Collection Constellation 1 A Show of Affection

Fotomuseum Winterth 10.02.20.02.20.01

US-American artist **Nan Goldin** (b. 1953) photographed this blood-red sky right in front of Fotomuseum Winterthur. While the soaring chimney of the old factory building and a solitary streetlight indicate the location, the bulk of the photo shows the sky, whose dramatic charge dominates the image. The material properties of the Cibachrome photographic paper preferred by Goldin give particular emphasis to the intense colours.

Goldin's works represent a realignment of documentary, narrative photography during the 1970s, marked by a shift from public settings to private scenes and intimate moments. The artist's photographs, which convey empathy coupled with ruthless honesty, often show people she is close to and bear witness to their lifeworlds. This work is also informed by a personal story. Goldin had come to Winterthur in August 1997 for her exhibition **PII Be Your Mirror**, which the museum's co-founder Walter Keller had curated together with her. When, on the eve of the opening, Goldin learnt that a Swiss friend of hers, whose past was marked by sexual abuse, had taken her own life, it triggered memories of her sister's suicide, which had been very traumatic for Goldin. The pictures that Goldin took of the sky that evening resulted in this work, whose title refers to the events of that day.

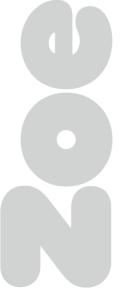


A stroll through the collection of Fotomuseum Winterthur is always a journey, too, through the history of its exhibitions. An early text setting out the museum's collection strategy focused on two goals: seeking to reflect some of the most important positions in photography since 1960 and using the exhibitions mounted at the museum as a means to expand its collection. From an early stage, then, the museum sought to incorporate representative works from an exhibition in its collection so that it would be informed by the institution's history, which would be given a visible presence. The collection's 1/5 first inventory numbers are assigned to works by Paul Graham: the museum featured these works in its inaugural exhibition in 1993 and subsequently acquired them.

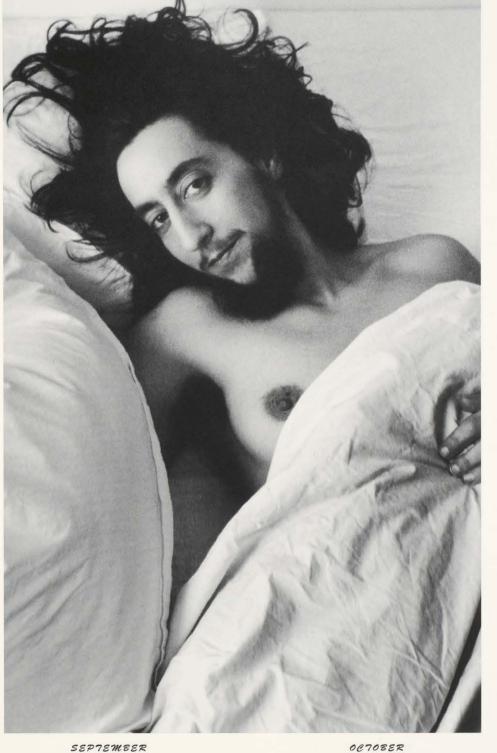
Nan Goldin and museum co-founder Walter Keller became close friends in the 1990s, producing books and exhibitions together. Keller's publishing house, Scalo Verlag, put out Goldin's book **The Other Side** in 1992. The exhibition **I'll Be Your Mirror** and the publication of the same name – along with the influence that Keller brought to bear beyond that - played a significant part in helping Goldin achieve recognition and become established outside the USA. Her work **The Sky on the Eve of Philippine's Death, Winterthur, Switzerland**, which one encounters as the first work of this exhibition, is an apt symbol to represent a collection that was - and continues to be - created in close association with the museum's exhibitions and the people and networks involved in them.

US-American artist **Zoe Leonard** (b. 1961) uses photographs, sculptures and installations to focus on themes like gender and sexuality, grief, migration and urban landscapes. Her 1998 wall calendar is made up of six pages showing portraits of the circus artist and entertainer Jennifer Miller. Leonard's black-andwhite and colour photographs present Miller in various states of undress, in intimate settings such as in the bathtub or in bed. This recalls the iconography of the pin-up, a culture that produces a clichéd image of femininity by depicting women as (sex) objects in eroticised poses: such images are often distributed in the form of calendars for a cis-male, heteronormative audience.

On the November/December page of **The 1998 Bearded Lady Calendar**, **Starring Jennifer Miller**, Leonard makes explicit use of such a model. The lascivious pose against a background of red fabric is a re-enactment of a pinup photo of actress Marilyn Monroe taken by Tom Kelley, which first went into circulation in 1952. Leonard's calendar, however, disrupts the binary scheme of gender identities and challenges the cis-male, heteronormative gaze, confronting it with the confidence and autonomy evident in Miller's pose and gaze at the viewer.







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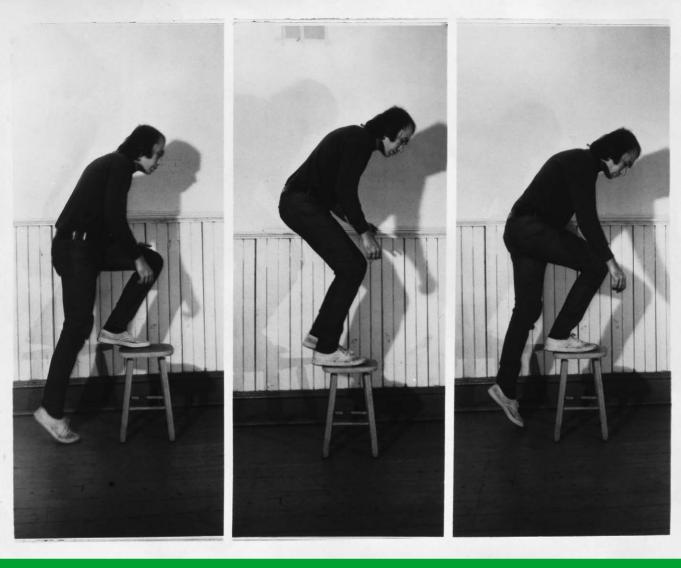
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One of the five focal points of the collection of Fotomuseum Winterthur is the category 'ephemera', which includes print formats used for artistic purposes such as postcards, letters, brochures and booklets, posters, newspapers, magazines, accordion books, stickers, zines and calendars. Even if they are often only designed to be used for a short time and were not intended to be part of a museum collection, they still express artistic ideas, whose circulation they facilitate in different contexts and to serve different functions. They form a counterweight to the collection of photo books in the photo library and the extensive series of images and photographic tableaux that make up the core of the collection.

