

DÜSSELDORF AND PHOTOGRAPHY

A Report by the
State Capital Düsseldorf

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DÜSSELDORF AND PHOTOGRAPHY

Photography as a new medium has played a crucial role in the development of Düsseldorf's art scene since its emergence in the 19th century, bringing with it an intermediary oscillation that has not only shaped the diversity of the arts within the city, but has always had a cross-border appeal. Ilisabe and Gerolf Schülke laid the groundwork in their 1994 report *Düsseldorf and its Photography*¹, which they prepared on behalf of the Düsseldorf Cultural Office. Based on the find-

ings gained from local archives and collections, they present photographers and photographic developments in Düsseldorf from 1840 to 1940 as a first-ever inventory and overview of Düsseldorf's photographic history. On the basis of their intense and diverse research results, they provide the impetus for a Photography Institute in Düsseldorf² to be established in the future and point to the potential that still needs to be assessed that photography in Düsseldorf still holds.

The dialogs and discourses emanating from Düsseldorf today are part of a unique, ever-evolving global network of interaction. In this context, the multifaceted work *with* photography assumes a central role that needs to be illuminated.

Founded in 1773 as the *Electoral Palatine Academy of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture*, the *Art Academy Düsseldorf* established itself from 1826 under the direction of Friedrich Wilhelm von Schadow into what was to gain worldwide recognition for decades as the *Düsseldorf School of Painting*, for Schadow's academy reform consisted in promoting collaboration between artists³ and the arts. This is shown very impressively in the *studio scene*⁴ created in 1836 under Johann Peter Hasenclever as a collaborative work with fellow artists. A decisive discourse-forming forum for exhibiting the works of the Academy's students became the *Art Association for Rhineland and Westphalia*, which Schadow co-founded in 1829.

In the 1850s, the Düsseldorf Art Academy was considered a liberal place with students from many nations, a situation enabled not least by the painter Emanuel Leutze. Alongside the Academy, the *Malkastenverein*⁵, founded by artists in 1848, formed an intercultural interface in the Düsseldorf art scene. Thus, the artistic energies in the Academy, the Art Association, and the Malkasten, came together and found an intercontinental bridge and transatlantic expansion of the Düsseldorf



Andreas Achenbach (1815–1910),
*The Academy Yard (The Old
Academy in Düsseldorf)*, 1831



Johann P. Hasenclever (1810–1853),
Atelierszene (Studio Scene), 1836

art market in the form of the *Düsseldorf Gallery* – an exhibition space in New York founded by Johann Gottfried Böker – that presented works of art from the Düsseldorf School of Painting between 1849 and 1862. In particular, the turn to the *Hudson River School*⁶ led to a sustained collaborative (study) exchange with Düsseldorf. One link between representatives of the Düsseldorf School of Painting and the Hudson River School was the idea of untouched nature, and the so-called *Tour of the Rhine* was naturally part of the Grand Tour of the 1850s for many American painters.

A decisive further development for the Düsseldorf School of Painting during this period was also the new visual experience associated with the emergence of photography, which found resonance especially in landscape painting. Artists such as Oswald Achenbach and Johann Wilhelm Schirmer possessed extensive photo archives from which they drew for the composition of their paintings.⁷ The American painter Albert Bierstadt, whose brothers – the *Bierstadt Brothers* – were experts in stereoscopic photography as well as landscape and portrait photography, trained as a painter at the Düsseldorf Art Academy from 1853 to 1856. There is no doubt that photography had an influence on Düsseldorf painters, and not only on Bierstadt, who became one of the leading landscape painters in the United States after his return to America. Today, the reverse is true, photographic works by Düsseldorf artists are represented in renowned collections in the United States.

It is worth noting that from the very beginning photography as an imaging method has been part of the artistic repertoire in Düsseldorf: The transition from the photographic medium as a template for works

of art to the autonomy of artistic photography in the context of academic teaching was a process of development over approximately one hundred years that still needs to be explored in depth.⁸ The photographic discourse that accompanied this development, however, cannot solely be attributed to the establishment of Germany's first class for artistic photography by Bernd [and Hilla] Becher at the Art Academy Düsseldorf, in 1976.⁹ In 1962, for example, Gerhard Richter, who was studying at the Art Academy at the time, began work on his *Atlas* project, which spanned decades – a collection of photographs, newspaper



Bernd und Hilla Becher, Ensdorf Mine, Saarland, 1979



Gerhard Richter, 1984
Photo: Benjamin Katz

clippings, and sketches that the artist continuously compiled and related to one another on picture panels until 2013.¹⁰ His fellow student Sigmar Polke who, like Richter, studied painting with Karl Otto Götz, among others, also engaged with painterly processes through the medium of photography and, with Richter, Konrad Lueg [Konrad Fischer], and Manfred Kuttner, established the concept of *Capitalist Realism*. The photographer Erika Kiffl, who is now regaining recognition of her importance in Düsseldorf's art scene, provided decisive impulses for the artistic autonomy of photography and for (critical) photography research; her entire photographic archive has been housed in the *Archive of Artistic Photography of the Rhenish Art Scene (AFORK)* at the *Kunstpallast* since 2017. With the international photo symposia she initiated and held at *Schloss Mickeln* from 1980 to 1989, she initiated important questions about photography, photographic processes,

and the artistic expression associated with them, and inspired a professional exchange.¹¹ Among the participants in 1981 was the cultural and communication philosopher Vilém Flusser, who – influenced by the discussions held here – published his decisive book *Für eine Philosophie der Fotografie (Towards a Philosophy of Photography)*¹² in 1983, edited by Andreas Müller-Pohle. The book was reprinted in 2011 and in this context was used by the Californian conceptual artist and photographer Christopher Williams as a basis for study in his photography class at the Düsseldorf Art Academy. Flusser's theses on photography and media, which have shaped artistic-photographic production in Düsseldorf, are also constitutive, for example, for the media artist Mischa Kuball, who met the philosopher in North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) in the 1990s.

Just as Schadow and Leutze already thought of the image and artistic work in the plural in the 18th century, since the 1960s photographers from a conglomerate of the *Art Academy Düsseldorf*, the *Werkkunstschule Krefeld* (later the *Niederrhein University of Applied Sciences*) and, increasingly in recent years, the *University of Applied Sciences Düsseldorf (HSD)* initiated a discourse on and with the medium of photography that has rarity value. For these reflections often started from a view of what has concretely been there – and has found a specific form of expression through the medium of photography. This was demonstrated in 2020, for example, in the exhibition "Subjekt und Objekt. Foto Rhein Ruhr" ("Subject and Object. Foto Rhein Ruhr") at the *Kunsthalle Düsseldorf*. Over many years, such developments have been documented and processed by the author Helga Meister.¹³



Gerhard Richter, *Atlas*,
sheet 10, newspaper & album photos,
1962-1968

So it extends back in a long tradition that the Düsseldorf art scene – not least thanks to the Art Academy and its diverse and high-caliber teaching staff, which acts as a kind of catalyst – generates impulses, forms networks, and engages in global exchange. But it is not only teaching and photographic training that have led to a living photographic practice and an expanded concept of photography in Düsseldorf: The manufacturing industry in Düsseldorf also makes a significant contribution to the fact that the medium and its use have been able to develop in this way at all.

As early as 1967, the photographer F.C. Gundlach founded the photographic service company *Creative Color (CC)* in Hamburg and Düsseldorf: The gallery *Creative Color Düsseldorf (CCD)*, which subsequently resulted in 1977, is one of the first galleries for photography and stands as an important place for the spectra of photography from applied photography to art.¹⁴ The specialized laboratories *Grieger* (with over fifty years of experience) and *hsl* (since 1987)¹⁵ are still the main producers of a visual language for which numerous artists in Düsseldorf have given important impulses through their own production processes, for example the large-format photographs of Katharina Sieverding and the digital image compositions of Andreas Gursky. These specialized laboratories with enormous experience in the field of photographic production and reproduction accept commissions from artists all over the world; their expertise is considered unique and has helped to shape photography in a decisive way, if not even making facets of this medium possible in the first place – bringing it to visibility, as we experience it today in exhibitions worldwide. It

is therefore not surprising that internationally active artists including Candida Höfer produce their photographic works in Düsseldorf: Höfer has located her studio right next to *hsl*. Companies specializing in photography and optical technologies, such as the Japanese companies *Canon*, *Eizo*, *Epson*, *Nikon*, *Fujifilm*, and *Wacom*, are also located in Düsseldorf and the surrounding area with their German headquarters, and have contributed to widespread market development over decades – Düsseldorf has been considered an important business location for Japan for over fifty years. Düsseldorf's location factor is crucial for a large number of those working in the arts and culture sector, as it is a centrally located city that not only has close lines of communication within NRW. The proximity to Belgium, France, and



Poster of CCD Gallery Düsseldorf, 1986



Catalog of the Photo Symposium near Düsseldorf with Vilém Flusser, 1981, edited by Erika Kiffi

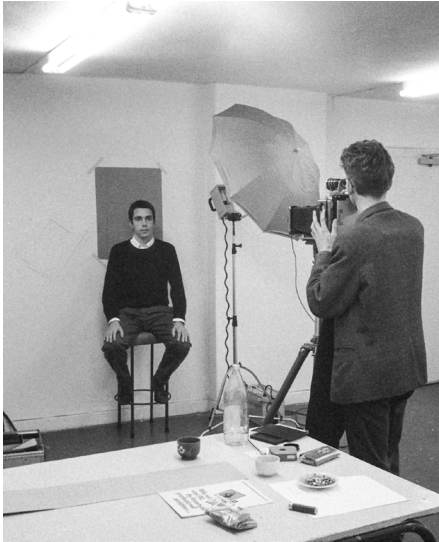
the Netherlands as well as the connection to a worldwide network of airlines have contributed and contribute to an international operation. In these contexts, Düsseldorf has not only seen a rapid development of the medium of photography that is still continuing – it has also been accompanied by the preservation of photographic products for over forty years. Because photography as a technical medium has sensitive conservation requirements, sustainability in photographic production, collecting, and exhibiting is an essential factor. For these reasons, the city of Düsseldorf established a Restoration Center as early as 1976, which now encompasses photo restoration and conservation measures for Düsseldorf's diverse museum landscape and its archival holdings, including estates: Among the approximately 3.5 million objects under care are rich photographic holdings ranging from the worldwide beginnings of photography to the present and covering a wide range of photographic techniques.¹⁶

Düsseldorf unites the diversity of the photographic – here applied and artistic photography have always been in dialog with each other. For decades, the State Capital was considered a leading fashion and media city, and applied photographic image production is a very important part of the fashion industry and the (here electronically influenced) music scene. The (local) galleries also play a crucial role in this context, as the Gundlach's CCD Gallery until the 1990s. Peter Lindbergh, for example, whom the Düsseldorf gallery owner Hans Mayer exhibited very early on and to whom the Düsseldorf Kunstpalast dedicated a comprehensive retrospective in 2020, established himself as one of the most influential fashion photographers of the past forty years.



Klaus Mettig and Katharina Sieverding in the darkroom, studio 111a, Düsseldorf, 1973

Mayer, in turn, in whose Grabbeplatz Gallery Andy Warhol and Joseph Beuys had met in 1979 and who had exhibited the media art of the Korean Nam June Paik¹⁷ in the 1980s and 1990s, has been shaping Düsseldorf for over fifty years with his cross-genre gallery program between (media) art, fashion, and music. The same is true for the *Konrad Fischer Gallery* which began showing artistic and conceptual photography at a time when the medium was neither established in curatorial practice nor in the art market: With the first gallery presentation of the works of Bernd and Hilla Becher in 1970, the Fischers paved the way



Thomas Ruff in the Becher class, 1983.
Photo: Jörg Sasse

for the career of the artist couple and thus for a whole subsequent generation of photographers.¹⁸

In his book *Die Düsseldorfer Photoschule. Photographien 1961-2008*¹⁹ (*The Düsseldorf Photo School. Photographs 1961 – 2008*) published in 2009, the art historian Stefan Gronert described the developments initiated by Bernd and Hilla Becher at the Art Academy Düsseldorf, which he has examined by means of a selection of photographers and their work who studied with the Bechers. A gain for the theory and history of photography will be to open up this classification against the background of diverse photographic positions that have emerged in Düsseldorf and to think further in international contexts.

From the beginnings of photographically based painting at the Art Academy Düsseldorf to the establishment of the photographic process as an artistic medium and its discourse formation to comprehensive collections of time-based media art, as with the *Julia Stoschek Collection* – photography in Düsseldorf has a genesis that has now evolved

over centuries, and in recent years its discursiveness has been expanded by festival activities such as the *Duesseldorf Photo Weekend* initiated by Clara Maria Sels and by the *Biennale düsseldorf photo+*. This development is not based solely on the further development of an image-creating technique, but on the people who collectively support this art system on the basis of their interest and expertise.

This is also the background to the initiative taken by Düsseldorf photo artists in 2009 to establish a *German Photography Institute in Düsseldorf (DFI)*. For it is important to work on a continuity of such an approach to photography that demonstrates responsibility towards the medium in a way that is equally reflective, productive, and preserving. This means actively thinking about photography through the medium itself. In concrete terms, this can mean, for example, enabling easy access to collection holdings or creating new kinds of spaces for research and sharing, such as digital databases that can be expanded with research results, as well as continuing to promote the exhibition and publication of photography, i.e., strengthening the overall visibility of the photographic, including the accompanying conservation and reproduction processes. Düsseldorf continues to offer excellent conditions for this, supported by a lively network.



Joseph Beuys, *Democracy is funny*,
1973

presented in order to start thinking about the future – also with a view to a new Competence Center for Photography to be created that builds on experience with and attitude towards an expanded understanding of photography.

This report is to be understood in these contexts: as the first inventory of the multifaceted and current commitment to photography in Düsseldorf, following on from the work of Ilisabe and Gerolf Schülke. It is preceded by a questionnaire developed by the Cultural Office Düsseldorf, which serves as the basis for the following analysis. Thus, selected moments and aspects as well as artists and institutions are pre-



Sigmar Polke in his studio, 1967
Photo: Manfred Leve

Notes:

1 Schülke, Gerolf and Ilisabe: *Düsseldorf und seine Fotografie*, Bericht für das Kulturdezernat Düsseldorf, Düsseldorf 1994 [unpublished manuscript, edition 250].

2 Ibid., pp. E6-1ff.

3 In Germany, the admission of women to study at German art academies was introduced in conjunction with the right to vote from 1919. Cf. Kennedy, Bianca/Mackenroth, Janine (eds.): *I [love] women in art*, Pool Positions, Munich 2020.

4 Johann Peter Hasenclever, *Studio Scene*, 1836, oil on canvas, 72 x 88 x 2,5 cm (28 3/8 x 34 5/8 x 1"): The painting shows Otto Grashof, Carl Engel von Rabenau, Anton Greven, Johann Peter Hasenclever, Joseph Wilms, and Wilhelm Heine, who made the painting as a joint effort. Cf. *Die Düsseldorfer Malerschule und ihre internationale Ausstrahlung 1819-1918*, vol. 2, ed. by Bettina Baumgärtel, exh.cat. Museum Kunstpalast Düsseldorf, Michael Imhoff Verlag, Petersberg 2011, pp. 54ff.

5 A photograph by Julius Staegemann from 1898 shows the founders of the *Malkasten* by means of a collage, which in turn introduces each member through photographic calling card portraits, so-called cartes de visite, cf. Julius Staegemann, *Die Gründer des Malkastens*. 6. August 1848, 1904, Düsseldorf, Künstlerverein Malkasten (Archiv), in: *Die Düsseldorfer Malerschule und ihre internationale Ausstrahlung 1819-1918*, vol. 2, p. 71.

6 The movement existed until the 1870s/1880s; the name Hudson River School did not emerge until around 1880. The school was rediscovered in the 1960s with a large-scale retrospective in 1987 at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

7 Pohlmann, Ulrich: "Die Düsseldorfer Malerschule und die Fotografie," in: *Die Düsseldorfer Malerschule und ihre internationale Ausstrahlung 1819-1918*, vol. 1, ed. by Bettina Baumgärtel, exh.cat. Museum Kunstpalast Düsseldorf, Michael Imhof Verlag, Petersberg 2011, pp. 341-349, here p. 342. Evidence of the extensive use of the medium of photography in Düsseldorf can be found above all in the context of the artists' festivals at the *Malkastenverein* (portrait photography), cf. Pohlmann *ibid.*, pp. 344ff.

