambiguity. It leaves room for interpretation and reveals new meanings over time. A work of art can continue to inspire different thoughts for years, not because the artwork changes, but because the person experiencing it does.

This openness is not a weakness.

It is its greatest strength.

In an age of constant information and instant conclusions, we have become accustomed to understanding everything as quickly as possible. Art resists this expectation. It slows perception. It encourages closer observation and accepts uncertainty as part of the experience. In doing so, it adds a depth that enriches spaces beyond their practical function.

For organisations, this quality carries particular significance.

Innovative organisations depend on people who can embrace different perspectives. Creativity rarely emerges where there is only one correct answer. It flourishes where observation, reflection, and openness are valued.

Contemporary art does not create innovation.

But it creates environments in which a culture of openness becomes visible.

Perhaps that is its most enduring contribution.

Not as a symbol.

**But as an invitation to think.**

# Photography as the Construction of Reality

Photography does not simply show the world.

It proposes a way  
of seeing it.



**Few artistic media are as closely associated with reality as photography.**

Since its invention, it has been regarded as evidence, documentation, and visual proof of what exists. This understanding continues to shape public perception today.

Contemporary photographic art has moved far beyond that role.

It does not document. It interprets. It constructs.

Drawing upon the visible world, it creates new visual realities that exist between observation and imagination. A photograph is therefore no longer evidence of what happened. It becomes the starting point for a different way of experiencing reality.

This openness gives photography a unique relevance within architectural spaces.

It does not prescribe meaning or tell a single story. Instead, it creates associations. Every viewer brings individual memories, experiences, and perspectives to the work. The artwork itself remains unchanged, yet its meaning evolves with each encounter.

Within organisations, this creates a distinctive value.

People from different cultural backgrounds, professions, and personal histories engage with the same artwork while experiencing it in different ways. The work becomes a shared point of reference without demanding a shared interpretation.

This plurality reflects the reality of contemporary organisations.

Innovation rarely emerges from uniform thinking. It grows where different perspectives are allowed to coexist and where new connections can be discovered.

Contemporary photographic art does not merely represent this openness.

It embodies it.

It does not present a finished reality.

It invites us to see reality again and differently.

Its greatest strength may lie not in what it shows,

**but in what it awakens**

**within the viewer.**

# The Artistic Position Photographic Realities

Between

## Image, Space

and

## Perception

Every image begins with a real place.

**Its true story begins**

**only within the image itself.**



**Michael Bork's works originate in photography. Their intention, however, is not to document reality. Observation is only the starting point. The finished work creates an autonomous visual reality.**

Photography is therefore understood not as a means of preserving a moment, but as the material of an artistic process in which perception is explored, condensed, and reconfigured.

Architecture, landscapes, and animals do not function as subjects in the traditional sense. They become vehicles for atmosphere, memory, and spatial experience. Familiar places lose their certainty. Perspectives shift. Time appears to slow, dissolve, or overlap. Between reality and imagination a new visual space emerges—neither documentary nor entirely fictional.

This openness lies at the heart of the artistic practice.

The images do not explain. They do not assert. They do not illustrate messages.

They create possibilities for perception.

For this reason, the works resist immediate classification. Their significance does not depend on the depicted subject but on the experience of looking. With every renewed encounter, relationships between surface, depth, light, and structure continue to evolve. The artwork remains unchanged, while perception itself develops.

This quality makes the works particularly relevant for environments shared by people with diverse backgrounds and experiences.

They require no specialist knowledge. They exclude no one. They prescribe no interpretation.

Instead, they invite time.

Not in order to arrive at answers. But in order to see more carefully.

In an age

defined by constant acceleration,

this may be one of contemporary art's most valuable qualities:

**It restores attention.**

# When Spaces Become Experiences

People rarely remember rooms.

They remember

how those rooms made them feel.



**Whenever we enter a space, we perceive far more than its architecture.**

Before we consciously notice individual details, an overall impression already begins to emerge. Light, proportions, materials, sounds, and atmosphere interact simultaneously, creating an immediate emotional response.

This experience is largely unconscious. And that is precisely what gives it its power.

Contemporary art adds another dimension to this spatial experience. Rather than demanding attention for itself, it changes the way people pay attention. Familiar environments begin to feel different. Lines of sight shift. The pace of observation slows. A place designed merely for circulation can become a place for reflection.

This transformation is not created by size or visual impact.

It is created through resonance.

The artwork enters into a relationship with the space, while at the same time beginning a quiet dialogue with the people moving through it. Every individual experiences this dialogue differently.

That diversity is its greatest strength.