Although this focus on ephemeral items – which are tagged with the letters EPH in the museum's in-house database – is being developed somewhat on the sidelines and on the basis of what is as yet no more than a loose concept, their presence in the exhibitions curated by Fotomuseum Winterthur is constantly perceptible. The 2022 show **Im Umlauf – Bilder auf Papier** (In Circulation – Images on Paper), which was part of the Passage Fotobibliothek exhibition format, was dedicated to the museum's collection of ephemera. Back in 2009, the **Printed Matter** collection show presented small publications, photo books and posters.

US-American artist **Vito Acconci** (1940–2017) started out as a writer and poet before turning to conceptual art and performance art in the 1960s. His photographic works, most of which were produced during a period of intensive work in New York around 1969/1970, are interrogations of the relationship between body, space and camera. In performative situations, he exposed himself to various experimental set-ups created for and with the camera. In **Step Piece**, for example, he stepped on and off a stool in his flat thirty times a minute for as long as he could keep it up. He continued this practice for months, taking photographs and making notes to document his progress as he carried out the activity.

In Acconci's work, the action captured in the photograph often remains tied to the artist's physicality. In **Down/Up**, for example, he reaches down with his hands so that the camera can look up from below. The resulting images show his face and upper body 'from the point of view' of his hands and thus seem to be taking a survey of his bodily dimensions. Acconci then makes collages from combinations of the photographic prints, which include handwritten markings, a characteristic feature of many of his works. These collages can be seen both as the result of his actions and as instructions for them. The writing is a visible indicator of how important language is for the trained poet.



In centring its collecting activities on works created since the 1960s, Fotomuseum Winterthur addresses a period in which a change occurred in the way photography was perceived and accepted as an art form. At a time when photography was rarely viewed as art or shown as such in a museum context, it was primarily artists working conceptually or reflecting on the media itself who posed new questions about how photography could be used and the conditions that governed it.

This frequently went hand in hand with a rejection of established art forms, figurative representation, aestheticism and formalism. By taking a self-critical approach to their probing of the medium, these artists set out to dissolve or indeed to expand the nature of photography. To this end, they cultivated conceptual methods, adopting, for example, a deliberately dilettantish attitude to technology, exploiting pictures from mass media or employing the techniques of appropriation art, which involves borrowing and copying existing images. Meanwhile, the documentary function of photography also found its way into art: in the context of performance art and land art, for example, where it became a record of the action that was carried out and at the same time an expression and product of art. In the collection of Fotomuseum Winterthur, this critical change in the status of photography as art is particularly evident in the acquisitions from the Jedermann Collection, which were added to the museum holdings in 2006 (p.24).

US-American conceptual artist and photographer **Sherrie Levine** (b. 1947) is best known for her artistic strategy of appropriating the motifs of famous male artists like Walker Evans, Alexander Rodchenko and Edward Weston. Drawing inspiration from predecessors is an established artistic practice, which Levine alludes to in her **After** series. However, she takes a radical approach to making her role models a part of her work by taking pictures of their photographs, exhibiting them as framed images and claiming authorship for them. In this way, she deconstructs and criticises the cis-male focus of the canon of art history and the history of photography, which attributes creativity and originality to the male artistic genius, granting women the role of serving merely as object and muse.

Levine does not take pictures of the photographic prints, but instead photographs the reproductions of the works that have already appeared in catalogues. She thus also calls into question the value system of art, which forces photography into categories of original and copy – something that runs counter to its intrinsic technical reproducibility. Ironically, this appropriation did not only involve the motifs she used, it also took place on a legal level: as Evans's photographs were not covered by the US Copyright Act of 1976, Levine was able to use the images without paying royalties and can claim copyright, meanwhile, for the works she herself exhibits.

Sherrie Levine, **After Alexander Rodchenko**, 1985, gelatin-silver print, 38.2×30.7 cm, acquisition made possible by the 'Jedermann Collection' donors' group, 2006-076-002 © Sherrie Levine



Sherrie Levine's artistic strategy tackles a structural imbalance in the relationship between the sexes, which the US-American art historian Linda Nochlin pointed to back in 1971 in her essay 'Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?'. The provocative question is meant rhetorically of course; the author makes it clear that although these women artists do exist, only a few have been given the opportunity to emerge from the shadows.

Levine's works have become the poster child of appropriation art and her pictures are 6/17 some of the most frequently exhibited images at Fotomuseum Winterthur. Yet, for all that, it is evident that female positions are under-represented in the museum's collection: since 1993, Fotomuseum Winterthur has acquired works by 613 artistic positions, of which 447 participating persons are male (70%) and 192 female (30%). Seven of the artistic positions have a collective authorship that cannot be individually itemised. Of the 102 solo exhibitions at Fotomuseum Winterthur to date, 70 were dedicated to male and 28 to female artists;

four exhibitions presented duos in which only two female artists were involved.

Nevertheless, both the statistics and the database reflect a binary logic of gender that is now obsolete and has so far disregarded artists with a non-binary identity. More recently, under Nadine Wietlisbach's stewardship, the collection has been striving for greater balance and the long-term dynamic is toward diversification: the aim is to focus attention on less recognised holdings by under-represented female artists.

US-American artist **Lorna Simpson** (b. 1960) embarked on her series **Summer '57/Summer '09** inspired by a photo album she had bought on eBay. In it were over two hundred private photographs, taken between June and August 1957 in Los Angeles, most of them showing a young Black woman. Simpson delved into the album, recreating some of the found photographs: in the process she not only picked up on the clothing and poses, but also mimicked the medium of the silver-gelatin print of the original photographs. Laid out as groups in uniform frames and sizes, the historical templates and artistic reenactments are combined and interfused.

The styling and the seductive poses of the figures – with the weight shifted onto one leg, causing the hip to stick out; or with one arm bent, placed behind the head – are consistent with the classic pin-up iconography of the 1940s and 1950s. Simpson's updating of these photographs with all their pin-up aesthetic highlights how society's ideals of beauty have been shaped by white bodies in a way that fosters discrimination. Both Simpson and the woman from the album register their Black bodies as part of this norm, thereby asserting a sense of seductiveness and beauty; a self-image that for a long time was denied to them and which, in many cases, society still does not accord them even today. Lorna Simpson, **Summer '57/Summer '09 (Group 6)** (detail), 2009, 10 gelatin-silver prints, each 18 × 18 cm, acquisition, 2009-052-007 © Lorna Simpson, Courtesy Lorna Simpson and Hauser & Wirth



Lorna Simpson's work points up a gap in many collections in Europe and the USA: the fact that there are only few Black women to be found in the images themselves or behind the camera. Although the collection of Fotomuseum Winterthur includes the work of many US-American photographers (p.72), only two African-American women are represented in it: Simpson, whose work was acquired in 2009, and Carrie Mae Weems, whose works came to the museum in 2006 when it purchased the Jedermann Collection. Simpson's Summer '57/Summer '09 (Group 6) is now on display for the first 0/21 time as part of this exhibition - 15 years after its acquisition.