8 Here, too, the Schülkes have done important basic research that is worth pursuing – such as the contextualiza-

tion of photography in exhibitions in Düsseldorf in the 19th and early 20th centuries, cf. *Düsseldorf und seine Fotografie*, B34-1ff. What has not found space in the Schülkes, nor in this report, is the parallel consideration of the development of the cinematographic image. The role of photography in Düsseldorf during the National Socialist era should also be considered in more detail in order to work out and understand continuities.

9 Cf. Felix Krämer in: *Sichtweisen – Die neue Sammlung Fotografie*, exh.cat. Kunstpalast Düsseldorf, Distanz Verlag, Berlin 2020, p. 6.

10 Richter was a professor of painting at the Art Academy from 1971.

11 International Photo Symposium 1980 Schloß Mickeln near Düsseldorf – *Neue Wege der Fotografie (New Ways in Photography)*. Lectures, discussions, interviews, image examples. With contributions by Ute Eskildsen, Verena von Gagern, André Gelpke, Ralph Gibson, Jörg Krichbaum, and Pier Paolo Preti, Mahnert-Lueg Verlag, Munich 1980; International Photo Symposium 1981 Schloß Mickeln near Düsseldorf – *Ist Fotografie Kunst? Gehört Fotografie ins*



Christopher Williams

Cutaway model Nikon EM.

Shutter: Electronically governed Seiko metal blade shutter, vertical travel with speeds from 1/1000 to 1 second, with a manual speed of 1/90th.

Meter: Center-weighted Silicon Photo Diode, ASA 25-1600, EV 2-18 (with ASA film and 1.8 lens). Aperture Priority automatic exposure.

Lens Mount: Nikon F mount, AI coupling (and later) only.

Flash: Synchronization at 1/90 via hot shoe. Flash automation with Nikon SB-E or SB-10 flash units.

Focusing: K type focusing screen, not user interchangeable, with 3mm diagonal split image rangefinder.

Batteries: Two PX-76 or equivalent.

Dimensions: 5.3" x 3.38" x 2.13" (135mm x 86mm x 54mm), 16.2 oz (460g).

Photography by the Douglas M. Parker Studio, Glendale, California, September 9, 2007 – September 13, 2007

Museum? (Is Photography Art? Does Photography Belong in a Museum?). Lectures, discussions, interviews, image examples. With contribution by Anna Auer, Sue Davies, Larry Fink, Vilém Flusser, Wolfgang Kemp, Andreas Müller-Pohle, and Michael Schmidt, ed. by Erika Kiffel, Mahnert-Lueg Verlag, Munich 1982. In this context, Flusser returned to Germany for the first time since his flight from the National Socialists, according to Erika Kiffel in a telephone conversation with the author on 02/28/ 2022.

12 Flusser, Vilém: *Für eine Philosophie der Fotografie*, European Photography, Göttingen 1983.

13 So for example, by the publications: Meister, Helga: *Fotografie in Düsseldorf – Die Szene im Profil*, Schwann im Patmos-Verlag, Düsseldorf 1991; Meister, Helga: *Nachstellungen – Junge Fotografie aus Düsseldorf*, Galerie Christine Hölz, Düsseldorf 2004.

14 In 1971, another service company for professional photographers followed with PPS Professional Photo Service in Hamburg; from 1975, F.C. Gundlach opened the associated galleries in Hamburg [1976] and Düsseldorf [1977], which he maintained until 1992: They were among the first galleries

for photography in Germany. Cf. <https://fcgundlach.de/de/eine-ikone-der-fotografie-wird-95---wir-feiern-fc-gundlach>, last accessed on 10/23/2021. Cf. also: "Eine Begegnung kann ein Leben verändern" oder 'Die Fotografie ist ein Medium, wie ein Bleistift oder ein Pinsel' – Bruno Brunnet, F.C. Gundlach und Wilhelm Schürmann im Gespräch," in: *Sammlung F.C. Gundlach*, ed. by Bruno Brunnet, exh.cat. Contemporary Fine Arts Berlin, Hirmer Verlag, Munich 2015, pp. 50-73, here pp. 55, 59, 63, 72.

15 The specialist laboratories Grieger and hsl merged to Grieger GmbH in August 2022.

16 Cf. information Jessica Morhard in the questionnaire sent out in advance of the report on 10/15/2021.

17 Nam June Paik taught at the Art Academy Düsseldorf from 1979 to 1996.

18 Cf. Information Thomas W. Rieger in the questionnaire sent in advance of the report on 10/14/2021.

19 Gronert, Stefan: *Die Düsseldorfer Photoschule – Photographien 1961-2008*, ed. by Lothar Schirmer, Schirmer/Mosel, Munich 2009.

DÜSSELDORF: PLACE OF PHOTOGRAPHIC PRACTICE

Katharina Alba Dirk Alvermann Rolf Appelbaum Pidder Auberger Banz u. Bowinkel Babette Bangemann Cécile Bauer Horst. H. Baumann Lothar Baumgarten
Monika Baumgartl Max Becher u. Andrea Robbins Bernd u. Hilla Becher Boris Becker Johannes Bendzulla Marion Benoit Franklin Berger Laurenz Berges Lore Bermbach
Joseph Beuys Dieter Blum Anna u. Bernhard Blume Inken Boje Natascha Borowsky Wendelin Bottländer Julius Brauckmann Andi Brenner Frank Breuer
Elisabeth Brockmann Susanne Brodhage Marcel Broodthaers Ralf Brück Raphael Brunk Jana Buch Cieslik u. Schenk Louisa Clement Patric Colling Natalie Czech
Aurel Dahlgrün Danica Dakić Frauke Dannert Thomas Demand Martin Denker Jan Dibbets Götz Diergarten Anna Dietz Nina Ditscheid Volker Döhne Johannes Döring
Julia Dombrowski Trisha Donnelly Achim Duchow Chris Durham Sabine Dusend Bogomir Ecker Dieter Eikelpoth Lothar Gabriel Christine Erhard Elger Esser
Nick Esser Dunja Evers Ivo Faber Claudia Fahrenkämper Hans-Peter Feldmann Harlan Ross Feltus Anna Ferrer Mareike Foecking Claus Föttinger Bernhard Fuchs
Matthias Gabi Lothar Gabriel Andreas Gefeller Karin Geiger Isa Genzken Jonas Gerhard Corina Gertz Anna Giese Edith Glischke Axel Vasco Gnad Claus Goedicke
Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster Manuel Graf Alex Grein Thomas Grünfeld Willy Gursky Andreas Gursky Janice Guy Adam Harrison Lukas Heerich Volker Heinze
Oliver Helbig Brigitte Hellgoth Brigitte Hempel Ulrich Hensel Katlen Hewel Maren Heyne Renate Heyne Stefan Hoderlein Candida Höfer Hanne Horn Stefan Hostettler
Uschi Huber Axel Hütte Katja Illner Vanessa Jack Manfred Jade Margarete Jakschik Jörg Paul Janka Bernd Jansen Janosch Jauch Magdalena Jetelova
Olga Kaloussi Klaus Kammerichs Irmel Kamp Benjamin Katz Ulrike Kazmaier Keller u. Wittwer Gudrun Kemska Julia Kernbach Dieter Kiessling Erika Kiffel
Hye-Mi Kim In Sook Kim Martin Klimas Ute Klophaus Christof Klute Beate Knappe Matthias Koch Erinna König Thomas Koester Chris Kohlhöfer Christian Konrad
Moritz Krauth Mischa Kuball David Kühne Christiane Kues Claudia Kugler Achim Kukulies Talisa Lallai Ute Langanky Bernard Langerock Andreas Langfeld
Ruth Lauterbach-Baehnisch Yoon Jean Lee Manfred Leve Peter Lindbergh Tim Loehde Stephan Macháč Katharina Mayer Gerhard Merz Klaus Mettig Reinhard Mucha
Conrad Müller Ralph Müller Christopher Muller Thomas Neumann Wilfred H. G. Neuse Simone Nieweg Hannes Norberg Dieter Nuhr Marcel Odenbach Hede Oppenheimer
Dominic Osterried Nam June Paik Lukas Panek Veronika Peddinghaus Peter Piller Anne Pöhlmann Nina Pohl Sigmar Polke Johannes Post Barbara Probst Stefanie Pürschler
Robert Pufleb Arisa Purkpong Erwin Quedenfeldt Carmen Rahn Johannes Raimann Michael Reisch Udo Remmes Gerhard Richter Sebastian Riemer Klaus Rinke
Johan Röing Brigitta Rohrbach Alexander Romey Tata Ronkholz Ulrike Rosenbach Martin Rosswog Thomas Ruff Reiner Ruthenbeck Judith Samen Jörg Sasse
Martina Sauter Horst Schäfer Morgaine Schäfer Heiko Schäfer Hedda Schattanik u. Roman Szczesny Peter Schlegel Thyra Schmidt Kai Werner Schmidt Nina Schmitz
Stefan Schneider Berit Schneidereit Kris Scholz Ilsabe u. Gerolf Schülke Thomas Schütte Josef Schulz Ursula Schulz-Dornburg Gerry Schum Helmut Schweizer
Miriam Schwedt Petra Senn Fari Shams Oliver Sieber Katharina Sieverding Orson Sieverding Pola Sieverding Sigune Siévi Lucia Sotnikova Julius Söhn
Juergen Staack Georgi Stanchev Daniela Steinfeld Isolde Strauss Liselotte Strelow Beat Streuli Thomas Struth Andreas Stöhr Studio Maria von der Heide Katja Stuke
Chris Succo Nic Tenwiggenhorn Johanna Terhechte Birgitta Thaysen Myriam Thyes Anton Tripp Rosemarie Trockel Jens Ullrich Claudia van Koolwijk Ira Vinokurova
Anna Vogel Walter Vogel Horst Wackerbarth Erna Wagner-Hehmke Moritz Wegwerth Wim Wenders Christoph Westermeier Ursula Wevers Sebastian Wickerroth
Claus Wickrath Christopher Williams Charles Wilp Jost Wischniewski Lothar Wolleh Matthias Wollgast Petra Wunderlich Pablo Zuleta Zahr Andrea Zeitler

Düsseldorf is a place that has grown through photography and through the people who deal with it: through pictorial diversity as well as through collective reexamination of the medium. The following graphic representation shows – without claiming to be complete – an overview of contemporary photographers and artists who are connected to the State Capital through their photographic training, teaching and practice as well as through their lives. As a multifaceted snapshot, it also illustrates the importance that photography has gained for Düsseldorf in recent decades.

The selection of artists presented here is exemplary, but not exhaustive. Through images and text, it shows the spectrum of artistic positions that use the medium of photography in very different ways and have further developed it in a style-defining way based on their understanding of the medium. It becomes clear how the international and cross-generational network of photographers and artists that has developed in Düsseldorf continues to evolve.



Jörg Sasse, 3310, 2021



Natalie Czech, *Fact: True Fact*, 2020

BERND UND HILLA BECHER



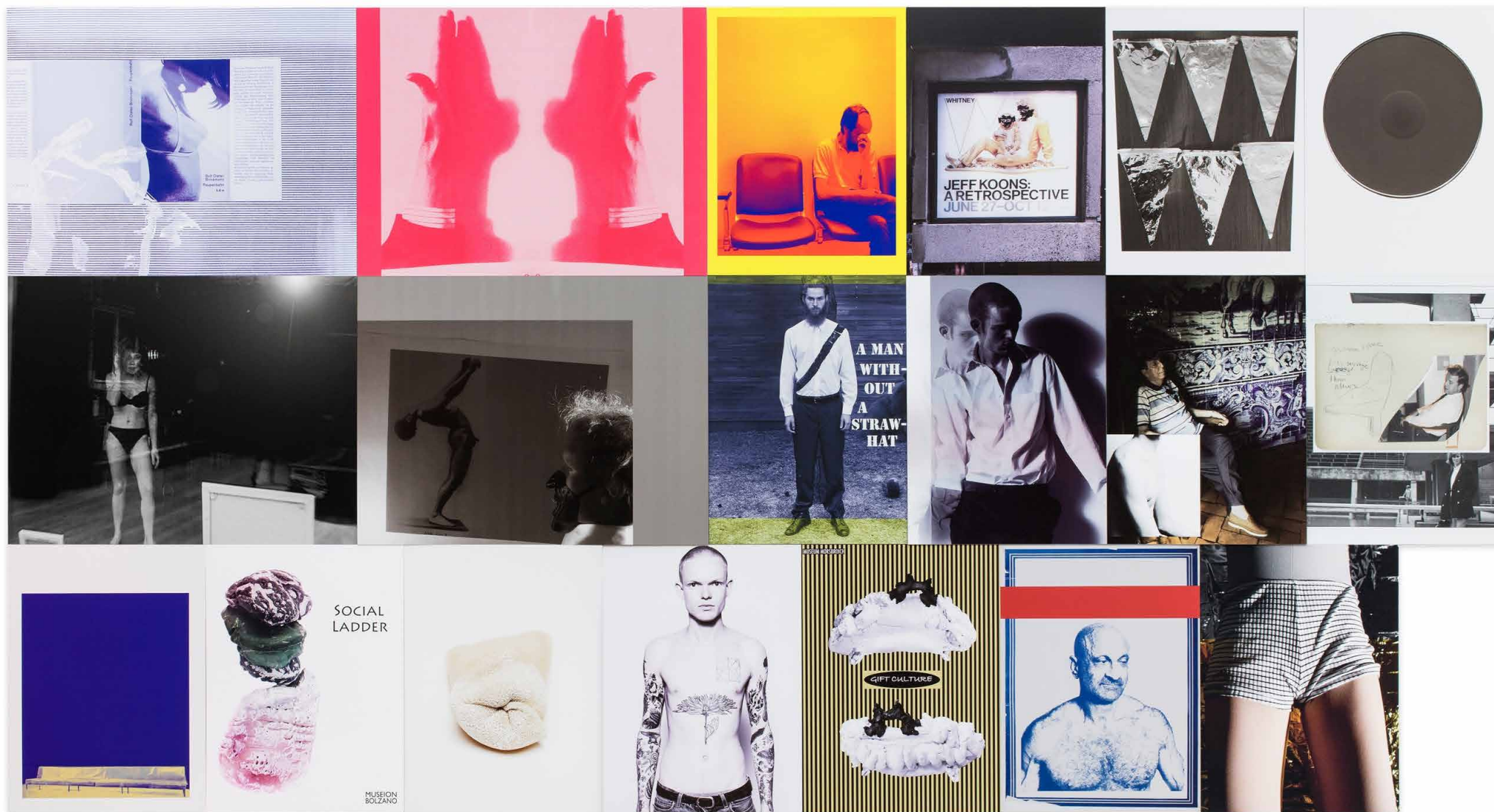
Bernd und Hilla Becher, *Fachwerkhäuser des Siegener Industriegebietes. Verschieferte Giebelseiten*, 1961–1978

With the establishment of a photography class at the Art Academy in Düsseldorf 1976 and the awarding of a professorship for photography to Bernd Becher, Bernd and Hilla Becher opened up new spectra of artistic expression in the field of photography as joint teachers.

Bernhard Becher (* 1931 in Siegen, † 2007 in Rostock) and Hilla Becher (* 1934 in Potsdam, † 2015 in Düsseldorf) created a photographic cartography of the industrial buildings they captured with their photographic oeuvres over nearly five decades. Bernd Becher and Hilla Wobeser met in a Düsseldorf advertising agency in 1957 against the background of their (commercial) graphic and photographic training. Hilla Wobeser successfully applied to the *Art Academy Düsseldorf* in 1958 with photographic works, and Bernd Becher also began studying typography there in 1957: Together they attended the class for commercial art with Walter Breker, who also set up the first photography workshop at the Academy in response to an impulse from Hilla Wobeser.¹ Beginning in 1959, the artist couple systematically sought out their pictorial subjects, for which they would become internationally known: Pithead towers, coal bunkers, cooling towers, blast furnaces, grain silos, and half-timbered houses formed the photographic vocabulary on the basis of which the Bechers, who had married in 1961, formulated their typologies, among other things. They referred to the industrial buildings they documented, which were always related to the production of goods, as *Anonymous Sculptures*. By means of the large format camera, they also negotiated a concept of craft between practical and creative work in the photographs, which were arranged as series and groups of works.

