

Personal Statement
ENTREPRENEUR 4.0 AWARD 2014

AMELIE KAHN-ACKERMANN

Traces

My search for images that represent my ideas, concepts, and also feelings about the potential world of the future (in regard to industry) ultimately led me to the industrial city of Linfen, which is located close to Beijing, the city where I was born.

What you see in the images is inseparably linked to me, not only because it deals with one of my native countries but also because it addresses a general awareness and certainty that I as an individual, as one small piece, belong to a larger whole, from which I cannot disassociate myself.

Understanding that one is connected to everything else is not merely an essential realization for me, but also for every one of us. In this sometimes mysterious world, which is permeated by abstract structures, it is becoming increasingly easy to lose a sense of cohesive meaning. For me it is important to regain this sense, and this ultimately means once again feeling connected to my surroundings and being able to perceive beauty in all its aspects.

The images show landscapes created or influenced by people. Now abandoned and empty, they seem to have lost all use and significance. They convey a feeling of emptiness. This has nothing more to do with a desire for progress, which obscures many other kinds of wishes in today's world. The aim of progress should be to improve our world and to make people's lives simpler and more beautiful. Progress should neither make people powerless nor doom them or their environment. However, at least on a humanitarian level, it seems as if progress raises many more questions than it actually answers. Achievements are overshadowed by their consequences. Humans are becoming more aware of their mortality and flawed nature.

Unfortunately we tend to separate everything. We separate the body and the soul, dream and reality. We view the past, the present, and also the future as static configurations, without realizing that each contains elements of the other. My images, which portray a specific state of reality, could be described as a warning, but also as proof that beauty is manifested everywhere — even if this may not seem to be the case at first glance.

I view people as beings capable of transformation and as having limitations that stem only from their minds. We are increasingly breaking down these boundaries — what was once modern is now long out of date. Even if the remnants in these images no longer represent today's technical standards, at some point the discoveries of today will be overtaken.

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In the face of all our progress, I am making an appeal to our sense of humanity. For without this, even the most significant invention is of no value. When are driven by the motivation of finding meaning within ourselves and we are attentive in our perceptions and in the way we impact others, then we are preparing the way for true, deep-seated progress, and we would no longer search for it behind crumbling façades, if it would be revealed to us on its own.

Amelie Kahn-Ackermann