It was not until 2022 that the collection of Fotomuseum Winterthur first included a Black European perspective when it acquired a work by Norwegian-Nigerian artist Frida Orupabo, who was the first Black woman artist to have a solo exhibition at the museum that same year. While this development is connected with current director Nadine Wietlisbach's realignment of the collection's focus, it is also a reflection of the current discourse within the museum landscape. This obliges museums to deal with gaps in their collections, to redress missing perspectives and to project greater diversity in the positions they represent. For the series **Untitled Film Stills** (1977–1980), US-American artist **Cindy Sherman** (b. 1954) re-enacted some of the iconic poses struck by female protagonists in Hollywood films of the 1950s and 1960s. Her black-and-white photographs bring to mind the stills that were used in marketing the films in question, even if the images do not relate to specific movies. In keeping with this, the images are generic, deteriorating into clichés of femininity, whose one-dimensionality is exposed and scrutinised by the artist.

The fact that femininity here is primarily a construct of visual codes is brought out by the clothing and accoutrements of the character portrayed in the image and by its cinematic rhetoric, which seems to be addressed to the gaze of a cismale viewer. The figure of the ungainly woman, for example, sits expectantly on the edge of the bed or stands, scantily clad, in the bathroom as she looks over her bare shoulder into the mirror with a sensual expression. **Untitled Film Stills** consists of 69 photographs and equates to a catalogue of female stereotypes presenting the construction and appropriation of identity through media. Sherman's ambiguous re-enactments challenge the normative gaze, which is reinforced by photography – through staging, instrumentalisation and marketing.



After ten years of staging exhibitions, Urs Stahel, the founding director of Fotomuseum Winterthur, ascertained that although the institution's collection was strong on documentary, narrative photography (p.32), it contained very few works representing photography's ingress into art and artistic experiments with photography (p.12).

Fotomuseum Winterthur's purchase of the Jedermann Collection from a US-American collector in 2006 went some way towards closing this gap and bolstered the profile of the museum's holdings. This substantial acquisition brought 177 works by 62 artists with a total of 340 photographs into the collection - including Sherman's Untitled Film Still #22 - along with key exponents of conceptual photography, such as **Bernd and Hilla Becher, Victor Burgin and** Gordon Matta-Clark, and 1980s postmodern photographers whose work reflects on the medium itself, such as Barbara Bloom, Sarah Charlesworth and Elaine Sturtevant. The opportunity to purchase parts of the **Jedermann Collection for a seven-figure sum** was only available for a limited period of

time and the necessary funds could only be raised thanks to the dedication and commitment of Thomas Koerfer, the then president of the Fotomuseum Winterthur Foundation's Board of Trustees.

In 1979 Mexican photographer **Graciela Iturbide** (b. 1942) made her first trip to the city of Juchitán de Zaragoza in southern Mexico. Iturbide's photo series **Juchitán** focuses on themes of identity and gender as well as Indigenous cultures: for instance, she regularly photographed the local Zapotec community over the course of several years. Invariably shot in black and white, Iturbide's poetic photographs of people and the traces of their lives communicate a complex image of Mexican society.

The three photographs in the exhibition are merely a selection from the extensive Juchitán series, a diverse assortment of images, one of which – **Nuestra señora de las iguanas** – has acquired the status of an iconic work. This portrait, shot from a low angle in heroic style, shows a woman with a selfassured gaze, who has live iguanas on her head which she wears like a crown. It was taken at one of the many street markets in the region, where women – unlike in the rest of Mexico – play a prominent role, in the economic sphere in particular. Iturbide is also interested in people with a non-binary gender identity. **Magnolia** is thus a portrait of a muxe, a member of a group who do not identify with the male gender assigned to them at birth.



In 2010 Fotomuseum Winterthur purchased seven photographs by Graciela Iturbide after a solo exhibition at the museum had been dedicated to her as one of the few women photographers with a humanist documentary style. Returning now to her work, the question arises as to why, when the works were bought, the museum departed from its basic programme of acquiring photographic works in series, rather than as individual images (p.32). As a result, the seven photos in the collection come from four different series - portraying their theme entirely on the basis of symbolic images that have become iconic. The inherent danger of reducing these series to individual images is that the diverse lifestyles of the Indigenous and queer community in Juchitán, with all its complex social structures, are only partially represented in the collection.

However, dealing with Iturbide's photographs also raises questions about the images themselves: more recent research has taken issue with the image disseminated by Iturbide, as published in her 1989 book **Juchitán de las mujeres**. The argument is that this work presents an idealised image of the city of Juchitán as a matriarchy and queer paradise and thus draws a veil over the complex power relations that the muxes are exposed to. Iturbide's work aptly shows how the contextual and institutional significance of works in a collection is not static but rather can and must be constantly brought up to date to keep pace with current discourses.

In the 1960s, **Lee Friedlander** (b. 1934) began developing a type of photography that he describes as an analysis of 'social landscapes'. Working mainly in series, the US-American photographer portrays people and objects in their social settings, such as New York's jazz scene. In the process, he invariably goes beyond a purely documentary approach and reflects on how realities manifest themselves as images within photography.

In his 1985/1986 series **MIT, Boston and Vicinity**, Friedlander focuses on how the nature of work changed in the 20th century. Although the portraits of the workers in their open-plan offices show only their upper bodies and faces, it is evident to the viewer what their gazes – sometimes concentrated, sometimes vacant – are directed at. Here, instead of the oil-smeared bodies of industrial workers that we are familiar with from numerous photo series, we see the faces of the digital revolution, illuminated by computer screens – employees whose intellectual services are the main building blocks of the value chain. Even if their work stands for networked and globalised communication, the people portrayed in the images remain isolated in front of their screens as they work alongside one another in the open-plan office.





With its subtle observations of everyday life, Lee Friedlander's oeuvre is representative of documentary, narrative photography, which has, from the museum's inception, been a key focus of the collection of Fotomuseum Winterthur. The works in this category are characterised by their photographic representations of the world, which show, analyse or comment on social realities by exploring them visually and thematically. This photographic practice can be found in a more classical form in the work of Diane **Arbus, Robert Frank and Boris Mikhailov** and is given post-documentary expression 2 / 33 by photographers like Nan Goldin and Max Pinckers.