With the establishment of a photography class at the Art Academy Düsseldorf in 1976 and the awarding of a professorship for photography to Bernd Becher, Bernd and Hilla Becher opened up new spectra of artistic expression in the field of photography as joint teachers. Not only did many of their students become internationally successful photographers, including Andreas Gursky, Candida Höfer, Thomas Ruff, Thomas Struth, Petra Wunderlich, Simone Nieweg, and Tata Ronkholz (†), and with them an expanded concept of photography continued in subsequent generations at the Art Academy, which to this day has a strength and radiance that contextualizes the medium.

¹ "In the process, Hilla Wobeser [...] was the first student to be admitted to the class with a portfolio composed solely of photographic work samples. Because of her training, she was also entrusted with setting up a photo department, where she introduced other students to darkroom work," notes Susanne Lange, in: Lange, Susanne: *Was wir tun, ist letztlich Geschichten erzählen. Bernd and Hilla Becher – Einführung in Leben und Werk*, Schirmer/Mosel Verlag, Munich 2005, p. 15. Cf. also: Meister, Helga: *Fotografie in Düsseldorf – Die Szene im Profil*, Schwann im Patmos Verlag, Düsseldorf 1991, p. 165.



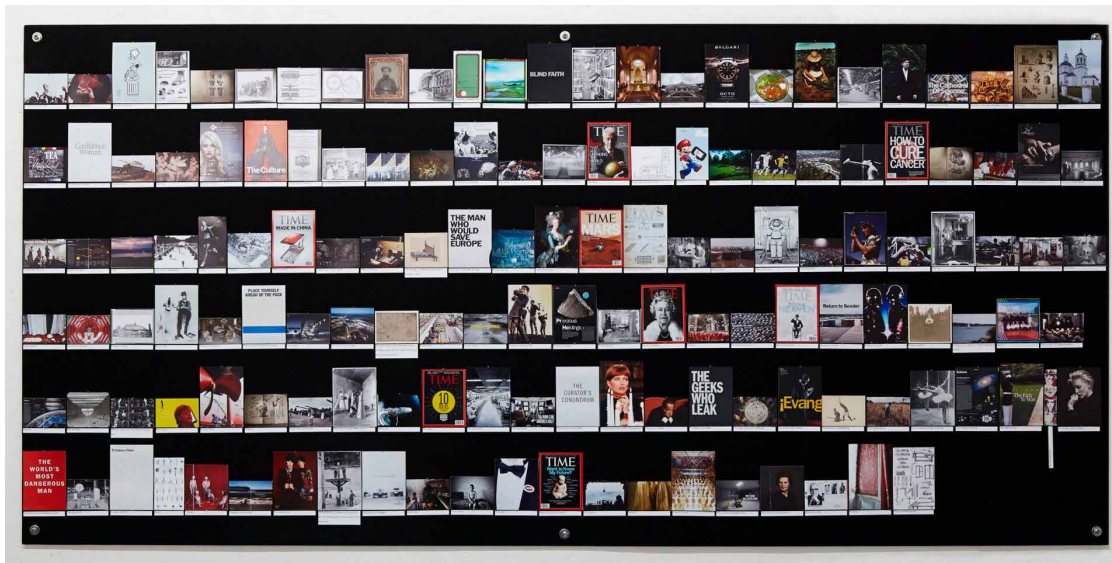
Rosemarie Trockel, *CLUSTER II - Prisoner of Yourself*, 2015



Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, VN (*numéro rouge*), 2018



Volker Döhne, Ohne Titel (BUNT), 1979



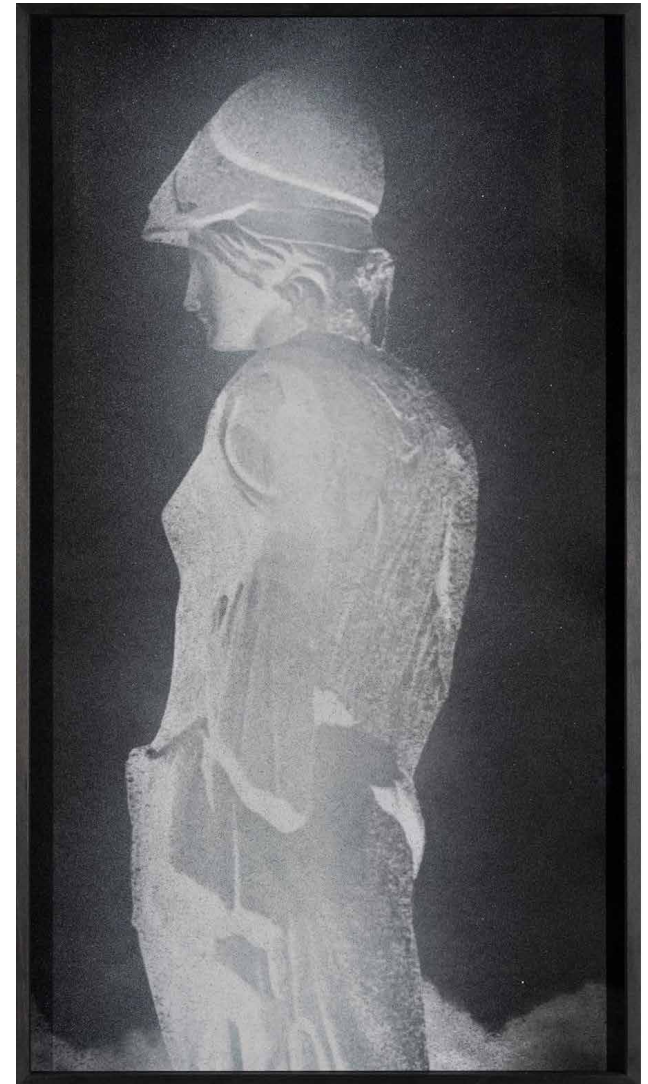
Fari Shams, Notice Board, European Civilization Peter the Great and the order of things, 2014



Alex Grein, Rolling (Pictures on a Screen), 2019



Lucia Sotnikova, *Reading*, 2018



Anna Vogel, *juno agrigento*, 2018

DANICA DAKIĆ



Danica Dakić, *La Grande Galerie*, 2004

Danica Dakić (* 1962 in Sarajevo) studied painting at the *Academy of Fine Arts Sarajevo* and at the *University of Arts Belgrade* before leaving Yugoslavia in 1988 and going to Germany. From 88 to 1990 she studied at the *Art Academy Düsseldorf* in Nam June Paik's class. For over thirty years, Dakić has lived and worked in Düsseldorf. In 2021, the artist was awarded the inaugural *Lauterbach Prize for Social Art* of the *Carl and Ruth Lauterbach Foundation* at the *City Museum Düsseldorf* for her artistic work. Dakić's artistic approach is driven by a strong awareness of political-social and (trans-) cultural issues and shaped by her work(s) in various locations: With her video works, filmic installations, and photographs that question cultural memory, globalization, language as well as history in its constant change as well as with her utopian potentials, Dakić is currently one of the central positions when it comes to reflecting on the social role of art. Danica Dakić teaches as a professor at the *Bauhaus University Weimar*. Her artistic work has been exhibited at *documenta 12* (2007) and the *58th Biennale di Venezia* (2019), among others. She is represented in many public collections in Germany and abroad, including the Collection of the Düsseldorf State Parliament and the Art Collection of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia.

With her video works, filmic installations, and photographs that question cultural memory, globalization, language as well as history in its constant change as well as with her utopian potentials, Dakić is currently one of the central positions when it comes to reflecting on the social role of art.



Claus Föttinger, *veldt & ocean reloaded*, 2018/2021

JAN DIBBETS

The Dutch conceptual artist Jan Dibbets (* 1941 in Weert) taught at the *Art Academy Düsseldorf* from 1984 to 2004. The artistic biography of Dibbets, who studied at the *University of the Arts London – Central Saint Martins*, is closely linked to Düsseldorf through the gallery owner Konrad Fischer; he lives and works in Amsterdam.

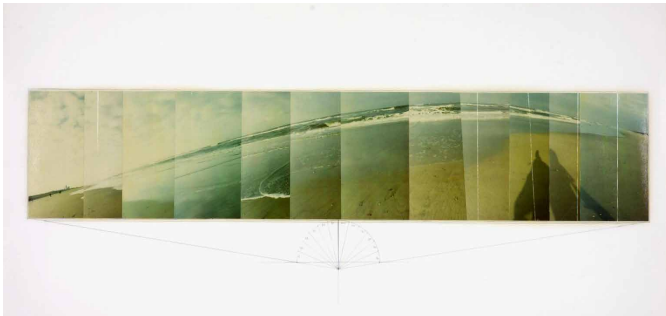
In the 1960s, Jan Dibbets began to create pictorial sculptural photographic progressions that transform natural space into a conceptual pictorial space of photographic collages or cinematic sequences – he is considered one of the early representatives of conceptual photography.

In 1969, Konrad Fischer showed photographic works by Jan Dibbets, John Baldessari, Bernd and Hilla Becher, Marcel Broodthaers, Gilbert & George, David LaPlaza, Giuseppe Penone, Ed Ruscha, and Robert Smithson at the *Museum Morsbroich* in Leverkusen in the first international exhibition on Conceptual Art with the title *Konzeption – conception*, which he curated together with Rolf Wedewer.

Likewise, in 1969, Dibbets collaborated with Gerry Schum, a cameraman, filmmaker, and video producer living in a mobile home on the banks of the Rhine in Düsseldorf, who produced Dibbets' legendary artistic intervention *TV as a Fireplace* for WDR, with which Westdeutscher Rundfunk ended its evening TV program over the course of several days. Dibbets' work was also presented in the context of Schum's television gallery – a conceptual television format that was intended to

offer a new social discussion forum as a virtual gallery space and that was mostly based solely on the cinematic image: for example, in the first broadcast of Schum's program entitled *Land Art*, with which a new artistic practice also began to establish itself.

Jan Dibbets' artistic work has been exhibited worldwide, including at *documenta 5* (1972), *6* (1977), and *7* (1982) in Kassel, at the *Stedelijk Museum* in Amsterdam, and at the *Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum* in New York.



Jan Dibbets, *Panorama Dutch Mountain*
12 x 15° Sea II A, 1971



Jan Dibbets, *Comet Land/Sky/Land 6° - 72°*, 1973



Isa Genzken, ohne Titel, 2016



Reinhard Mucha, *The Wirtschaftswunder, To the People of Pittsburgh III* [2016], 1991

For several decades he has been working on an understanding of image criticism that takes (photographic) images as projection surfaces and seeks to name them through a reference marked by humor and criticism in equal measure.

HANS-PETER FELDMANN

Hans-Peter Feldmann (* 1941 in Düsseldorf) studied painting in the 1960s at the *School of Art Linz*, today's *University of Art and Industrial Design Linz*, before he began to develop conceptual works through the medium of photography in 1968. For several decades he has been working on an understanding of image criticism that takes (photographic) images as projection surfaces and seeks to name them

through a reference marked by humor and criticism in equal measure. Feldmann's artistic work is based on images showing everyday things and actions: photographic images, some of which he creates, but many of which he collects at flea markets and antiquarian bookshops. His extensive archive is the basis of his artistic activity, which is based on constantly bringing these images into new contexts. In the process, varying sequences are created, which in turn produce a variety of narratives and possibilities of visual storytelling. His artistic work thereby reveals that there is not one, but many narratives that can emanate from (photographic) images – and that they can do so equally alongside one another. For example, Feldman put together conglomerations of images in thematic series in booklets and books, as in his *picture booklets*, with which he first achieved fame between 1968 and 1974. He founded his own publishing houses, including the *Feldmann-Verlag* in 1998, in which he publishes his artist's books, and is also co-founder of the maga-

zines *Ohio Photomagazine*, *Photographie wie noch nie* (1995–1998), and *cahiers d'images* (the latter together with Céline Duval).

Feldmann's conceptual art is characterized by the fact that it repeatedly takes its starting point in the photographic, but also flows into sculptural objects. One of his best-known sculptures is a reproduction of Michelangelo's *David*, which he made under the same title as a kind of Pop Art replica. "If there's one thing I can do right, it's look,"¹ Feldmann remarks of his artistic practice.

Hans-Peter Feldmann lives and works in Düsseldorf. His work is presented internationally in solo and group exhibitions, including at the *documenta* in Kassel and the *Venice Biennale*.

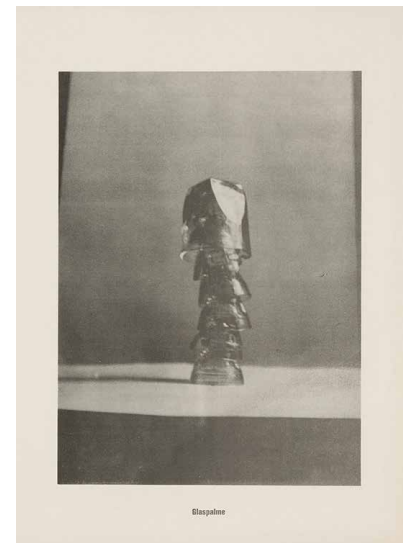
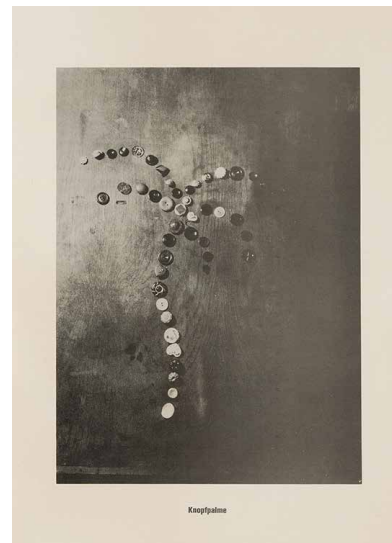
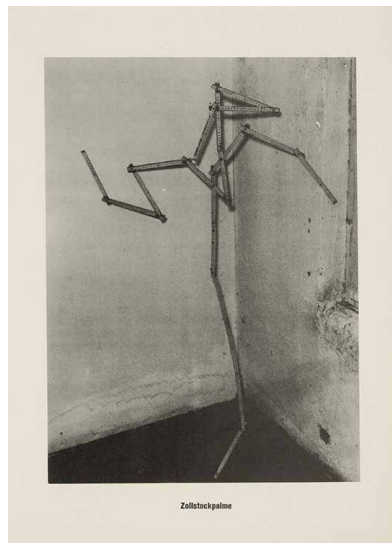


Hans-Peter Feldmann, *Ansichten von Autoradios, in denen gerade gute Musik spielt*, 1970–1990



Hans-Peter Feldmann, *100 Jahre*, 2001

¹ <https://co-berlin.org/de/programm/ausstellungen/hans-peter-feldmann>, last accessed on 11/23/2021.