In workplaces increasingly defined by speed, constant communication, and information overload, such moments become increasingly valuable. Spaces today can offer more than functionality. They can encourage concentration, support meaningful encounters, and create environments in which people feel both oriented and connected.

Art does not replace these qualities.

It reveals them.

It does not create corporate culture.

But it can give that culture a visible spatial expression.

Perhaps this is the true contribution of contemporary art within organisations:

Not its decorative value.

But its ability to transform attention into experience.

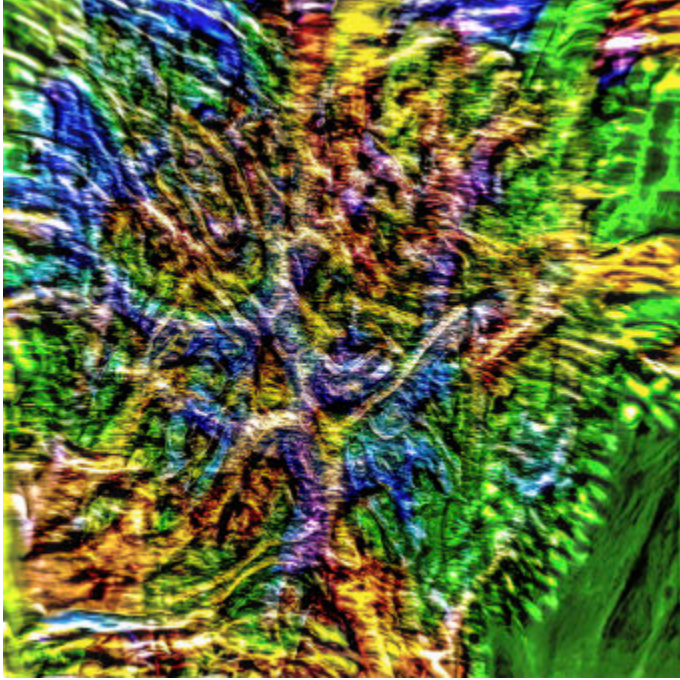
Because identity is rarely created where everything is explained.

**It is created where something remains unforgettable.**

# Dialogue Before Decision

The most important decision  
is not  
which artwork to choose.

It is understanding the question  
the space is meant to answer.



**The acquisition of contemporary art often begins with the search for suitable works.**

Catalogues are explored, galleries visited, and digital archives reviewed. Size, colour, and budget frequently dominate the conversation.

Yet this sequence overlooks something essential.

Before discussing an artwork, it is worth discussing the space itself.

Every place has its own character. Some spaces are representative, others intimate and reflective. Some encourage encounter, while others support concentration. Many evolve throughout the course of a day. Art never exists independently of these conditions. Its meaning always emerges through its relationship with the space it inhabits.

For this reason, the process should not begin with the artwork. It should begin with listening.

How is the space used? Who meets here? What atmosphere already exists? Which qualities should be strengthened? What should employees, visitors, clients, or guests experience when they leave?

There are no universal answers.

Every organisation has its own culture. Every building develops its own language. Every institution exists between its history and its future. Consequently, the selection of art can never become a standardised procedure.

Dialogue provides the foundation.

Its purpose is not to adapt art to an interior concept. Rather, it seeks to understand the role art can play within the broader identity of a place. Sometimes an artwork reinforces the existing atmosphere. Sometimes it deliberately introduces contrast. Sometimes it reveals dimensions of a familiar space that had previously gone unnoticed.

This openness is not accidental.

It is part of the artistic process.

For that reason, selecting an artwork is never based on aesthetic criteria alone.

It emerges through the interaction of architecture, use, light, perception, and the people who give a space its life.

Ultimately,

the objective is not simply to enrich a wall.

It is to enrich

**the identity of a place.**

II

# Choosing Art

Means

# Choosing Identity

Every organisation  
designs its spaces.

Only a few consciously  
shape their cultural identity.

People remember places.

Not because they were perfectly designed.

But because they stirred something within them.

**Today, architecture is recognised as an essential part of organisational development.**

Buildings are no longer created solely to fulfil practical requirements. They express values, communicate attitudes, and influence how people work, interact, and perceive an organisation.

The same is true of art.

Yet its significance is often underestimated.

Art is frequently regarded as an addition to an interior rather than as a cultural dimension in its own right. This distinction is fundamental.

Flooring serves a purpose. Lighting creates visibility. Furniture provides comfort.

Art asks questions.

It attracts attention without demanding it. It changes perception without dominating a room. It communicates not through statements but through possibilities.

Its influence cannot easily be measured.

Yet it is unmistakably present.

Organisations invest considerable resources in branding, communication, and corporate culture. Ultimately, all of these efforts pursue the same objective: to create trust and develop a distinctive identity.