Fotomuseum Winterthur opened in 1993 with an inaugural exhibition on Paul Graham, a visually powerful exponent of the documentary approach. Whenever possible, Fotomuseum Winterthur collects documentary, narrative works not as single images but rather as groups or series. The thinking behind this is that the photographers' approach and the narratives manifested in their images are often only apparent in a series or sequence. Fotomuseum Winterthur's holdings of Friedlander's works include parts of the series **MIT, Boston and Vicinity**, a number of prints from the series **The Little Screens** (1961–1970) and a selection of selfportraits (1966–1968), which it was able to acquire in 2004.

The comic strip advertising a British brand of breakfast muesli or an illustrated greetings card with the motif of Garfield the cat holding a bunch of flowers and balloons: British artist **Clunie Reid** (b. 1971) uses newspaper cuttings, caricatures, screenshots from websites and photographs as collage elements in **Take No Photographs, Leave Only Ripples**. Combining found images with her own shots, Reid writes or draws on the pictures before photograph-ing them anew.

Reid's work comprises 27 large-format inkjet prints stuck to the wall with gaffer tape. Arranged in this way, the images connect to form an even larger collage. In some of the prints, the cut edges and adhesive tape reveal that they are the product of analogue collage, while in others the transitions are blurry, suggesting that they may have been digitally manipulated. The use of gaffer tape to create loose arrangements of images gives rise to a provisional composition that generates associations between the motifs. Some of the visual elements, such as two outstretched arms or the background of the British TV channel The Music Factory (TMF), can be seen several times. The recurring motif of scantily clad women's bodies can be read as a critical reference to the sexualised imagery that is prevalent in the mass media.

Clunie Reid, **Take No Photographs, Leave Only Ripples** (detail), 2009, 27 inkjet prints on aluminium foil, each 120 × 84 cm / 84 × 120 cm, gift Clunie Reid, 2009-046-013 © Clunie Reid



Take No Photographs, Leave Only Ripples is a prime example of Fotomuseum Winterthur's interest in approaches to photography that reflect on the medium and its ongoing development. The museum's acquisition of the Jedermann Collection in 2006 established this kind of photographic approach as a focal point of the collection (p. 24). It includes works by the Pictures Generation from the 1970s and 1980s, whose approach is characterised by the appropriation of existing visual material.

Reid's work was added to the collection after it was exhibited in 2009/2010 as part of the show Karaoke - Photographic **Quotes.** This exhibition was an assemblage of contemporary works shifting between creative originality, montage and artistic appropriation. Its focus on works involving found images from magazines, advertisements, TV or the internet rendered visible a 'second' media reality that we are surrounded by every day. Although Karaoke did not feature any examples of post-photography (p. 40) - i.e. works that relate to image practices that have evolved in the process of

digital and networked technologies – the inclusion of Reid's work in the collection indicates an institutional interest in the increasing digital circulation of photographic images in popular and everyday media.

The spatial installation by Spanish artist **Roc Herms** (b. 1978) takes as its starting point the Campus Party, a technology festival and LAN party that was founded in Valencia, Spain, in 1997: the annual event brings together thousands of participants, including software developers, gamers, hackers, internet activists and artists. They are quite literally connected to one another – via their laptops and computers, which are linked via a local network for 24 hours. Herms recreates these connections using several devices, such as screens, keyboards, mouses and all the attendant cables, which are set up on and around a desk.

With the hum of the computers audible in the room, the screens play back the cycle of a computer session: after booting up, you can hear the sounds of the operating systems launching, followed by a cascading sequence of startup screens until the devices power down again. The start screens show images of animals or vehicles along with individual folder structures and file names. As customised desktop surfaces, they become personal snapshots of our screen lives.



When Fotomuseum Winterthur acquired Roc Herms's work, it also established a new focus for the collection: that of post-photographic works, which has substantially defined the museum's institutional orientation since 2015 (p.76). The term post-photographic refers to image practices that have evolved with the advent of digital and networked technologies. They represent a significant watershed in the development of photography and the way it is practised. For example, photographic usages and modes of representation today are in some cases far removed from the largely fixed, stable, 0/41 framed imagery of classical photography that we typically encounter in museums. **Post-photographic works frequently involve** image phenomena circulating online and are often based on algorithmic image-making processes or call into question the digital conditions that govern them.

However, Herms's work also shows the speed with which digital technologies are changing in terms of both hardware and software: just eight years after the installation was acquired, the flashing, humming computers

The Exhibition as Invitation This exhibition centres on works by 19 different artists and photographers - a visually diverse selection that illustrates Fotomuseum Winterthur's institutional history and exemplifies its collecting activities. The aim of the exhibition is to create visual instances of linguistic density in the space and to interlace poetry with the friction that is generated when the unexpected encounters the familiar. The selection of works also reflects the curiosity, openness and critical spirit with which Fotomuseum Winterthur approaches the past and present of photography.

All the additional levels that we have developed for the exhibition are conceived as an invitation to delve deeper. These include short videos with background information provided by current and former employees and associates on such topics as the care and scientific reappraisal of the collection; the contents of this booklet - texts on the works and detailed information about them as well as leaflets, one of which is for families and young detectives; and events with photographers and guests actively involved with the exhibition themes as well as educational offerings, such as focused lunchtime viewings of the works.

The Collection as Inspiration and Responsibility

The collection of Fotomuseum Winterthur is both an inspirational resource and an exacting challenge – in equal measure. What follows will provide you with an insight into the day-to-day routines associated with and surrounding the collection.

Storage and Care behind the Scenes

From a conservator's perspective, photographs are particularly unstable in material terms: the elements that compose them react chemically with one another and are affected by external influences. Consequently, conditions in the storage facility are designed to delay the process of chemical degradation: the colour section is kept at 14° Celsius and 38% relative humidity, and the blackand-white section at 18° Celsius and 44% humidity. In addition to maintaining ideal climatic conditions, it is also vital to ensure minimal exposure to light to help conserve the photographic materials. Black-and-white prints are less sensitive to light than colour prints, which can fade or undergo a so-called colour shift (taking on a red cast, for example).

The storage facilities at Fotomuseum Winterthur have been operated jointly with Fotostiftung Schweiz since 2003. There are approximately 100 square metres to maintain, requiring the intensive deployment of resources on many levels, ranging from staffing to space management and energy consumption.

Parts of the Collection on the Move

Fotomuseum Winterthur regularly lends works from its collection to institutions around the world. Loans call for specific technical expertise and logistical knowledge: when a loan request comes in, the curator of the

collection and the registrar check to see whether the loan can be justified in terms of content and from a conservation point of view. The request involves various documents, such as a climate report, which provides precise information about the temperatures and humidity levels pertaining in the exhibition space in which the work is to be presented. If the loan is approved, all the requisite documentation is drawn up. This includes the loan agreement and all the documents relating to the logistical and organisational aspects of transporting the work, including customs clearance. The loan process takes several months from the time of the initial enquiry to the moment the work is exhibited: this is a collaborative process involving a variety of staff working in coordination - the museum charges an administrative fee to cover this.