Sigmar Polke, *Palmenserie*, 1966/1968



Hans-Peter Feldmann, Uschi Huber, Jörg Paul Janka,
Stefan Schneider, *Ohio Photomagazine #1*, 1995



Simone Nieweg, *Feldweg mit Pfützen, Meerbusch-Büderich*, 2001



Thomas Struth, *Düsselstraße, Düsseldorf*, 1979

ANDREAS GURSKY



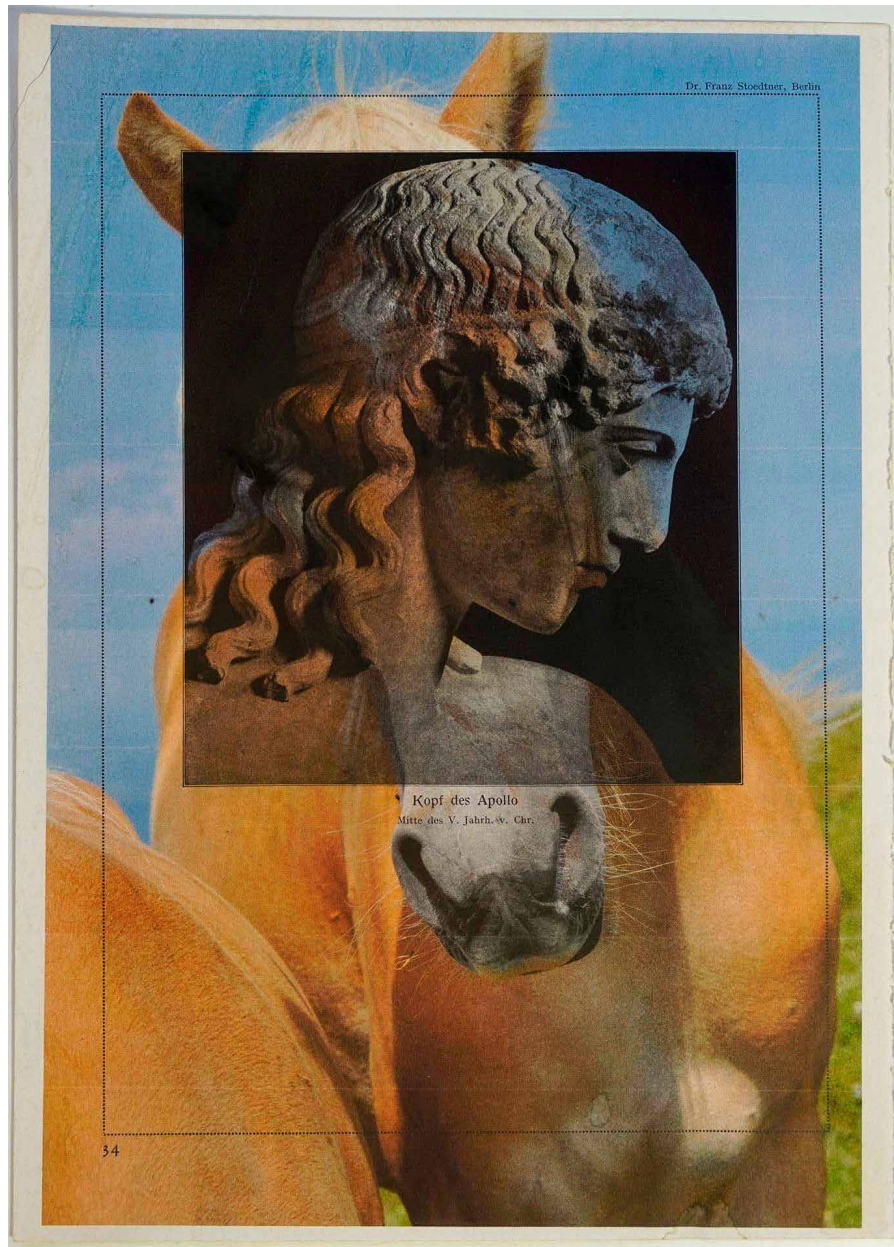
Andreas Gursky, *Klitschko*, 1999

Andreas Gursky (* 1955 in Leipzig) negotiates reality as a construction in his photographs, both on a formal level and in terms of content. His images are geared towards contemporary events and refer to modern lifestyles and their specific manifestations, including the fields of music, architecture, politics, trade, consumption, tourism, fashion, and art. In particular, the large format photographic works are designed as panoramas, with which Gursky lends vividness to real situations by taking individual moments photographed from various perspectives and assembling them into one image.

Gursky's photographs are digital montages: The artist assembles elements of digitally generated photographs on a computer into tableaux in which the motif captured from above extends over the entire area of the picture. The image surface thereby enters into an alternating relationship of proximity and distance; close-ups and overall views oscillate between blurriness and the utilization of a greater depth of field. The technically evoked illusion of the eye is further intensified by the exaggeration of the reproduced moment, through which the recognizable, the supposedly familiar seems alien, almost alienated: The individual recedes in favor of this process of generalization, it dissolves into structures, grids, and patterns, which become the central object in Gursky's photography. [...] Both industrial and cultural landscapes are equally the subject of contemplation in the works of Andreas Gursky, a former Becher student and teacher at the Art Academy from 2008 to 2018, who repeatedly directs his gaze to traces of contemporary forms of organization of human life and the resulting global experiences, consequences, and not least the absurdities.

Slightly expanded and adapted excerpt from: "Christina Irrgang on Andreas Gursky" in: *Museum Ludwig – 20th/21st Century Art – Painting, Sculpture, New Media*, Collection Catalog, ed. by Yilmaz Dziewior, Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, Cologne 2018, p. 224.

Gursky repeatedly directs his gaze to traces of contemporary organizational forms of human life and the resulting global experiences, consequences, and absurdities.



Christoph Westermeier, aus der Serie *Die Horizontale Grand Tour*, 2020



Morgaine Schäfer, *Archiv No 2301 (Pose2)*, 2016



Bogomir Ecker, Auszüge aus *Idylle + Desaster*. Die Fotosammlung Bogomir Ecker, Spector Books, 2012

CANDIDA HÖFER

Candida Höfer (* 1944 in Eberswalde) studied at the *Art Academy Düsseldorf* from 1973 after a traineeship in the Cologne photo studio *Schmölz + Huth* and photographic training and further education in Cologne and Hamburg: first in Ole John's film class, from 1976 in the photography class of Bernd and Hilla Becher. Her large format photographs of interiors such as libraries, museums, lecture halls, and cafeterias, which she began in the 1980s, have earned her international renown. Candida Höfer's photographs, often conceived as a series, do not show people, but places that are specifically designed or used by people. In her images, she focuses on space, its edges, and the components that furnish it. Höfer's show arrangement resembles the strict objectivity of Karl Hugo Schmölz, who also works with a large format camera – a style that makes the photographic images look like a showcase. At the same time, Höfer highlights typologies in the spatial structures she visits that are reminiscent of those of Bernd and Hilla Becher. In doing so, Candida Höfer produces highly precise color photography that fascinates with its richness of detail. She emphasizes sophisticated piece of equipment offering great range of technical adjustments and with the ability to capture incredible detail and focus – a style that makes the photographic image look like a showcase. At the same time, Höfer highlights typologies in the spatial structures she visits that are reminiscent of those of Bernd and Hilla Becher. In doing so, Candida Höfer produces a highly precise color photography that fascinates with its

richness of detail. She emphasizes the specificity of these places and brings out through the photographic means of (large format) photography: Her culturally defined spaces have a plastic effect, doing justice to the inherent need of the space in each case, including the individual moment of fascination of her viewers in the moment of seeing.

Candida Höfer lives and works in Cologne and produces her photographic works in Düsseldorf. Her studio lies in the immediate vicinity of the photo lab *hsl*.



Candida Höfer, *Hauptbahnhof Düsseldorf* 1975



Candida Höfer, *BNF Paris XXIV*, 1998

Höfer's culturally defined spaces have a plastic effect, doing justice to the inherent need of the space in each case, including the individual moment of fascination of her viewers in the moment of seeing.



Peter Piller, *Schlafende Häuser*, Archiv Peter Piller, 2002–2004

Piller generates thematic images series, which he assembles into new narrative contexts from primarily photographic reproductions.

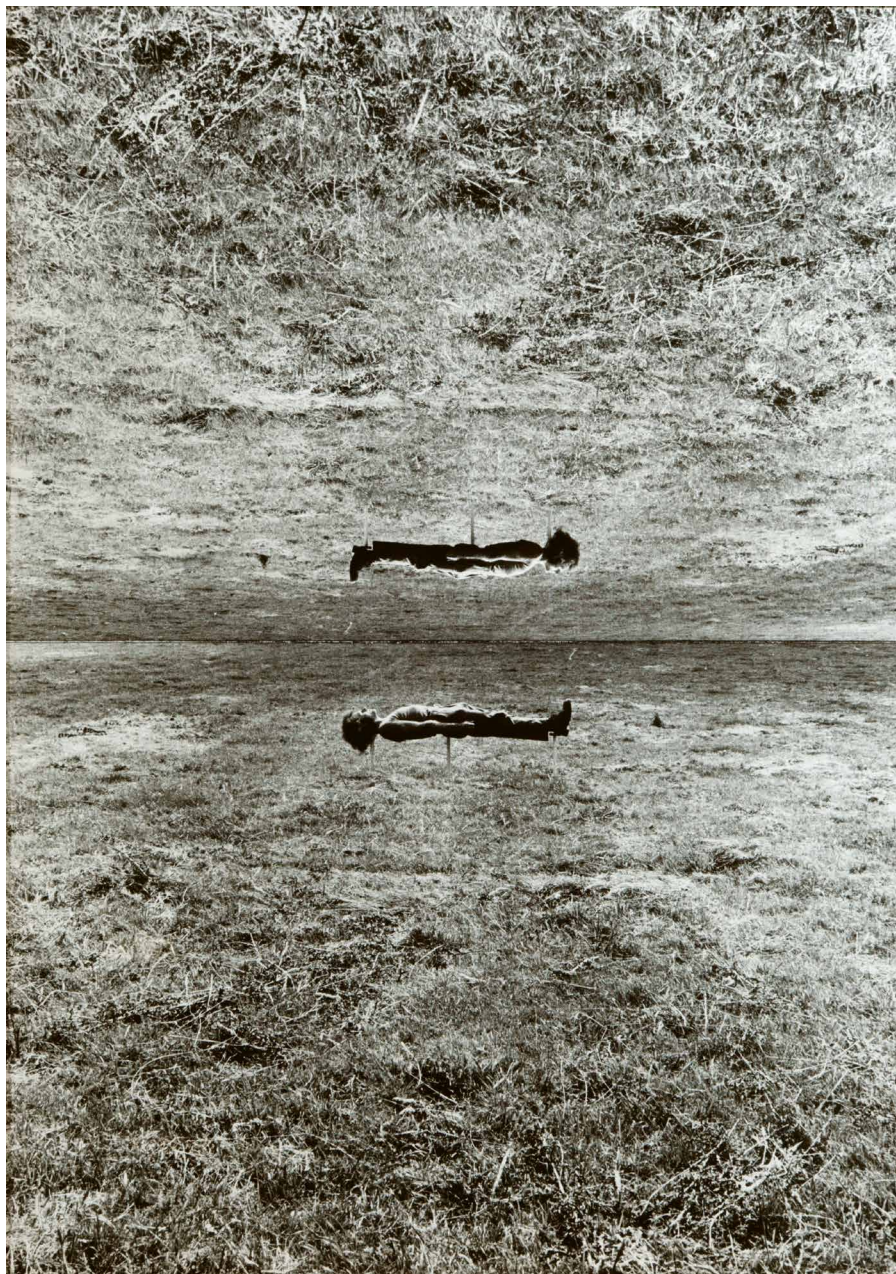
PETER PILLER



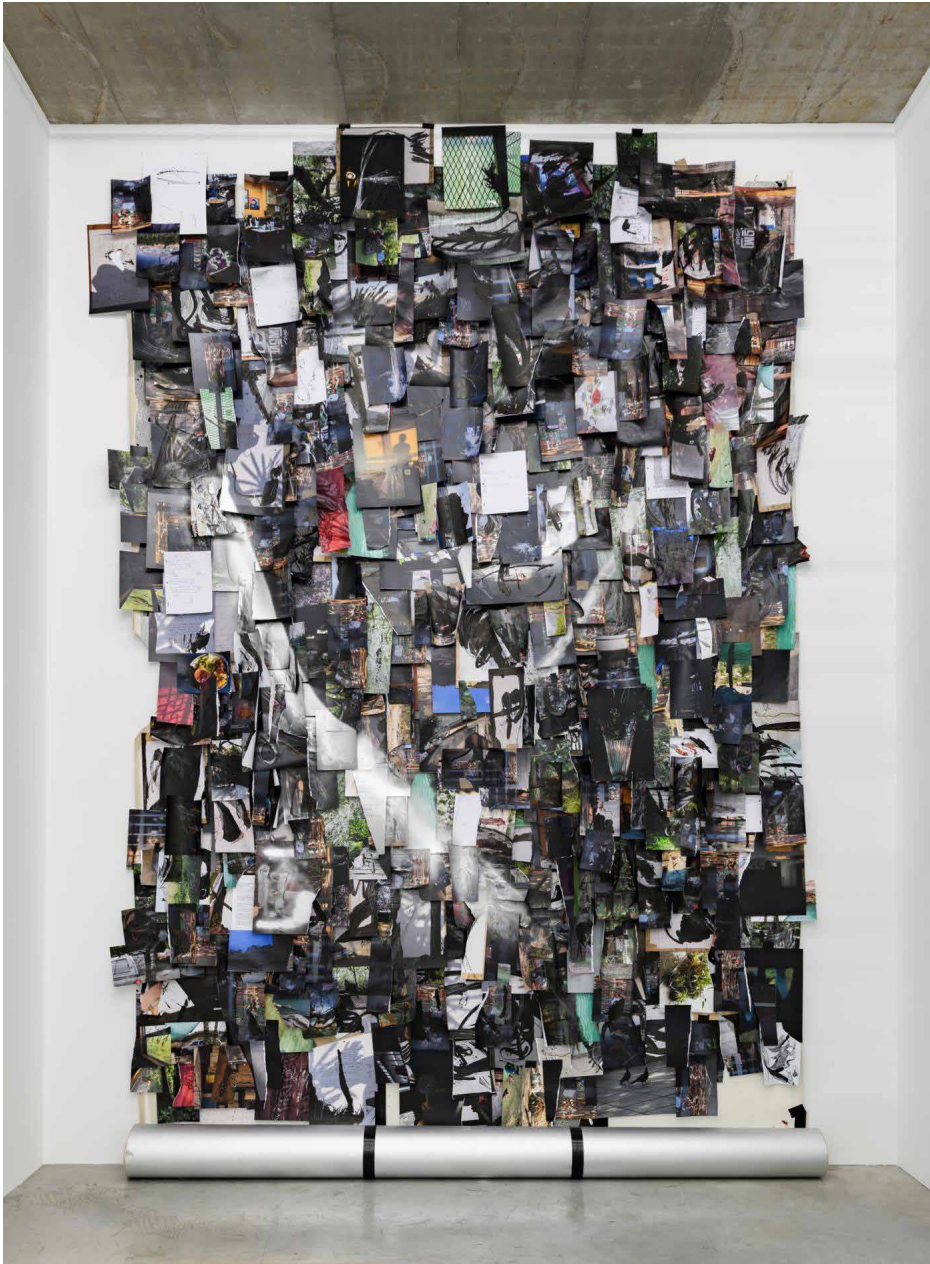
Peter Piller, *In Löcher blicken*, Archiv Peter Piller, 2002–2004

Peter Piller (* 1968 in Fritzlar), who initially studied geography, German language and literature, and art education, completed his studies in fine arts at the *Hamburg University of Fine Arts*. Piller works in the media of drawing, photography, and the extended image assemblage. He has become known for the Archive Peter Piller compiled over many years, which consists of, among other things, newspaper photographs, aerial photographs, historical postcards, photographs found on the Internet, and photographic documentation of hikes that he undertakes. Piller generates thematic images series from the enormous holdings of his archive, which he assembles into new narrative contexts from primarily photographic reproductions or photographically transmitted image sources. Keywording becomes part of his work, with assignments generating visual spaces and image narratives through associative references. Through his assemblages, Piller's pictorial observations formulate situational conglomerates that declare the photographic to be a kind of alphabet in which each letter can also vary again and again in its spelling. Peter Piller's approach to the photographic image is a reflexive one, reflecting on the medium with regard to the strength of its expressiveness. In doing so, Piller's pictorial structures tell what photographic excerpts – taken from a context as situation and image and rearranged after subjective categorization – are able to reveal about social structures and courses of action. Based on his series of images, numerous illustrated photograph books have been produced.

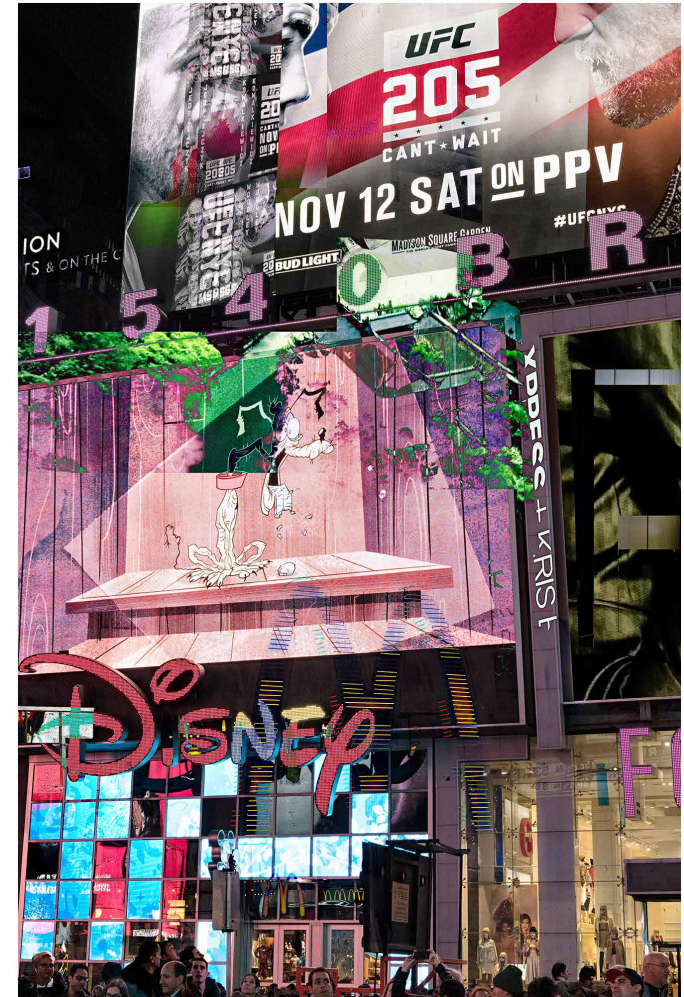
Peter Piller lives and works in Hamburg. Since 2018, he leads the class for free art at the *Art Academy Düsseldorf*.



