

## ELGER ESSER

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### SAONE AND RHONE

PARIS DEBELLEYME

16 Monday - 21 Saturday

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Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac is pleased to announce an exhibition by Elger Esser held on the occasion of Paris Photo. It will feature Saône and Rhône, a series commissioned by the Délégation aux Arts Plastiques, first exhibited at the Abbaye de Montmajour during this summer's Rencontres d'Arles.

Born in 1967, Elger Esser grew up in Rome and studied at the Kunstakademie in Düsseldorf. One of the younger students of the Bechers, founders of the Düsseldorf School, he became an accomplished practitioner of the various photographic processes. He also studied the landscape work of the great photographers of the 19th century and became fascinated by the descriptions of nature exchanged by Flaubert and Maupassant in their letters. While moving away from the objective, documentary vision of the Bechers, Esser continued to share their concern at the ineluctable disappearance of the traces of our history. The slow metamorphosis of the landscape now became almost the exclusive theme of his work.

These images are quite devoid of human presence or precise architectural references. The Rhône is his guide here as he follows it to the gates of Arles, just as Charles Nègre did in the 19th century, and "sketches" its meanders across the plain of the Camargue, dwelling on the emptiness of the horizon where the river gives itself up to the sea.

Esser offers a nostalgic vision of unspoilt nature with tranquil waters and the soft light of the setting sun blurring contrasts and heightening the monochrome of this "photographic drawing" with its sepia tone.

From 28 November 2009 to 11 April 2010, the Kunstmuseum Stuttgart is holding a major retrospective of Elger Esser's work entitled *Eigenzeit*, featuring some fifty photographs. The show will later tour to the Museum voor Moderne Kunst in Arnhem, Netherlands.