Focused and Careful

The process of expanding the collection takes place on various levels. The possibility of acquiring new works that represent the programme of Fotomuseum Winterthur depends on the funds available. Owing to pressing financial constraints – linked in part with the costs of the current new building and renovation project – there have been only limited possibilities for making new acquisitions over the last half decade. In recent years, the annual acquisitions budget has ranged from around CHF 20,000 to CHF 100,000.

It is a privilege for the museum to receive gifts, as these can enrich its holdings. It is commonly assumed that all donations are accepted, but this is not the case. In addition to space issues or other related considerations, it is also important to determine whether the gift accords, in terms of content, with the overall concept of the collection or, where applicable, augments artistic positions that already feature in it. Ideally speaking, if the new works are by artists already represented in the collection, they should precisely reflect their attitude and mode of expression and expand the collection by including the artists' more current thematic concerns and more recent methods and technical processes. It is particularly gratifying when donations extend the range of the collection in terms of the geographical origins and gender of the artists represented.

The Courage to Speculate on the Fringes

A new collection concept was created in 2020. Many of the measures that were drawn up require the investment of time and money – resources that first need to be secured. However, some adjustments have already been put in place. For example, a new policy for handling loan requests has been developed, which makes it possible for the museum to plan more efficiently.

The temporary move out of the premises at Grüzenstrasse 44 to enable the new building and renovation project to be carried out also provided an opportunity for more suitable institutions to be found to house various inventories and archives. Although this was necessary because of space limitations, content-related considerations also played a decisive role in the permanent relocation of these works.

Working on and with a collection is like long-distance running – it is not a sprint. The fact that a lot goes on behind the scenes and cannot be grasped by outsiders constitutes an additional challenge in the context of debates surrounding cultural policy.

Here is a more detailed outline of four goals we have set ourselves for the coming years at the level of content and structure:

1.

One focus will be on augmenting existing bodies of work by artists who already feature in the collection and on acquiring new works that can dialogue with them in terms of their content or the period in which they were created.

2.

Using the exhibition programme as a vehicle, the museum will set out to acquire works that embody underrepresented positions, i.e. works by women and by photographers and artists who operate outside the main European centres and the USA. In terms of content, the museum's new acquisitions and the donations it accepts will continue to be geared to the collection's five focuses.

3.

The estate of US-American artist Mark Morrisroe (1959–1989), which has been on permanent loan to our collection from the Ringier Collection since 2006, will be given greater visibility. The work and its history will be made accessible in digital form – to be used, for example, by international curators and researchers.

4.

The process of monitoring the procedures for reviewing and maintaining the collection is to be developed on an ongoing basis. The changes in how photographs are produced at the material level and in how they are presented bring new challenges with them. Fotomuseum Winterthur thinks outside the box in its understanding of photography – and this is reflected in its holdings. Some works need customised storage solutions that frequently rely on improvisation.

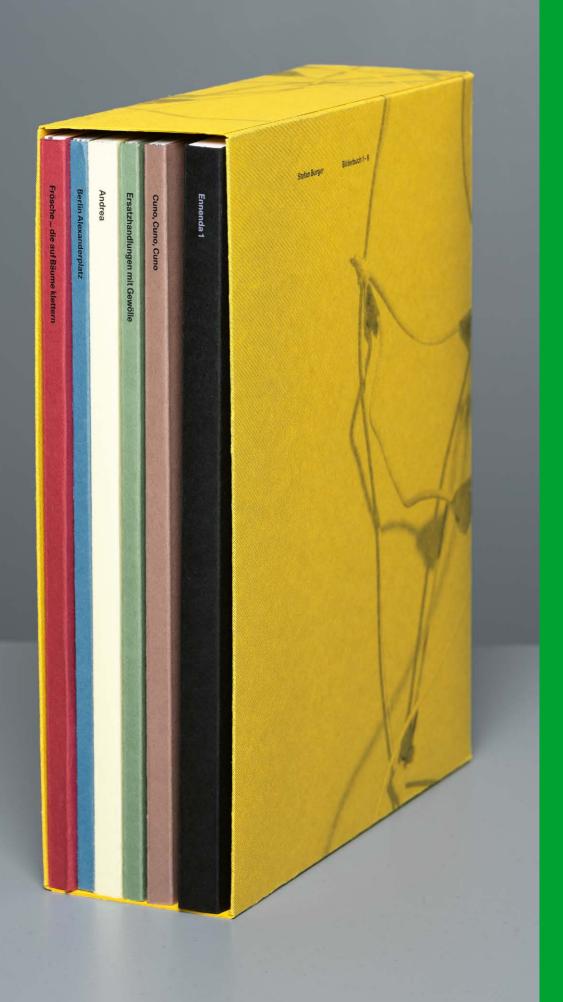
In future too, the collection will be characterised by gaps that are consciously embraced. Its DNA has been heavily influenced by the decision taken in the late 1990s by the museum's founding director, Urs Stahel, to confine the focus of the collection to the period from the 1960s onwards. clearly setting it apart from other collections, both nationally and internationally. This and other structures that were consciously arrived at are of key importance: the idea of 'less is more' is apposite in this regard. Only when a museum strikes a sensible balance between the resources it has available and the challenges it faces can it establish a responsible way of dealing with its collection. As a cultural institution with considerable curiosity and an interest in experimentation, this 'less is more' approach is less painful when it is complemented by 'audacity'. In the end, the responsibility towards an artist and their descendants, whose valuable resources we are entrusted with, is a charge that cannot be treated lightly. Our affection is reflected in our willingness to critically scrutinise the works, the circumstances in which they were created and our own curatorial actions. Ultimately, this characterises our understanding of modern-day museum work and will also be reflected in how the collection develops in the future.

Nadine Wietlisbach

and small, low-resolution screens already seem outdated. When post-photographic works are added to the collection, it is often not clear how technologies and materials will develop and what the conservational challenges will be. As a result, the purchase of such works also requires the institution to keep developing its expertise in this area.

German artist **Stefan Burger** (b. 1977), who lives in Switzerland, studied photography in Zurich, though he also sees himself as a conceptual artist. While his work is oriented around photography in the broadest sense of the term, it also includes sculpture, film and installative elements. His creative output, much of which is based on research, centres on crucial questions such as the truth value of the photographic image.