Klaus Rinke, *Der Versuch, sich von der Erdanziehung zu lösen*, 1971



Arisa Purkpong, ohne Titel, 2021



Moritz Wegwerth, 1540, 2018



Tata Ronkholz, Rheinhausen, Rosastraße 24 (aus der Serie: *Trinkhallen*), 1978



Tata Ronkholz, Köln 51, Brühler Straße 86 (aus der Serie: *Trinkhallen*), 1978

TATA RONKHOLZ

Tata Ronkholz (legal name Roswitha Tölle, * 1940 in Krefeld, † 1997 in Hürth) studied architecture and interior design at the *Niederrhein University of Applied Sciences Krefeld*. Before working as an independent product designer, she worked at the well-known *Furniture House Schroer* in Krefeld, where Hans Mayer in turn ran his first gallery in NRW from 1967–1970. In 1977, she met Bernd Becher through her husband Coco Ronkholz, who had also worked with Mayer. In the same year, she enrolled at the *Art Academy Düsseldorf*, studying in the photography class from 1978 to 1985. For economic reasons, she broke off her artistic work as a photographer and worked in a Cologne photo agency from 1985 to 1995. Since 2001, her estate has been under the care of *Van Ham Art Estate* in Cologne.

Tata Ronkholz is one of the lesser-known graduates of the Becher class, due to the long absence of a reappraisal of her photographic work, although her photographs in a very special way “represent a cultural memory of architecture and urbanism in the postwar period.”¹ Ronkholz initially photographed industrial gates before documenting the old Düsseldorf Rhine Harbor together with Thomas Struth in 1979/80. This extensive series is a unique contemporary historical document and convolute, from which the *Düsseldorf City*

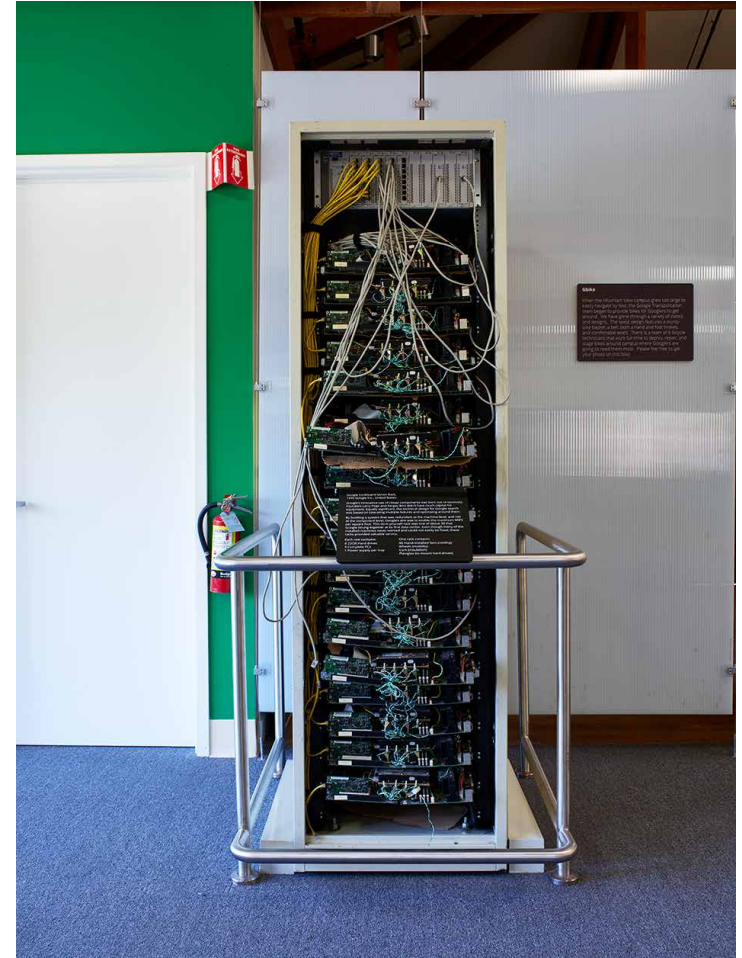
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Museum purchased eighty-two works in 1981. These in turn belong to the most important holdings of the City Museum. Other subjects from Tata Ronkholz’s artistic photography include drinking halls and kiosks as well as store windows in Düsseldorf, Bochum, Cologne, and other places in the Ruhr region. In archival books, which can be found in the estate, connections to these places can be reconstructed. Since the indexing of the estate, further possibilities have opened up for discursive consideration of her work, which is represented in important collections both nationally and internationally.

¹ <https://www.tata-ronkholz.de/>, last accessed on 11/01/2021.



Oliver Sieber, o. T. (*Spiky*), aus der Serie *J_Sub*s, Osaka, 2006



Mareike Foecking, *First Google Server*
aus *I am Looking at Silicon Valley - Silicon Valley is Looking at Me*, 2018



Louisa Clement, *Heads*, 2014–2015

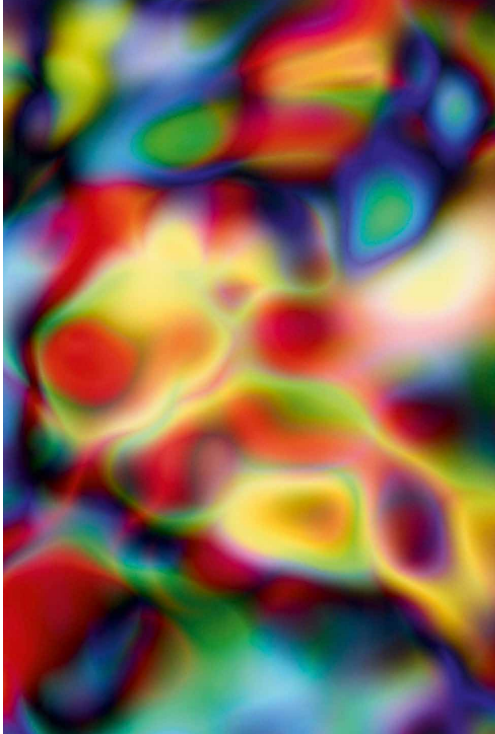
THOMAS RUFF

Thomas Ruff (* 1958 in Zell am Harmersbach) studied at the *Art Academy Düsseldorf* from 1977 to 1985 in the class of Bernd and Hilla Becher. From 2000 to 2005 he headed the photography class there as part of a professorship. His works have achieved international renown. In 2020/21, he was represented with an extensive solo exhibition at *K20 – Art Collection North Rhine-Westphalia* in Düsseldorf, which impressively traced Ruff's photographic career and his contribution to the development of the medium of photography.

Ruff represents a very specific stance on the conceptuality of photography, as he engages in an exegesis of photographic technique and the photographic image in equal measure with his photographic practice, presenting the possibilities of photography with an extensive and multifaceted body of work. In doing so, he shows through his nuanced images themselves the transformation of the technically produced and reproduced image up to photography without the use of a camera. Ruff has been internationally received since the late 1980s through his series (larger-than-life) portraits of friends and acquaintances. Via typologized interiors of German living spaces, which he has taken into view, to photographs of the starry sky (taken in scientific contexts), which he adopts and processes in his photographic spectrum, Ruff developed an approach to the photographic that is literally an "image-scientific" evaluation of photography. Thus, his works also incorporate the observation of the development of an image, and the backs of photographic archival records become the subject matter, as do evaluations of databases and algorithmic image results from the Internet.

The digital inversion of historical, analog photographs is just as much a photographic testing ground for his work as the collaboration with 3D experts and the creation of almost virtual photo-based spatial moments.

Ruff explores the medium of photography by means of image making from its history and illuminates its future potential. In 2001, he was elected to the *North-Rhine-Westphalian Academy of Sciences and Arts*.



Thomas Ruff, *Substrat 27 II*, 2005



Thomas Ruff, *Portrait (Pia Stadtbäumer)*, 1988

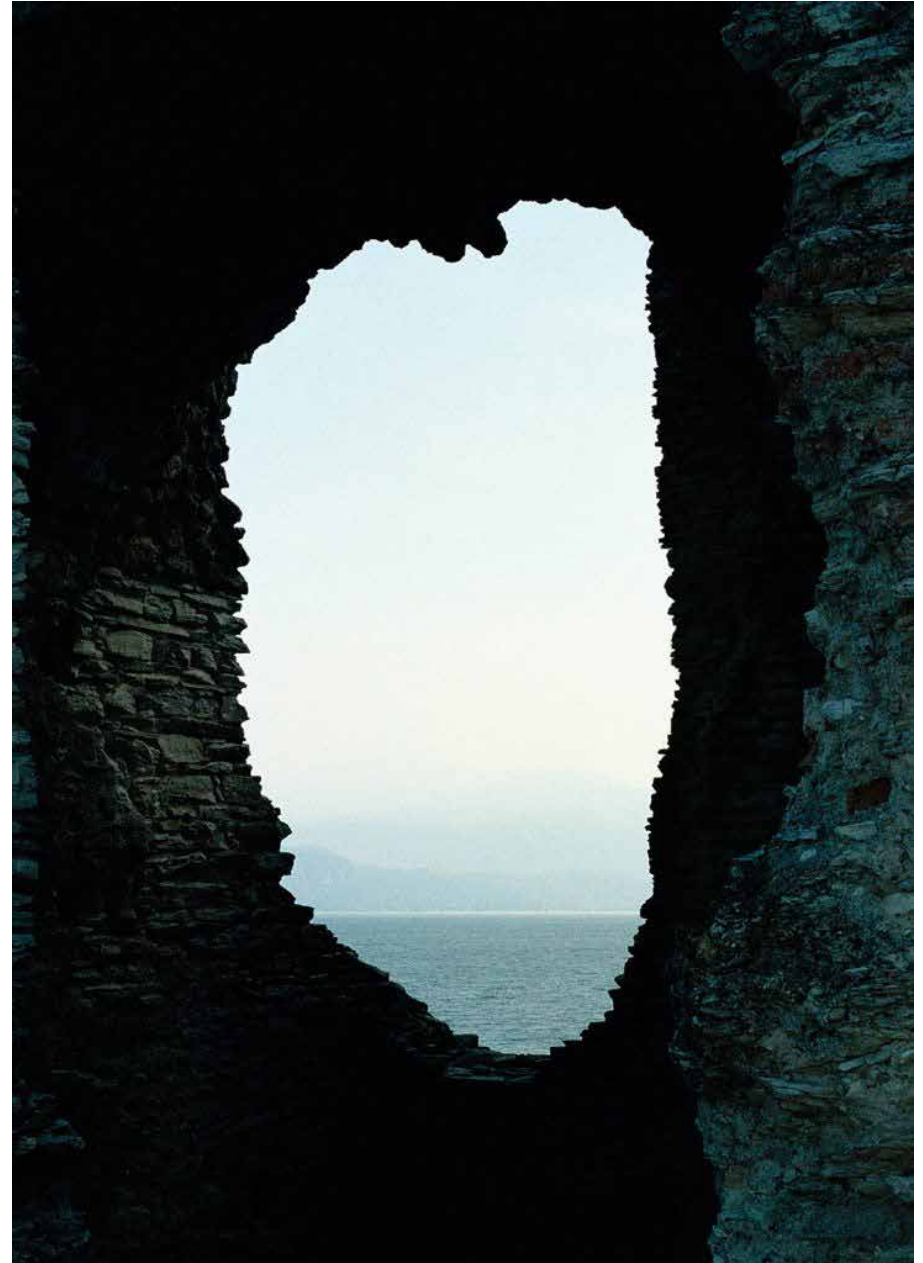
Ruff explores the medium of photography by means of image making from its history and illuminates its future potential.



Bernhard Fuchs, *Grüner Fiat*, Helfenberg, 1996



Janosch Jauch, *Moire*, 2018



Talisa Lallai, *Grotte di Catullo, Sirmione, Lombardia*, 2020



Sabine Dusend, *Florentin*, 2016



Katja Stuke, *CCTV / Osaka Public*, 2006



Elger Esser, *Saint Dyé sur Loire*, 2018

URSULA SCHULZ-DORNBURG

Ursula Schulz-Dornburg (* 1938 in Berlin) belongs to a generation of photographers whose work has been (re)discovered in the German-speaking world particularly in recent years. The photographer has lived and worked in Düsseldorf since 1969, but work is characterized by travels that have taken her to landscapes and (now) historic places all over the world. In largely remote and socially sparsely populated regions in, for example, Armenia, Myanmar (Burma), Indonesia, Iraq, Yemen, Kazakhstan, Laos, Syria, and Russia, Schulz-Dornburg has gone in search of traces and found slivers of lived present and history. In her mostly small-format photographs, Ursula Schulz-Dornburg has captured narratives that communicate themselves through situations, vegetation, and architecture, such as bus stops in desolate expanses, former monks' caves in rock faces, or sculptural built structures, with an almost archaeological eye. In doing so, her work fans out into series – not least following the idea of showing the possibilities of an (overall) image through individual facets. These are structures that have been built, settled, and lived through by people. People who move within these structures are an important part of her photographs. With her



Ursula Schulz-Dornburg, *Atomwaffentestgelände Semipalatinsk*, 2012

With her work, Ursula Schulz-Dornburg pursues a cultural-historical anthropological interest, which she describes with the “verticality of time”.



Ursula Schulz-Dornburg, *Erewn-Yeghward*, 1997

work, Ursula Schulz-Dornburg pursues a cultural-historical anthropological interest, which she describes with the “verticality of time”: giving a conceptual and present-day form to what has been found and what was once alive, as well as keeping present a continuing awareness of resources – in both human and nature-related ways.

In 2021, *Architekturforum Aedes* in Berlin presented a comprehensive exhibition of her work entitled *Verschwundene Landschaften – Ursula Schulz-Dornburg – Düsseldorf Fotografien 1980–1998* (*Vanished Landscapes – Ursula Schulz-Dornburg – Düsseldorf Photographs 1980–1998*). Her work has been exhibited internationally, including 2019/20 at the *Maison Européenne de la Photographie (MEP)* in Paris, 2018/19 at the *British Museum* in London, 2018 *The Land In Between* at the *Städel Museum*, Frankfurt am Main, as well as at the *Tate Modern* in London, and at *Gallery Luisotti* in Santa Monica (California).

¹ Ursula Schulz-Dornburg on her series *15 Kilometer entlang der georgisch-aserbaidschanischen Grenze* (*15 kilometers along the Georgian-Azerbaijani border*) (1998/99) in conversation with the Städel Museum Frankfurt, TC 04:12-04:14, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MsPXrmltSLM>, last accessed on 01/24/2022.



Alexander Romey, ohne Titel (*Drucker*), 2018



Ulrich Hensel, *Am Mühlenturm*, 2008



Petra Wunderlich, *Carrara I*, 1989



Axel Hütte, *Coco Palms, Hawaii*, 2001



Juergen Staack, *SOLAR - COPY*, 2019



Johannes Bendzulla, *Untitled (Catalogue Edition #2)*, 2022

KATHARINA SIEVERDING

Katharina Sieverding (* 1941 in Prague) stands decisively for an expanded concept of photography. The artist came from the theater via stage painting and costume design with stations in Hamburg and Vienna in the 1960s to Düsseldorf and the Art Academy, where she studied first in Teo Otto's class and then with Joseph Beuys. She has lived in Düsseldorf since 1964 and was herself a professor at the *University of the Arts Berlin* for many years.