Spaces are part of that identity. They are the physical expression of what an organisation says about itself.

Contemporary art cannot create that identity. But it can make it visible.

Not through illustration. Not through branding. Not through decoration.

But through its capacity to deepen perception and introduce a cultural dimension to a place.

Perhaps this is its most enduring contribution.

People eventually leave a space.

But the experience remains.

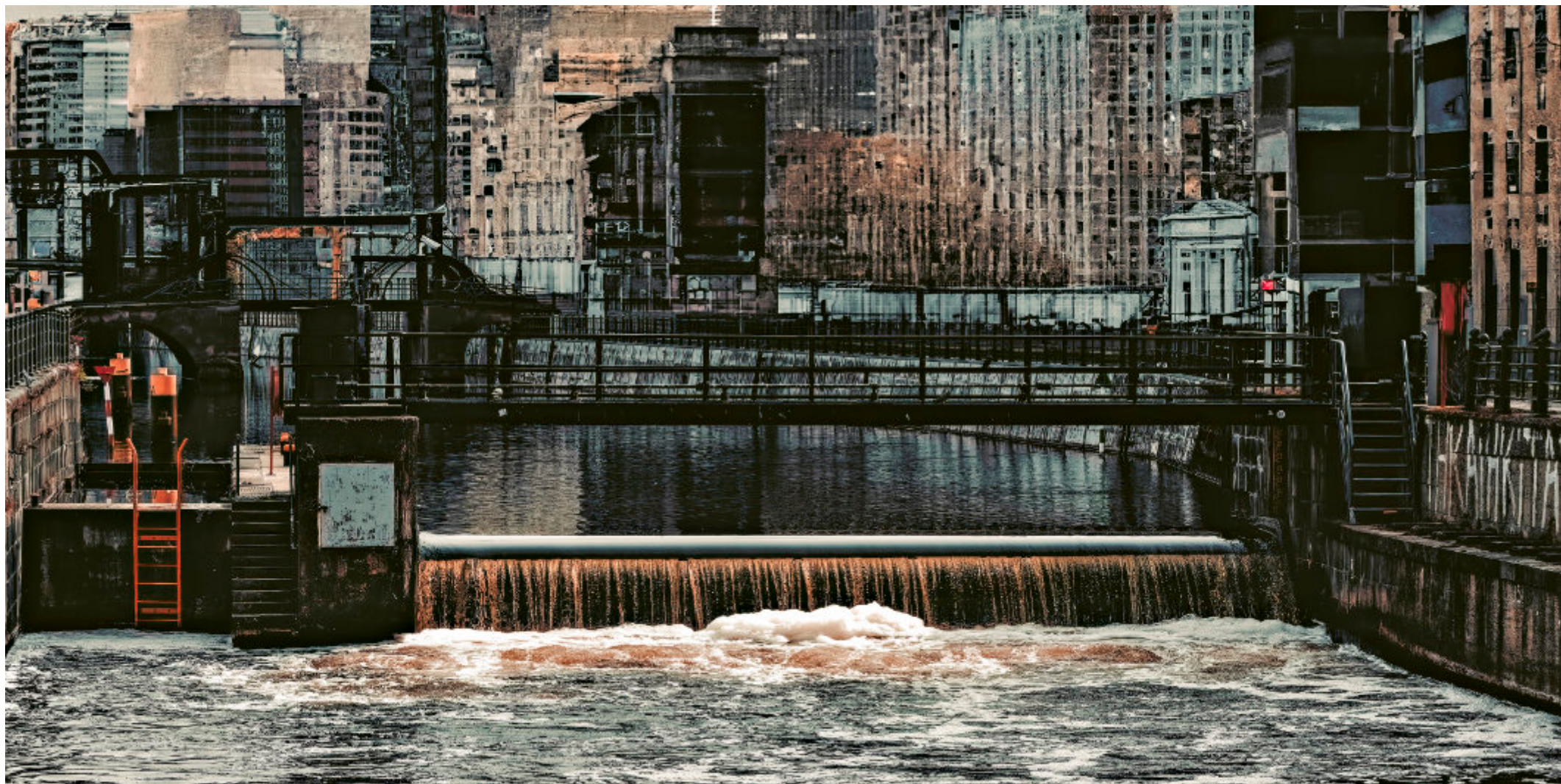
**And sometimes,  
that experience becomes the beginning  
of how an organisation is remembered.**

# Urban Apparitions

## The City as a Space of Perception

Cities consist of buildings.

Urban space  
emerges through perception.



**The contemporary city is a place of constant transformation.**

Architecture grows, disappears, overlaps, and continuously creates new relationships between past and present. Buildings define urban environments, but they do not fully explain them.