The ongoing series **Bilderbuch** (Picture Book) currently consists of six independent volumes that bring together a range of previously unpublished material: Archive and research materials, correspondences, documents and photographs that have emerged in the process of creating works and preparing exhibitions and have, over time, developed a certain autonomy as artistic material. The volume **Frösche... die auf Bäume klettern** (Frogs...climbing trees) presents, for example, pictures and documents relating to a cash transport, which Burger photographed in front of the Swiss National Bank in Zurich. Burger was suspected of criminal activities as a result, and he was investigated by the police. The ensuing communication with the police – including alleged evidence captured by surveillance cameras – is interwoven in the volume with his own photographs of the incident. By assembling footnotes and lesser-known parts of his oeuvre into one package, the books shed light on the rest of his artistic practice.



Over time, Fotomuseum Winterthur has cultivated a close and lasting connection with a number of artists, including Stefan Burger. Back in 2010, Urs Stahel, the museum's founding director, dedicated an extensive solo exhibition to him, Under the Circumstances, with a publication to accompany it. At the time, Burger was just 33 years old and had only recently completed his photographic training. Subsequent directors maintained an interest in his artistic development with the result that twelve of his works have now found their way into the collection - the latest of which is the journalistic compilation Bilderbuch.

For this collection show, the curator Nadine Wietlisbach developed, together with the artist, a form that translates the visual and linguistic complexity of the 'picture books' into the exhibition space. In the past, the museum has regularly worked together with Burger to find a form in which to present his multimedia works, leading him to further develop his artistic practice. Fotomuseum Winterthur aims to augment the existing holdings of artists by adding key works to the

collection that facilitate a more precise understanding of the particular artist's work.

The photographic works of **Shirang Shahbazi** (b. 1974), an Iranian artist who emigrated to Germany and now lives in Zurich, is characterised by its conceptual approach. Her abstract works and classical motifs, which include portraits, landscapes and still lifes, play with different modes of representation and abstraction in the medium of photography.

Although the compositions exhibited here don't reveal a clear pictorial subject at first glance, they are based on real objects that Shahbazi arranged and painted in her studio before photographing them with an analogue medium-format camera. The result is a kind of abstract still life consisting of colour compositions that produce an intense effect. What we see, for example, are circles in which light seems to be reflected, areas of colour that merge with one another and overlapping multiple exposures. Lines and forms generate dynamic interactions between surface and depth effects and between figuration and abstraction. In the play of complementary contrasts, which amplifies the intensity of the colours, an area of green may look like a floor surrounded by red walls. Shahbazi's artistic practice consistently examines the question, how real or abstract is photography as an imaging medium?

Shirana Shahbazi, **Komposition-40-2011**, 2011, C-print, 210 × 168 cm, gift Shirana Shahbazi, 2012-003-003 © Shirana Shahbazi



While Fotomuseum Winterthur has an international focus, Fotostiftung Schweiz is committed to the work of Swiss photographers. Founded in 1971, it has striven since then to preserve, research and provide education on the national photographic heritage. It sees itself as a memory institution operating in the zone where archive and exhibition intersect. The collection of Fotomuseum Winterthur, meanwhile, focuses on international contemporary photography without restricting itself to any particular region. When Fotomuseum Winterthur acquires the work of artists with a relationship to Switzerland, this is down to the work itself and the artists' exceptional conceptual practice - as exemplified by Stefan Burger, Matthias Gabi and Shirana Shahbazi.

The works by Shahbazi that are currently on display entered the collection in 2011 following her solo exhibition **Shirana Shahbazi – Much Like Zero**. While Shahbazi also features in the collection of Fotostiftung Schweiz as a national artist, Fotomuseum Winterthur has a total of seven of her conceptual works in its holdings. When Swiss photographers find their way into the museum's collection now, it is on the basis of acquisitions deriving from the exhibition and publication format Photographic Encounters or via the portfolio-viewing event Plat(t)form (p.60).

In her photo series **Disguise and Deception - A Mimetic Exchange of Strategies for Make Believe**, German artist **Anika Schwarzlose** (b. 1982) interrogates strategies of (in)visibility and visual deception. Her motifs show military dummies and replicas - from hand grenades to hollow rocks - that are produced and used by the special 'Disguise and Deception' unit of the German armed forces. They serve as camouflage, an illusionist technique that is developed for military purposes; it is both an object of research and used as teaching and training material. The special unit was originally established as part of the National People's Army in East Germany.

Schwarzlose took pictures of modern-day military workshops, which show some similarities with art and theatre workshops, as well as of the objects produced there and the collection of archival images. In the process, she brings home the fundamental similarities between the practice of camouflage and mimicry and her own artistic work as well as the act of image-making itself: on the one hand, photography renders visible certain things that may not be perceptible to the naked eye; on the other hand, it is also an illusion. For photography pretends to be a 'transparent window' through which we believe we can see what the image shows, while the material out of which the photograph is actually made consists of an opaque surface of colour or grey tones.

Anika Schwarzlose, **Casting Mould for 6 Grenades**, 2014, from **Disguise and Deception – A Mimetic Exchange** of Strategies for Make Believe, 2014, inkjet print, 60 × 80 cm, gift Anika Schwarzlose, 2015-012-003 © Anika Schwarzlose



While there are ten photographic prints from Anika Schwarzlose's **Disguise and Deception** series in the collection of Fotomuseum Winterthur, the 2014 artist's publication that emerged from it is part of the publicly accessible holdings of the Photo Library, which is run jointly by Fotostiftung Schweiz and Fotomuseum Winterthur. With over 30,000 publications, it is Switzerland's most important public library specialising in photography. It contains a large number of photo books that stake a claim to being a form of artistic expression in their own right.

There is as yet no systematic record or procedure governing whether artist publications are put in the library holdings or end up directly in the collection's storage facilities, where they are logged in the collection database as independent artistic works. A possible re-evaluation of the process and the issuance of clear guidelines on procedures in this regard are still pending. Nevertheless, the two collections are interrelated, having evolved together in close accord right from the start – the Photo Library's holdings, for example, include books on the

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works in the collection that serve as supplements or contextualisation.

A spotlight, a mushroom cloud, a forest clearing, a football player: Swiss artist **Matthias Gabi** (b. 1981) works with motifs that most of us have come across at some point. They signify themselves yet are also generic, and they form the basis of the series **Buchdruck**, whose title is a reference to Gutenberg's letterpress. Gabi seeks out these catchy motifs in magazines and non-fiction books. He collects, selects and scales the pictures, defining precise framings – in doing so, he tirelessly explores the question of how reproductions of images function when they feature as the subject of an investigation, an appropriation.