Sieverding exploits the possibilities offered by the medium of photography to the maximum and puts social currents, identity formation, and power structures up for discussion through her photographic negotiation: "I am driven to connect art with life, with the social body in which we live,"¹ says Sieverding. The artist combines the pictoriality of collective memories with her own precise perception of the present. By superimposing and interpenetrating the photographs she has

taken and the photographically reproduced as well as medially mediated images, she discusses socio-political issues. In doing so, she draws on (sometimes self-) archived material, interweaves and contextualizes what has actually happened and what is visually constructed. The spectra of photography enable her to expose situations in a multifaceted way, which she brings up for debate: Analog and digital, Sieverding

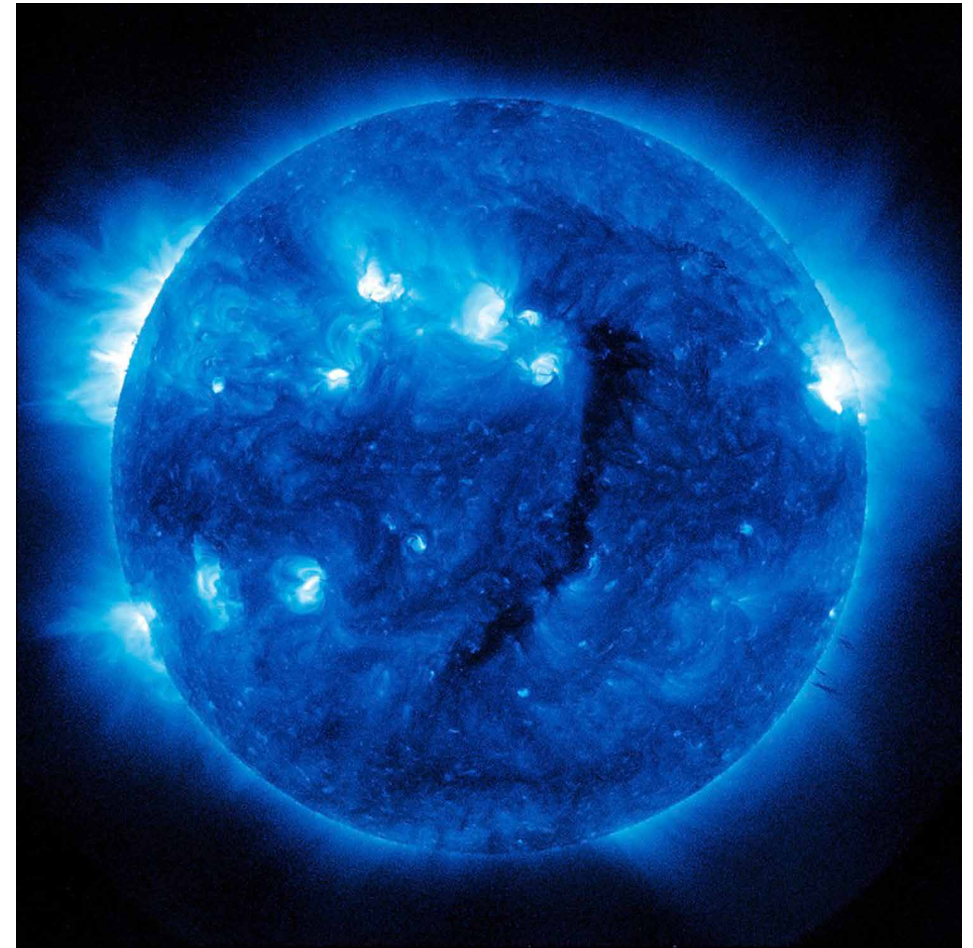
employs traditional and cutting-edge techniques ranging from black-and-white solarization to photocopying to the absolute possibilities of large-format photo production, which she has been implementing since 1975 – primarily in her own production facility *studio111a* on Düsseldorf's Nordstraße. She has significantly expanded the view of the potential of artistic photography.

Katharina Sieverding's works are represented in collections internationally, including the *Museum of Modern Art* in New York. In Düsseldorf, her works can be found in the *Art Collection North Rhine-Westphalia*, the *Art Foundation NRW*, and the *Kunstpalast*.

¹ Katharina Sieverding quoted from Udo Kittelmann, in: Katharina Sieverding – *Die Sonne um Mitternacht schauen*, ed. by Udo Kittelmann, exh.cat. Stiftung Frieder Burda, Wienand Verlag, Cologne 2021, p. 7.



Katharina Sieverding,
Stauffenberg-Block I–XVI, 1969



Katharina Sieverding, *Die Sonne um Mitternacht schauen*, SDO/NASA, (Blue), 2011

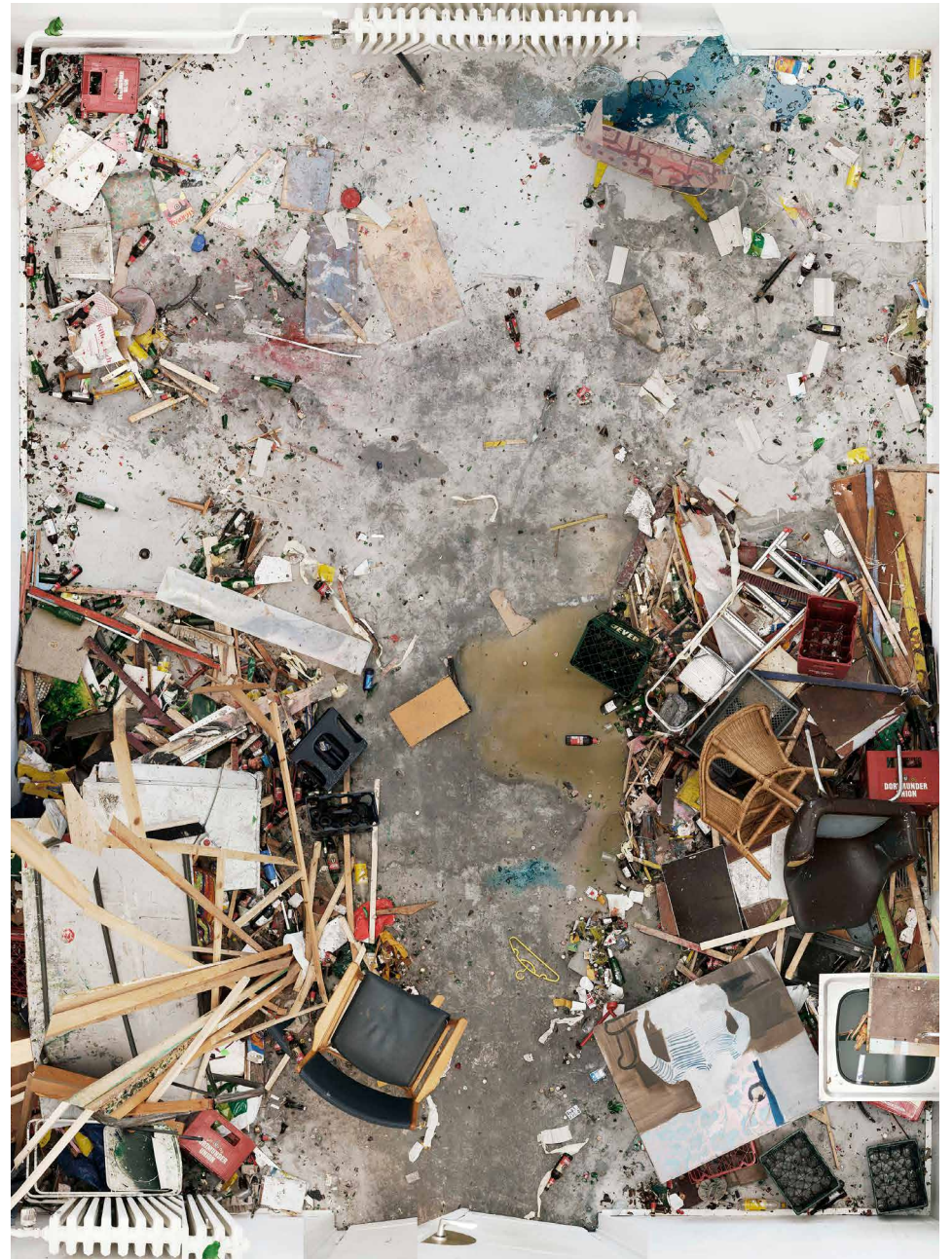
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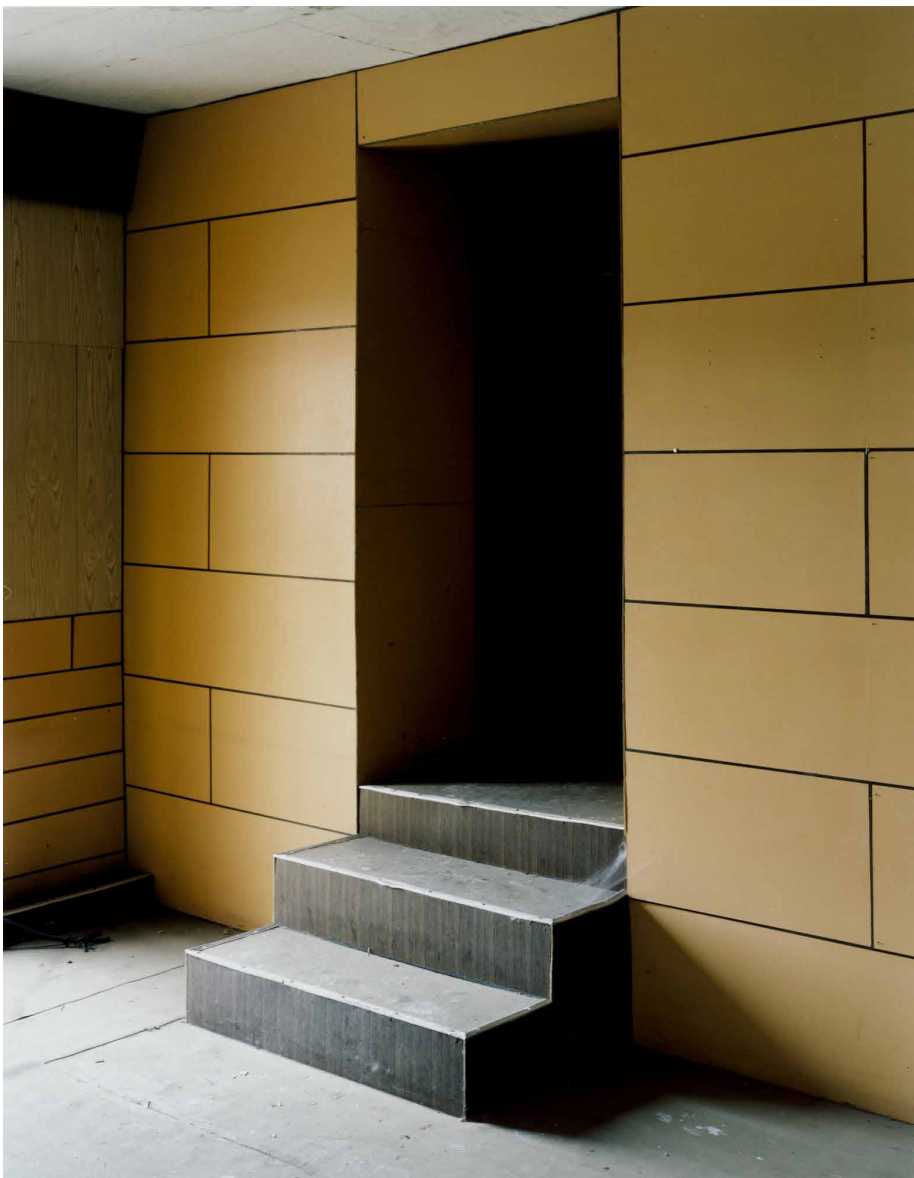
Boris Becker, *Hochhausruine 1153*, 1994



Thomas Koester, *Seeing Moscow #02*, 2021



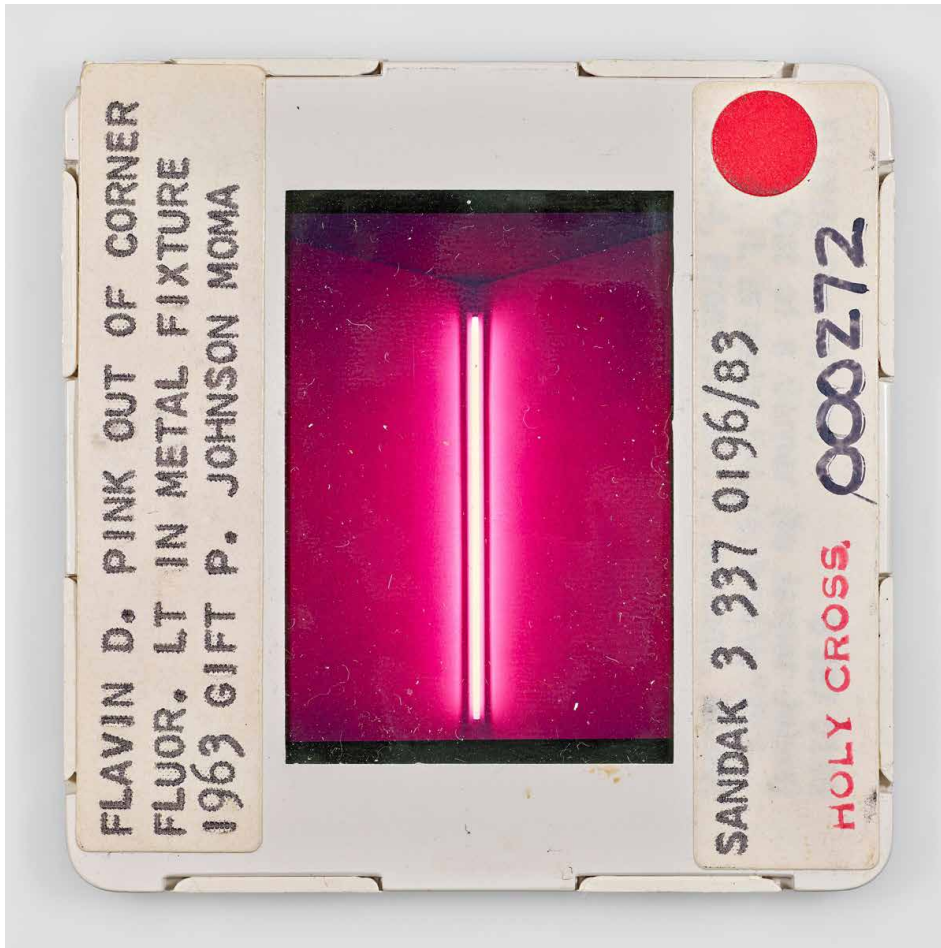
Andreas Gefeller, *ohne Titel (Academy of Arts, R 209)*, 2002



Laurenz Berges, *Perleberg*, 1992



Jens Ullrich, *Refugees in A State Apartment 016*, 2015/2016



Sebastian Riemer,
 FLAVIN D. PINK OUT OF CORNER FLUOR LT IN METAL FIXTURE 1963 GIFT P
 JOHNSON MOMA SANDAK 3 337 0196/83 HOLY CROSS 000272, 2019



Berit Schneidereit, *fantasy XIX*, 2018



Christopher Williams
 Clockwise from Manufacturer Name (Outer Ring)
 Michelin
 X M+S 89
 Clockwise from Tire Size (Inner Ring)
 135 R 15
 72 Q E2 0281541
 M + S
 Tubeless
 Radial X
 TF 852 20-2044
 Tread: 1 Polyester Ply
 +2 Steel Plies
 Sidewall: 1 Polyester Ply
 Canada and U.S. Codes Only
 Max Load 355 Kg (780 Lbs)
 Max Press. 350 kPa (51 PSI)
 V-1
 Photography by the Douglas M. Parker Studio, Glendale, California
 January 3, 2008 – January 4, 2008 (from the series For Example: Dix-Huit
 Leçons Sur La Société Industrielle)
 2008

CHRISTOPHER WILLIAMS

Christopher Williams (* 1956 in Los Angeles) studied at the *California Institute of the Arts* with Michael Asher, John Baldessari, and Douglas Huebler. Today, he is one of the most important representatives of contemporary conceptual art. Since 2008, Williams has headed the photography class at the Art Academy Düsseldorf, and in this capacity, continues to set new standards in the production and acknowledgement of photography, which is in turn carried far beyond the country's borders by his many students.

