Pushing the Vision: Philipp Schaerer and Andrés Jaques

When I came upon MoMA's two recently acquired architectural images by Philipp Schaerer's Bildbauten series, my mind was loose and limber and ready for a chance to stretch. As a young practitioner in Switzerland, Schaerer created digital architectural illustrations using technologies like computer-aided architectural design (CAAD) and computer generated imagery (CGI) for planned architectural projects. His work has since progressed to visualizations of fictional architecture of his own imagining, picking up where previous generations of visionary and conceptual architects left off. While the images in the Bildbauten series look like full-frontal photographs of real but quite curious houses, the buildings depicted are fully made-up, digital montage compositions of fictional architecture. The flattened lines of the houses are not unlike those that we first draw as children. The windows have a wonderful way of seeming to have just arrived home themselves, suggesting a secret relationship to the world outside and on close inspection making it almost possible to see inside. Not quite but almost, and that's somehow enough. All the imagination needs is the slightest suggestion, something to guess at, because with houses like these we are happy to imagine the possibility.