Photographed front on without any contextualising information and with a strict formal approach, each motif becomes an apparently self-contained statement that encourages us to reflect on how we encounter images in everyday life. For over 15 years, Gabi has been exploring, in various ongoing groups of works, the way photographic images function – be they prints, moving pictures or images circulating online. He is interested in their processes of dissemination and in how this creates value in terms of knowledge transfer. With regard to his use of archetypes in his work, Gabi describes his methodology as follows: 'Each of these images should be irrevocable and carry all other images of the same kind within it.'



Matthias Gabi's work was added to the collection in 2011 after the artist presented a mock-up of **Buchdruck** at Plat(t)form, the museum's annual portfolio-viewing event. Urs Stahel, the founding director of Fotomuseum Winterthur, and Thomas Seelig, the collection curator at the time, created this format to give young photographers and budding artists the opportunity to discuss their work with experts from various fields (from museums, publishing houses, galleries and academia), while at the same time networking with one another.

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For years, at the end of the Plat(t)form event, which dates back to 2007, smaller acquisitions have been made for the collection, which has given rise to a new focus as a result: that of purchasing the work of young photographers. This focus is speculative in nature and sets out to cultivate and collect a promising young generation of artists at an early stage of their careers. Today, this focus is also being pursued through other formats of the museum. A variety of Plat(t)form participants now have works in the collection, including Tobias Zielony (who participated in 2008), Laia Abril (2012), Anika Schwarzlose (2015) and James Bantone (2020). The curatorial team has remained in contact with many of these younger photographers and artists.

Every day, various channels and a range of different sources present us with a host of images from war zones or political scenes such as demonstrations and refugee routes. The status, meaning and value of these images, however, often remain unclear, owing to a lack of contextualising information. The multidisciplinary research group Forensic Architecture, which is based at Goldsmiths, University of London, compiles this image material as it circulates online and develops visual methods for verifying and interpreting it. The group puts together images taken by private individuals, journalists and surveillance cameras to create computer-aided 3D models that reconstruct the events plastically, allowing conclusions to be drawn about the actual course of events. In this way, Forensic Architecture helps clarify the facts, shedding light on the political and legal circumstances and highlighting, for example, human rights violations carried out by states, police forces, the military and companies. The work Atme, Syria, 8 March 2015 from the Bomb Cloud Atlas series visualises bomb detonations that happened in 2015 during the Syrian war, somewhere between the town of Atme and a refugee camp. Forensic Architecture counteracts one-sided reports and potentially manipulated sources by putting forward a scientifically sound model whose credibility is bolstered by its combination of a wide variety of sources and perspectives. These models and reconstructions are used as supporting evidence by inter-

national criminal prosecutors and NGOs.



Forensic Architecture's digital and networked image practices (p. 40) yield works that challenge the criteria of a photographic collection, questioning, among other things, our idea of art and its function. Although the research group's 3D models intersect with art in their mode of creation and are often presented in a museum context, they make use, first and foremost, of scientific methods and pursue an agenda of social and political activism. As a result, the works do not have any classical relationship to photography or art history and thus cannot be judged on the basis of traditional aesthetic criteria. Instead, Forensic Architecture's research-based and scientific works analyse and open up new perspectives on current events and developments of sociopolitical importance.

From early on, Fotomuseum Winterthur took an interdisciplinary interest in the 'fringe areas' of photography, integrating works into the collection that challenge our conventional conception of art and photography. By consistently transcending a purely artimmanent perspective on photography, the collection of Fotomuseum Winterthur is able to set itself apart from a classic art collection and accentuate its profile as a specialist collection.

In **Bulgarische Denkmale** (Bulgarian Monuments), German photographer **Margret Hoppe** (b. 1981) connects past and present: her series shows monuments, sculptures and murals that were originally commissioned by the Bulgarian Communist Party for various locations around the country. These works have now found their way into storage facilities or have literally been moved aside at their original locations. The photographer's work begins in each case with extensive research into the place whose history she is investigating. The photographs she then takes are shot with a medium- or large-format camera – over a period of years and in the course of several trips.

Hoppe's abiding focus has been on the artistic search for the vestiges of history in architecture and the landscape: How present is the past and its ideological imprint? How is history inscribed in the reality we see – what has been preserved, what can still be experienced? In the image **Kalina Tasewa, Boicho Grigow, Wladimir Boew, Erste Konferenz der Kommunistischen Partei, 1951, Öl auf Leinwand, 348 x 470 cm, Depot der Nationalgalerie Sofia, 2007**, what has been discarded is the subject of the work, as the title indicates: the motif is in the background – a rolled-up canvas, seen only from the outside – in front of it busts, a winged sculpture, a stack of bubble wrap.

Margret Hoppe, **Depot der Nationalgalerie, Sofia 2007**, from **Bulgarische Denkmale**, 2008, C-print, 75.7×93.5 cm, partial gift Margret Hoppe, 2009-021-003 © Margret Hoppe, 2024, ProLitteris, Zurich



The 12 prints from the Bulgarische Denkmale (Bulgarian Monuments) series entered the collection as a partial gift. After participating in the 2008 Plat(t) form event (p.60), Margret Hoppe suggested to the museum's then director Urs Stahel, who had expressed an interest in her work, that she make a gift to the collection. Stahel selected the Bulgarische Denkmale series, which was then acquired for a modest amount that was more symbolic than anything else. Given the increasingly demanding conditions on the art market, it is becoming more and more unusual for works by artists to be do-8 / 69 nated directly to the museum; when this does happen, it is connected with major monographic exhibitions or relates to works that have been specially developed for a particular themed exhibition.

Since 2019, Fotomuseum Winterthur has audited all gift offers on the basis of a list of criteria geared to the collection concept. The aim is to guarantee that the institution can commit to incorporating the work into the collection on a long-term basis. Contentrelated and various practical considerations play a role here: Does the work or series augment an existing holding? Do they supplement the collection's areas of focus? Does the museum have sufficient space and resources to store and maintain the works properly?

Influenced by Walker Evans and Robert Frank, US-American photographer **Garry Winogrand** (1928–1984) reinvented the genre of street photography in the 1950s and 1960s. Unlike many of the journalists he modelled himself on, Winogrand was generally not a silent observer but instead got directly involved in what was going on. He met passers-by in the bustling streets of US-American metropoles and took an endless stream of pictures with his 35 mm camera, which he often deliberately held askew to add dynamism to the composition.

Although Winogrand's appropriative practice and his often voyeuristic and sexist gaze are a reflection of the largely male-dominated cultural landscape of the 1950s and 1960s, he was met with criticism even at the time. The pictures of women's demonstrations in his photo book **Women Are Beautiful** (1975) were seen as sexualising and reductive even back then. One of Winogrand's best-known and most controversial motifs is the portrait of a white woman and a Black man walking through New York's Central Park Zoo carrying monkeys dressed in clothes. The racist undertones of this image, whose iconography references family photographs, are unmistakable.