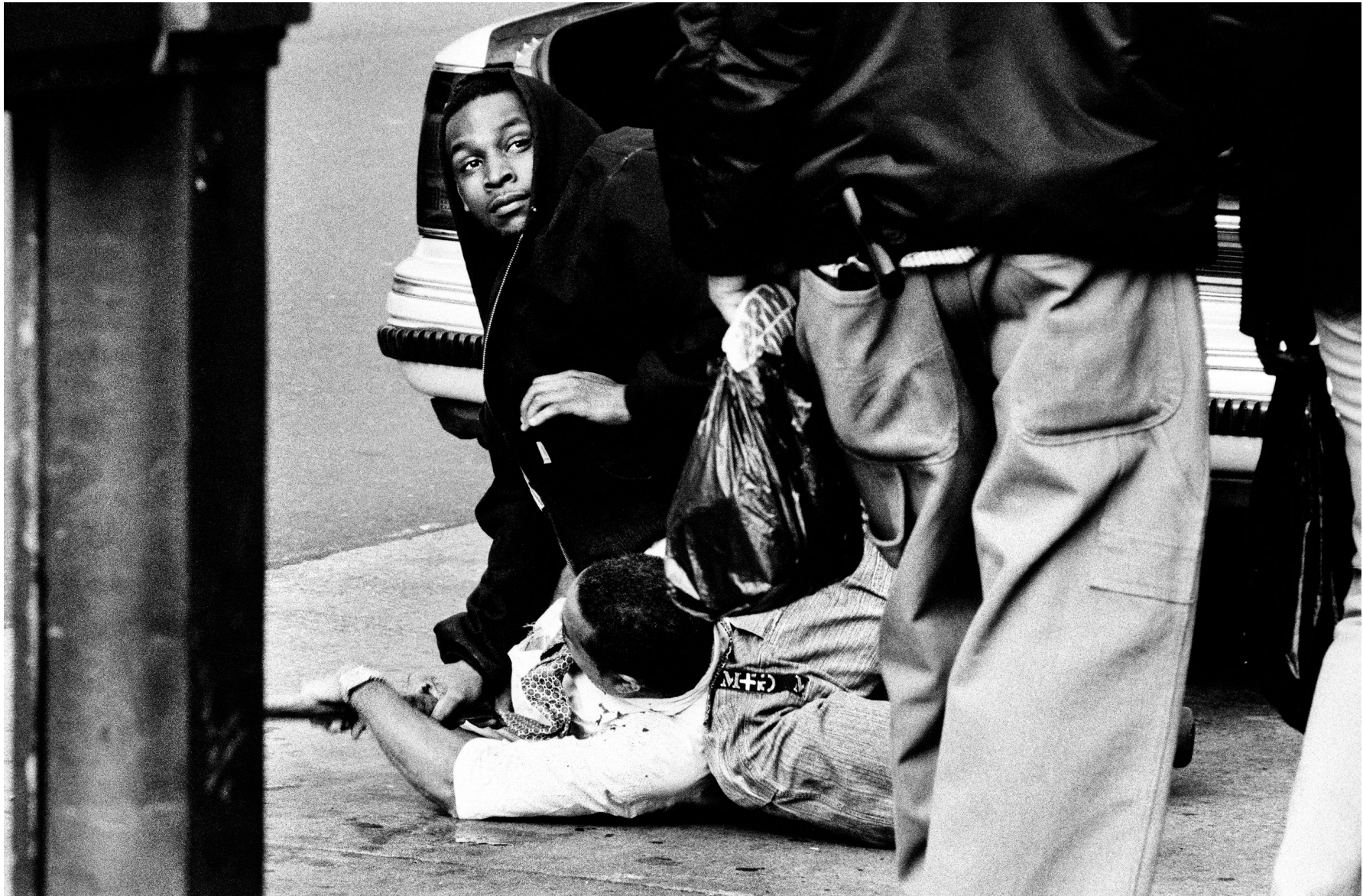
In his artistic practice as well as in his teaching, Christopher Williams focuses on the (theoretical) production conditions of photographic images. In doing so, he uses and serves capitalism-endorsing images of social-societal life, which he transfers into high-end-produced pictorial entities that visually-tautologically refer to a critique of themselves. Language, along with the photographically mediated image, is an essential body of action for Christopher Williams. On the one hand, photographic theory and scholarly texts are a crucial foundation for his image production, which are sometimes explicitly incorporated into the photographer's pictorial works by the means of captions and titles.

The end result of his photographic, cinematic, and installation statements are works of high-quality execution, produced in conjunction with a team of professional advertising photographers. However, the perfection of representation and subject is interrupted by the critical pictorial idea inherent in the image, which is able to articulate itself visually and verbally, repetitively and circuitously through the work in series and sequences.

In his artistic practice as well as in his teaching, Christopher Williams focuses on the (theoretical) production conditions of photographic images.



Christopher Williams
 Standardpoussin [Standard Pose]
 1,0 Zwerg-Brabanter, silber, Düsseldorf 2013 (Vera Spix, Elsdorf)
 Ring number: EE-D13 13-901, green
 Studio Rhein Verlag, Düsseldorf
 November 21, 2013
 2014



Klaus Mettig, N.Y. 2004 #05, 2004

TEACHING AT THE ACADEMY OF ARTS DÜSSELDORF AND THE UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES DÜSSELDORF

ART ACADEMY DÜSSELDORF AND PHOTOGRAPHY

The *Art Academy Düsseldorf* was founded in 1773 by Elector Carl Theodor as the *Electoral Palatine Academy of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture*. In 1819, it became Prussia's *Royal Academy of Art* in the Rhine Provinces. Today it is a public corporation and institution of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia, where painting, sculpture, free graphics, architecture, stage design, photography, film, and video can be studied. Among teachers and students from all over the world, it is considered the "Art Academy of the Five Continents."¹

As early as the 19th century, the medium of photography – as the graphic preliminary sketch – counted as a reference illustration preceding painting in the context of the *Düsseldorf School of Painting*.² It was not least through Hilla Wobeser (later Becher), who studied in the class for commercial art with Walter Breker, that the impetus was given in the late 1950s for the establishment of a photography workshop at the Art Academy.³ This was followed in 1976 by the awarding of the first professorship for photography to Bernd Becher and the concomitant establishment of a class for photography under Bernd and Hilla Becher, a new chapter in artistic production at the Art Academy Düsseldorf – but also for the historiography of photography as such. Since the establishment of the photography class, numerous students of the Bechers have taught artistic photography at the Art Academy Düsseldorf. One of the focal points here has continuously been the work in large format by means of the large format camera. The interpenetration of genres and disciplines, in turn, and the proximity to the lively art and music scene within the city, afforded by the location of the Academy, undoubtedly promoted the thinking of an expanded concept of photography at the Art Academy Düsseldorf and sometimes took this event as the visual starting point of the artistic works.



Art Academy Düsseldorf, exterior view



Art Academy Düsseldorf, interior view

In addition to the workshop facilities established by the Academy, the infrastructural conditions provided by the Düsseldorf specialized laboratories *Grieger* (since the 1970s) and *hsl* (since 1987) have since been an essential complement and also a prerequisite for a language of photography such as that which has developed at the Art Academy. It is therefore not surprising that artists such as Candida Höfer

and Andreas Gursky use these infrastructures as a production-related prerequisite to realize their artistic works.

Christopher Williams, who currently heads the photography class, represents a conceptual aspect of the medium of photography, Peter Piller, as professor of the class for free art, sometimes directs the focus toward archival practices, and Trisha Donnelly, as professor of sculpture, teaches a spatial understanding and handling of photographic products. Babette Bangemann teaches the basics of analog and digital photography in the workshop. In an ever-expanding practice, the photographic image in the plural and its (re)production conditions are reflected upon. As at all universities, the slide archive was an important photographic source of teaching at the Art Academy Düsseldorf. Fari Shams, who studied with Christopher Williams, dedicated herself to the whereabouts of this archive in a student project.⁴

Through continuities in the questioning of and attitude towards images, a way of producing and dealing with the photographic image has been formulated and developed at the Art Academy Düsseldorf that

has set and continues to set decisive impulses in photography observation and research worldwide.

1 <https://www.kunstakademie-duesseldorf.de/die-akademie/historie/>, last accessed on 11/10/2021.

2 Artists such as Oswald Achenbach and Johann Wilhelm Schirmer possessed extensive photo archives from which they drew for the composition of their paintings; cf. Pohlmann, Ulrich: "Die Düsseldorfer Malerschule und die Fotografie," in: *Die Düsseldorfer Malerschule und ihre internationale Ausstrahlung 1819–1918*, vol. 1, Museum Kunstpalast Düsseldorf, Petersberg 2011, pp. 341–349, here p. 342. See also: Introductory text within this report.

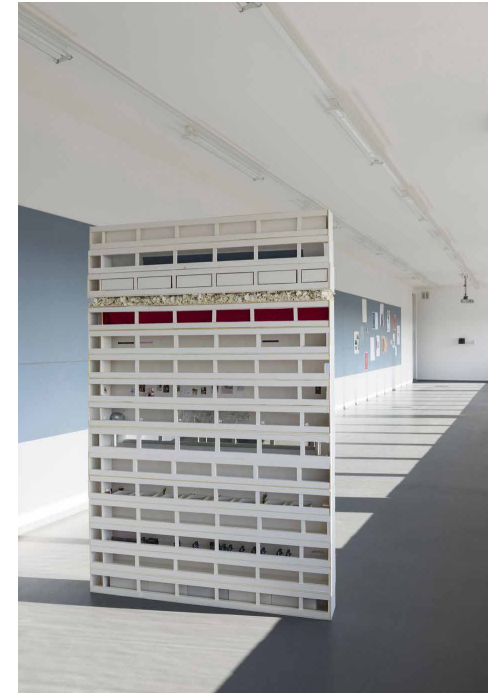
3 Cf. Meister, Helga: *Fotografie in Düsseldorf – Die Szene im Profil*, Schwann im Patmos Verlag, Düsseldorf 1991, pp. 165 ff.

4 Shams, Fari: *The Concise Companion to Art History* arranged by Ingo Müller and Gerd Schneider, *Künstlerbuch* (2014).



Colloquium at the Art Academy with Benjamin Katz, 2017

Christopher Williams, who currently heads the class for Photography, represents a conceptual conceptual aspect of the medium of photography, Peter Piller as professor of the of the Class of Fine Arts focuses on archives, and Trisha Donnelly, as Professor of Sculpture teaches a spatial understanding and handling of photographic products. Babette Bangemann teaches the basics of analog and digital photography.



Round Tour, class Prof. Christopher Williams, 2017



Exhibition view The Inconspicuous Cliff, Moritz Krauth, Art Academy, 2019



Set up at the Art Academy Düsseldorf for the Round Tour, 2018

UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES (HSD) AND PHOTOGRAPHY



Photo studio, teaching area photography, HSD PBSA

As interdisciplinary as the teaching structure of the HSD is, photography has always been a decisive factor for the various branches of study, which is why the HSD has set up its own photo studios and laboratories.

The *Düsseldorf University of Applied Sciences (HSD)*, formerly *Fachhochschule Düsseldorf*, is a State University of Applied Sciences that emerged from various educational institutions in 1971. Integrated into the HSD is the *Peter Behrens School of Arts (PBSA)* with the Departments of Architecture and Design, which in turn have various teaching disciplines, such as the field of photography. As interdisciplinary as the HSD's teaching structure is, ranging from information technology and electrical engineering to social and cultural sciences, the medium of photography has always been crucial to the various branches of study, which is why the HSD has set up in-house photo studios and photo labs.

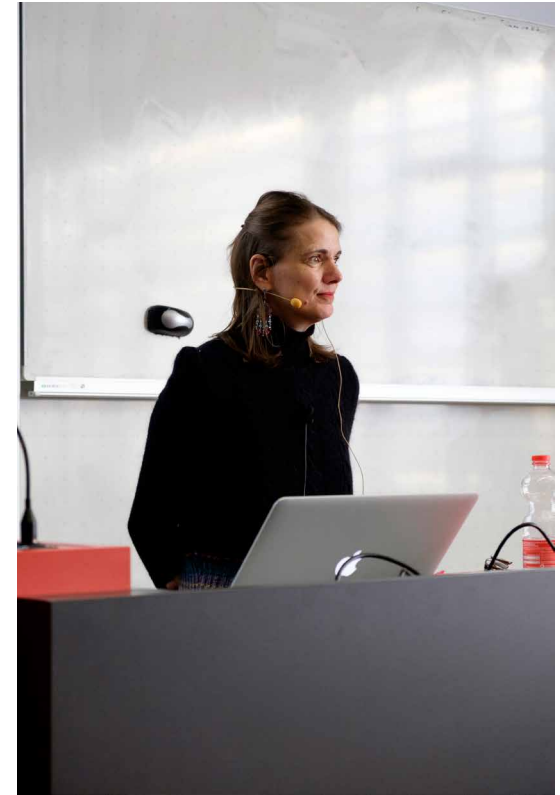
With the newly built *Campus Derendorf* and the expanded premises in 2015, the educational and research offerings of the PBSA have become even more differentiated. Media and image science courses – covering the spectrum from the genesis of the medium to *virtual reality* – are provided by Professor of Photography Mareike Foecking. The students in the Photography Department are continuously engaged in the context of public photographic discourse.



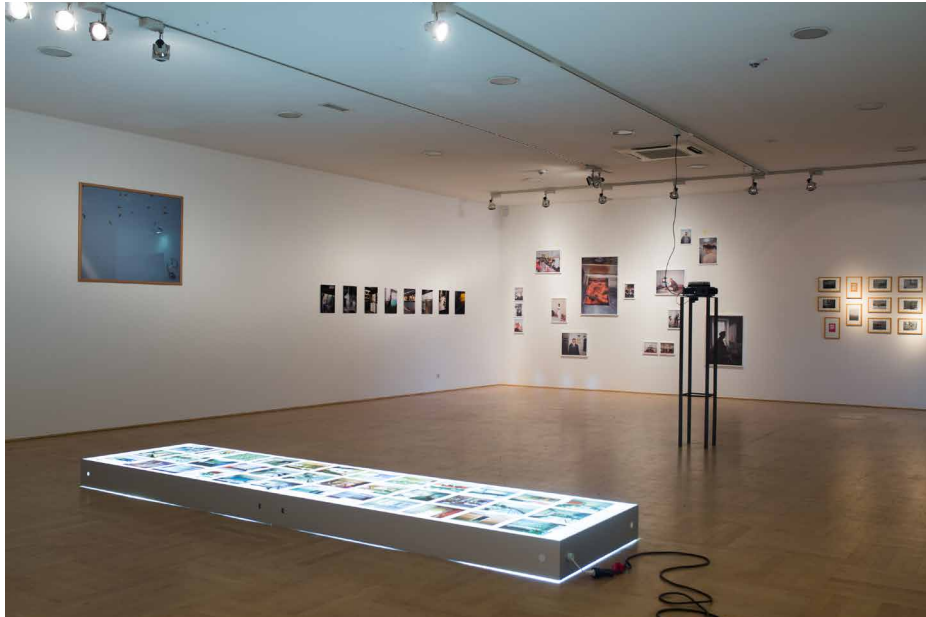
HSD Campus Derendorf, exterior view



Andreas Bunte's lecture during the symposium "Pre_Invent Beyond the Visible," 2019



Prof. Mareike Foecking, 2018



Exhibition view, *Dienstag Abend Fever (Tuesday Night Fever)*, NRW-Forum Düsseldorf, 2018



Photo Book Salon, 2017

EXHIBITING AND COLLECTING INSTITUTIONS



Exhibition view, *SUBJEKT und OBJEKT. FOTO RHEIN RUHR*,
Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, 2020

KUNSTPALAST

The *Kunstpalast* in the Ehrenhof, located between the Rhine and the Hofgarten, was opened in 1913 as a museum for citizens interested in art. The impulse for this goes back to the middle of the 19th century, when the *Association for the Establishment of a Painting Gallery* initiated an art museum for the citizens of Düsseldorf in cooperation with the *Art Academy*. The museum's collection currently comprises more than 130,000 items of various artistic genres, including more than 3,000 photographs, which originate from the collection of the gallery owner couple Annette and Rudolf Kicken. The *Kunstpalast* acquired the collection in 2018 and took this as an opportunity to establish a separate collection area for photography.