Every individual experiences the same city differently.

Memory, light, weather, movement, and personal experience reshape our perception of the same street, façade, or public square. The city therefore exists as far more than its physical reality.

It exists as perception.

The works in Urban Apparitions explore precisely this condition.

They are not documentary views of urban architecture. Instead, they investigate the spaces between architecture and atmosphere, between clarity and ambiguity, between structure and movement. Familiar places become unfamiliar. Certainty gives way to openness. The city becomes a landscape of imagination.

These works do not describe reality.

They condense it.

Rather than reducing the visible world to form alone, they extend it into the realm where memory, emotion, and perception intersect.

Within architectural environments this creates a unique dialogue.

The works do not compete with architecture.

They continue it.

They extend physical space into a space of thought, where new perspectives become possible.

Perhaps this is their defining quality.

They do not show the city.

**They reveal how we experience it.**



# Liminal Nature

Nature

Between Memory  
and Imagination

Nature is not merely a place.

It is an experience.



**Nature has been one of the oldest subjects in the history of art.**

For centuries it has been described, measured, idealised, and romanticised. It has served as scenery, symbol, and projection alike.

Today, our relationship with nature has changed.

For many people, nature is no longer an everyday environment but an interruption—a counterpoint to the speed of contemporary life. It has become a place where time seems to unfold differently.

The works of Liminal Nature explore this experience without attempting to represent it.

They are not landscapes in the traditional sense.

They do not tell stories about forests, mist, or seasons.

Instead, they investigate the subtle boundary between external landscape and internal perception.

Contours dissolve.

Light becomes atmosphere.

Space loses its certainty.

What initially appears to be a photograph gradually unfolds into a visual world in which memory and imagination become inseparable.

Nature is therefore not presented as an object.

It becomes a condition of experience.

The works do not invite viewers to recognise a particular place.

They invite them to discover their own memories, emotions, and associations within the image.

Perhaps this is their greatest quality.

They do not depict nature.

**They reveal the way**

**nature continues to exist within us.**



# The Animal Gaze

## The Gaze of the Other

Perhaps perception begins  
where we stop looking only at ourselves.



**There is something profoundly distinctive about the gaze of an animal.**

It does not judge. It does not confirm. It does not contradict.

Yet within that brief encounter, a remarkable form of presence emerges.

Throughout history, people have projected emotions, meanings, and stories onto animals. They have appeared as companions, symbols, and reflections of human imagination.

The Animal Gaze follows a different path.

The works are not primarily about animals.

They are about the human experience of encountering another living being.

The animal's gaze becomes the starting point for a quiet reflection on perception, presence, and attention.

These are neither scientific documents nor romantic visions of nature.

The animals appear as autonomous beings.

Without spectacle.

Without sentimentality.

Simply through their presence.

It is precisely this restraint that draws the viewer into the image.

The essential question is therefore not:

What am I looking at?

But rather:

Why does this image seem to be looking back at me?

Perhaps this is the series' most distinctive quality.

It does not transform the animal.

**It transforms the observer.**



# Epilogue

Spaces Remain.

People Leave.

Art does not change the world.

It changes the way

we encounter it.



**Every building begins with an idea.**

Every space is shaped by a series of decisions.

What purpose should it serve? How should people move through it? What atmosphere should it create? What story should it tell?

Architecture provides compelling answers to many of these questions.

Others are intentionally left open.

This is where art begins.

Contemporary art does not complete architecture. It extends it.

It introduces a dimension of perception that cannot be fully designed or controlled. It does not make spaces more complete; it makes them more layered. It creates opportunities for encounter without determining the outcome.

Perhaps this is its greatest strength. It asks for no agreement. It simply invites attention.

At a time when speed has become the dominant measure of success, attention has become a cultural value in its own right. It allows moments in which people pause, observe more carefully, and recognise connections that might otherwise remain unseen.

Not every artwork transforms a space. Not every space requires art.

But wherever architecture, human activity, and contemporary art enter into genuine dialogue, something emerges that goes beyond design.

Identity.

This publication is therefore not intended as a catalogue. It is an invitation.

An invitation to think about spaces not only in terms of their function,

but in terms of the experiences they make possible.

Because perhaps the most successful spaces are not those that are designed most completely.

**They are the ones**

**we continue to remember**

**long after we have left them.**

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## Production

All works presented in this publication are based on original photographic images. Through a multi-stage process of digital image composition, they are transformed into independent photographic works, produced as high-quality direct photographic prints on aluminium composite panels (AluDibond).

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## **BEYOND DECORATION**

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where architecture becomes experience.*

**Michael Bork**

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