Garry Winogrand, **Gircle Line Statue of Liberty Ferry, New York**, 1971, gelatin-silver print, 21.7×32.8 cm, acquisition, 2003-036-014 © The Estate of Garry Winogrand, Courtesy Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco (image printed to the edge with permission)



Together with photographers Diane Arbus, Lee Friedlander and Nan Goldin, Garry Winogrand embodies a US-American viewpoint that dominates the history of photography in the 20th century. This is due in part to the fact that photography had been recognised and institutionalised as an art form in the US in the mid-20th century and the perspective espoused there had a major influence on its canonisation. This is one of the reasons why the USA acted as a spur for Urs Stahel, the founding director of Fotomuseum Winterthur, in his aspiration to establish a museum for photography.

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This dominance of the US-American perspective is also reflected in the collection of Fotomuseum Winterthur: as of 2024, 20.7% of the artistic positions represented in the collection are from the USA. In the present exhibition showcasing the collection, eight of the 19 artists on display are also US-American. By contrast, Eastern Europe and the Global South are under-represented – these regions account for only 10.6% of the positions in the collection. This is problematic because it gives a skewed picture of culture and history and the attendant discourses or leaves them invisible. The current collection concept attempts to progressively counteract this imbalance and give visibility to the holdings of previously underrepresented perspectives.

The US presidential election campaign is manufactured for the big stage of livestream media: staged reality TV shows are sold as political debates and 'stars' like Donald Trump storm up the charts with 'alternative facts'. Political opinion is served as easily digestible nibbles that keep circulating on social media, where they develop a life of their own. X (formerly Twitter), Facebook and others have become key players in election campaigns and are instrumentalised to mobilise the masses.

The Show Must Go On by Swiss media artist **Marc Lee** (b. 1969) captures the dynamics of the 2016 presidential election campaign, fuelled by a maelstrom of opinions circulating on social media – and exaggerated to the point where it tips into a theatre of the absurd. Lee, who is known for his interactive, mostly internet-based installations, programmed an online work that spent a month filtering out the latest Twitter, Instagram and YouTube posts tagged with the terms 'Clinton', 'Trump' or 'US Election'. Lee recorded twelve hours of the election day on 8 November 2016 – the footage is played back in full in the video installation. Likes and retweets move across the screen as asterisks (Clinton) and hearts (Trump), accentuating the emotional dynamics of online image circulation.



Photographic images are the driving force behind a visual culture that plays out online in social media. Works like Marc Lee's illustrate the effect that networked and algorithmic image practices have on our social interactions. They mobilise people, shape opinions, both private and public, and influence political decision-making.

Under the direction of Duncan Forbes and **Thomas Seelig, Fotomuseum Winterthur** began, in 2015, to put a conscious focus on digitally networked photography (p. 40). With this it has established an international reputation - in part also because content started to be designed for online formats. The experimental exhibition format SITUATIONS, which ran from 2015 to 2021 and was largely given impetus by digital curator Marco De Mutiis and research curator Doris Gassert, and the new [permanent beta] format, have consistently explored the social, cultural and political effects of our contemporary visual practices. Under the direction of Nadine Wietlisbach, this focus is being continued and further amplified by being implemented in the educational programme, where Fotomuseum Winterthur is now making a name for itself in the area of image and media competence.

Danish photographer **Jacob Holdt** (b. 1947) hitchhiked through the USA from 1970 to 1975. During this time, over 350 people offered him a temporary home and allowed him to plunge into their lifeworlds as a considerate guest, friend or lover. At once shocked and fascinated by their son's reports, Holdt's parents sent him a Canon Dial 35 half-frame camera, which he then used to document his experiences. This gave rise to over 15,000 snapshot-style images of people in their environments going about their daily lives. They cover the whole gamut of human relationships – including violence, poverty and crime as well as affection and love. In 1977, Holdt published his photos, accompanied by extensive descriptions, in the book **American Pictures** in a bid to draw attention to the poverty and exploitation experienced by the Black population. The book soon went on to become an international bestseller and Holdt returned to the USA to give slide shows pointing up the profound social divide and devastating social conditions.

While Holdt is still involved in the fight for social justice, he has also been presenting his photographs in an art context since the early 2000s. In the run-up to this exhibition, the museum worked closely with Holdt to adapt the work, which originally comprised four slide projections and 160 photographs. The image selection was edited together and a conversation with Jacob Holdt was added to accompany the projection.



Initiated in 2020, the Collection Revisited format examines works from Fotomuseum Winterthur's own collection. Viewed against the backdrop of current academic discourse, artistic works are examined through in-depth case studies that raise fundamental questions about how we deal with photographic images. How should a museum address the depiction of violence? How can the power dynamics or moments of cultural imbalance inscribed within the gaze be disrupted?

80/81 The images in Jacob Holdt's American Pictures, which give an unsparing view of racism, poverty and social injustices in the USA, cry out for contemporary contextualisation. For years Holdt presented his socially critical photographs in an educational context, invariably accompanied by his commentary, and refused to exhibit them as art without a text to go with them. For him there seemed to be too much ambiguity in stripping his work down to the aesthetic impact of his images, which would run the risk of being instrumentalised. Current discourses put forward similar arguments,

calling on museums to embed photographs in their sociopolitical context and to reflect on how these contexts are involved in the reproduction and perpetuation of discriminatory visual structures. The case study on Holdt develops over the course of the exhibition run of **A Show of Affection** and weaves his images into a web of varying viewpoints and narrative levels.

More information at: www.fotomuseum.ch/en/case-study-jacob-holdt

Concept: Clara Bolin, Yulia Fisch, Doris Gassert, Nadine Wietlisbach Work Selection Collection Constellation 1: Nadine Wietlisbach Texts: Clara Bolin, Doris Gassert, Christopher Lützen, Christina Schmidt, Nadine Wietlisbach Translation (from German): Simon Cowper Editing: Gwendolyn Fässler, Alessandra Nappo, Julia Sumi Design Corporate Identity Fotomuseum: Studio Achermann Design Booklet: Laura Prim & Aurelia Peter

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A Show of Affection – Collection Constellation 2: DZ Bank Kunststiftung 28 June to 28 September 2024

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Due to the renovation of Fotomuseum Winterthur, the exhibition is shown in the spaces of Fotostiftung Schweiz at Grüzenstrasse 45.

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Opening hours: Tue-Sun 11:00-18:00, Wed 11:00-20:00, Mon closed



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