Previously, photography at the *Kunstpalast* had often been shown specifically in relation to an artistic work and from its various contexts of origin, such as in 2002 with the two-part group exhibition *heute bis jetzt. Zeitgenössische Fotografie aus Düsseldorf (today until now. Contemporary photography from Düsseldorf)*, 2015 with the exhibition on Wim Wenders' photographic work and in 2020 the exhibition on the life's work of Peter Lindbergh in the context of fashion photography. The 2020 exhibition curated by collection director Linda Conze, *Sichtweisen. Die neue Sammlung Fotografie (Points of View. The New Photography Collection)* then presented 150 works from the new acquisition: this art exhibition discursively highlighting the medium of photography throughout its medial history was the first time such an



Kunstpalast, exterior view



Peter Lindbergh, *Untold Stories*,
Kunstpalast, 2020

extensive exhibition on photography had been presented in Düsseldorf. For the museum, it is a prelude and an occasion for an even more multifaceted examination of the medium in the future, whether in collection presentations in proximity to other art genres or in a cabinet space for photography. The goal is to contextualize the medium and emphasize its diversity, says Conze in conversation with the author.¹ The special feature of the Photographic Collection, as Conze notes in the exhibition catalog *Sichtweisen – Die neue Sammlung Fotografie*, is that “around 150 years of photographic history [are] represented by the holdings. They contain a wide variety of photographic movements represented by convolutions, including 19th-century travel photography, the imitation of painting by photography in Pictorialism, the New Vision and New Objectivity of the 1920s and 1930s, the light experiments of Subjective Photography in the 1950s, documentary and author photography of the 1970s and 1980s, and American color photography.”² With this range of photographs and their technical contexts of origin, their preservation is of particular importance, Conze continued in conversation, referring to the close collaboration with the Restoration Center, also located in the Ehrenhof, and Jessica Morhard, with whom strategies for restoring and storing recent photographic artworks are being developed in dialog in order to collect sustainably for the future.³

Another special feature of the Kunstpallast is the *Archive of Artistic Photography of the Rhenish Art Scene* (AFORK), which was founded there in 2003 and seeks to make the history of the Rhenish art scene tangible through photographic documents. The archive contains about 8,000 paper prints and well over 30,000 Ektachromes and negatives from nearly 100 photographers (including Benjamin Katz, Erika Kiffel, and Manfred Leve, with whom the archive was built up in collaboration) who have recorded exhibitions, actions, and happenings in NRW since the 1950s. Today, their photographs serve as a source for art historical research as well as international exhibition projects, as they reveal connections concerning artistic production and presentation. AFORK's acquisitions have been regularly funded by the *Art Foundation NRW* and, in this continuity, also reflect the developments of the younger art scene.

1 Information Linda Conze on 10/14/2021, conversation with the author.

2 Cf. Conze, Linda: "Fotografie: Eine neue Sammlung für Düsseldorf," in: *Sichtweisen – Die neue Sammlung Fotografie*, exh.cat. Kunstpallast Düsseldorf, Distanz Verlag, 2020, pp. 8–15, here p. 9, also <https://www.kunstpallast.de/de/museum/sammlung/highlights-2/Sammlung-fotografie>, last accessed on 10/23/2021.

3 Information Linda Conze on 10/14/2021, conversation with the author.

4 *Ibid.*



Man Ray, *Tears* (1933) from the Collection Photography Kunstpallast



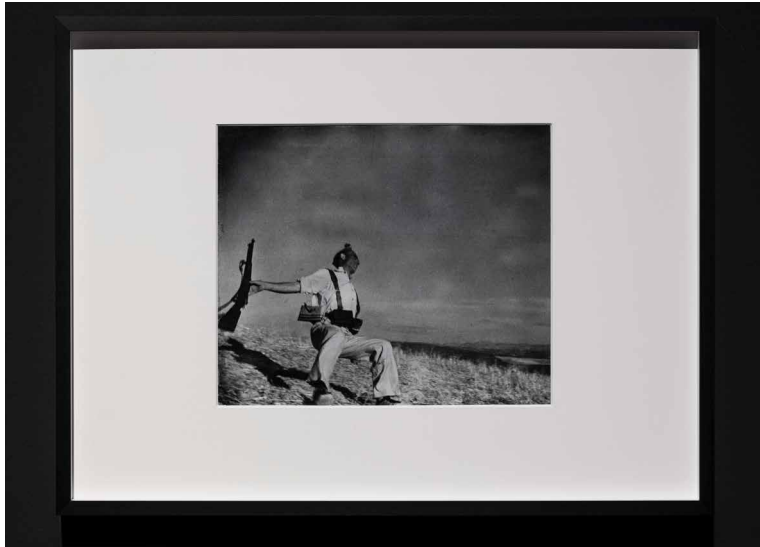
Man Ray, *Tears* (1933), back of the photographic print

“The history of photography at the Kunstpallast is still quite young: it is true that substantial works by Katharina Sieverding, Thomas Ruff, and Anna and Bernhard Blume already entered the collection in the course of the 1990s and 2000s. But it was the acquisition of around 3,000 photographic works in 2018 that gave the medium a central place in the museum in 2019. The Photography Collection at the *Kunstpallast* represents many historical phases of the medium, important currents as well as a wealth of genres and figures.

It lists well-known image authors and those who are yet to be discovered. I am very pleased to be in charge of this diverse Düsseldorf collection, to be constantly expanding it, revitalizing it, and anchoring it in the city where photography came into being as an artistic medium. To this day, strong artists in Düsseldorf work with the medium in a variety of ways. Photography is everywhere, it has numerous forms, provokes questions, and demands to be questioned.”⁴

– Linda Conze, Director of the Photography Collection at *Kunstpallast*

**The Collection Photography
at Kunstpalast**



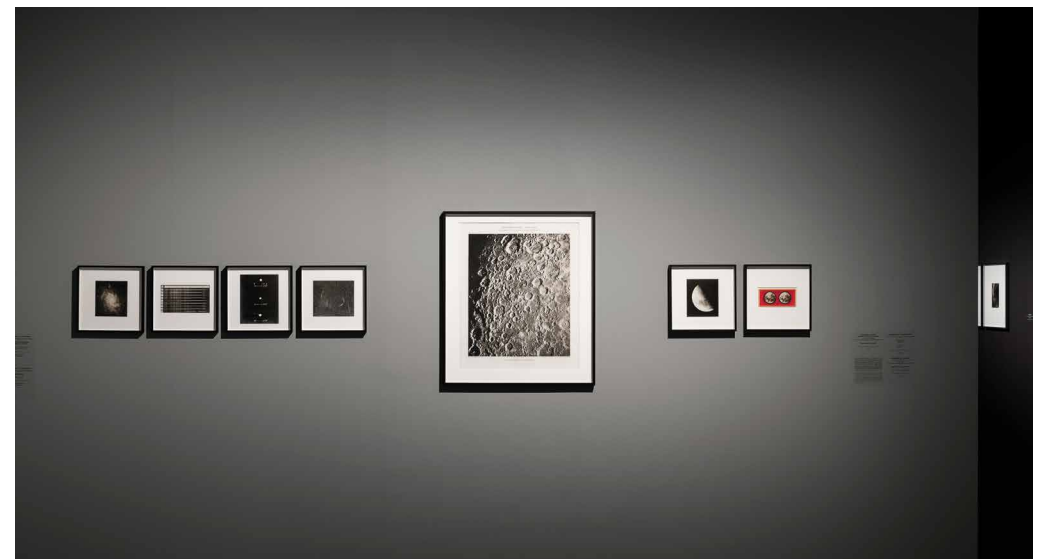
Exhibition view, Robert Capa, *Falling Loyalist Soldier at the Moment of Death. Cordoba front, 1936.* *Sichtweisen (Viewpoints).* The new photographic collection at Kunstpalast, 2020



Exhibition view, *Sichtweisen (Viewpoints).* The new photographic collection at Kunstpalast, 2020



The Moon, Lunar Photographs, 1959



Exhibition view, *Sichtweisen (Viewpoints).* The new photographic collection at Kunstpalast, 2020

Archive Artistic Photography of the
Rhenish Art Scene (AFORK)



Otto Piene, 1966, Photo: Maren Heyne



Opening of the exhibition of Carl André at Gallery Konrad Fischer, Düsseldorf.
Konrad Fischer, Gustav Adolf Baum, Joseph Beuys, 10/21/1967,
Photo: Manfred Leve



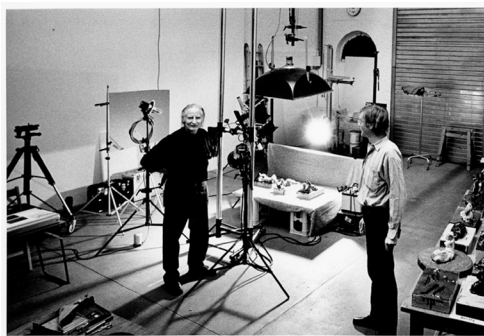
Jörg Sasse, 1989



Sigmar Polke, Katharina Sieverding, Photo: Achim Duchow, ca. 1976



Candida Höfer, Cologne, 2000, Photo: Benjamin Katz



Thomas Schütte in the studio, Photo: Nic Tenwiggenhorn



Joseph Beuys, 1965,
Photo: Ute Klophaus



Sigmar Polke and Angelika Platen, 1971.
Photo: Angelika Platen



Bernd Becher and Thomas Ruff.
Photo: Nic Tenwiggenhorn



NRW-Forum, exterior view

NRW-FORUM

The *NRW-Forum Düsseldorf* is an international exhibition house for photography, Pop, and digital culture. In group and solo exhibitions, festivals, lectures, workshops, film screenings, and other novel formats, the exhibition house takes up current social issues and translates them into discursive formats. The NRW-Forum dedicates itself extensively to the work of photographers, as in 2019 with a comprehensive retrospective of the British photographer Martin Parr, who has also become known as an editor of texts on photography, and with a double exhibition of the work of Joachim Brohm and Alec Soth. The artistic director of the NRW-Forum and head of the *collection of time-based media* at the *Kunstpalast*, Alain Bieber explains: "The NRW-Forum in Düsseldorf has been a house for photography since 1998. When Petra Wenzel and Werner Lippert took over as directors, it achieved national fame through spectacular exhibitions featuring primarily U.S. photographers from the worlds of music and fashion: exhibitions with Herb Ritts, Peter Lindbergh, Bryan Adams, and Mario Testino shaped Düsseldorf and the city's entire image. The festival center of the *Düsseldorf Photo Weekend* with numerous participating galleries and institutions was also traditionally located in the NRW-Forum. When I took over in 2015, I docked to those roots and rejuvenated the audience as well: The new focus was dedicated to contemporary photography, Pop culture, and digital art. I presented solo exhibitions with cult photographers like Louise Dahl-Wolfe and Pop culture positions like those of Olaf Breuning, Erik Kessels, and Herlinde Koelbl, as well as very ambitious cycles of work by concep-



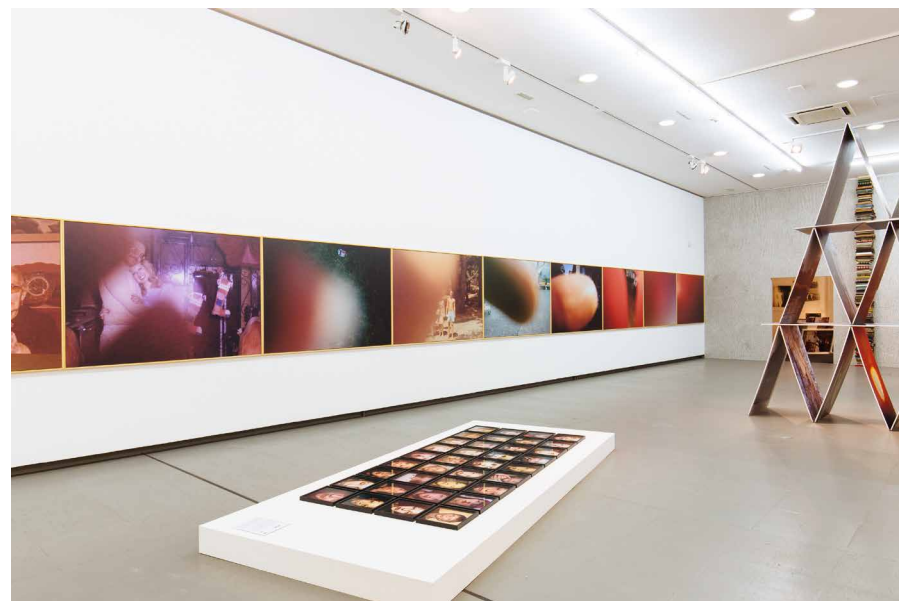
Exhibition view, *Bauhaus und die Fotografie*, 2019

tual photographers like Simon Menner and Magnum award-winning photographer Bieke Depoorter. And it continues: Soon our photography exhibition with Matthias Schaller will open, followed next year by exhibitions with Andreas Gefeller and Alison Jackson. In particular, the exhibition projects on digital culture are also about expanding the contemporary image and about the new, fascinating visual worlds in the digital: computer-generated landscapes, avatars, memes, gifs, virtual and augmented reality, and artificial intelligence."¹

1 Information Alain Bieber in the questionnaire sent out in advance of the Düsseldorf and Photography report on 01/26/2022.



Exhibition view, *Two Rivers*: Joachim Brohm / Alec Soth, 2019



Exhibition view, *Erik Kessels & Friends*, 2017



Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, exterior view

KUNSTHALLE DÜSSELDORF

Since its reopening in 1967 under the name *Kunsthalle Düsseldorf*, the Kunsthalle which was inaugurated in 1881, has been one of the most important venues for contemporary art, alongside the *Art Association for Rhineland and Westphalia*.

As early as 1969, the exhibition *Anonyme Skulpturen. Formvergleiche industrieller Bauten. Fotos von Bernd und Hilla Becher* (Anonymous Sculptures. Form Comparisons of Industrial Buildings. Photographs by Bernhard and Hilla Becher) was presented, so were *Andreas Gursky. Photographs 1984 – 1998* (1998) through *Television Gallery Gerry Schum* (2004), and *Hans-Peter Feldmann* (2010) *Subject and Object; Photo Rhein Ruhr* (2021) with works by over 100 photographers: The Kunsthalle continuously presents defining photography of the present, and has thus successfully introduced it to an international media discourse, building strong relationships that extend as far as Asia. The exhibition house at the centrally located Grabbeplatz has a trans-disciplinary orientation due to the joint use of the building with the *Art Association for Rhineland and Westphalia* and also thanks to the affiliation with the cabaret stage *Kom(m)ödchen*, the *Salon des Amateurs* venue, which is sometimes used for lectures and performances, and the *Walther König bookstore*. As a result, the Kunsthalle Düsseldorf has become a place where the artworks that are created in Düsseldorf or that are brought into the city through supporting impulses are discussed across institutions and generate essential aspects for academic research.

Photography is given a special status here:

“Düsseldorf’s importance for the medium of photography can certainly be rated as very high, and may possibly be unique. On the Rhine and Ruhr, both historically and contemporarily essential moments were created [...]. Düsseldorf stands for photography worldwide – just like Kraftwerk for electronic music and Beuys for the expanded concept of art. The city fulfills all the criteria for the exploration and preservation of this multifaceted medium in all its aspects, it is strategically located more than conveniently between Essen and Cologne, for example, and is an international pilgrimage destination for those who create and seek culture,”¹ says Dr. Gregor Jansen, director of the Kunsthalle Düsseldorf. At the same time, the Kunsthalle has always been an important place with which artists have identified and which has supported initiatives by artists: for example, with the exhibition series between, which was organized here by artists from 1969 to 1973 and through which important impulses were set for the recognition of photography as conceptual art.²

¹ Information Dr. G. Jansen from the questionnaire sent in advance of report on 10/13/2021.

² Cf.: Buschmann, Renate, *Chronik einer Nicht-Ausstellung – between (1969-73) at Kunsthalle Düsseldorf*, Dietrich Reimer Verlag, Berlin 2006. For example: Katharina Sieverding created photographs for the picture catalog of the exhibition between 7 that was shown at the Kunsthalle in 1973 under the title *Yes Sir, That’s My Baby* and at Gallery House London as *Some 260 Miles From Here – Art From The Rhein-Ruhr Germany* in 1973 with over 90 participating artists, cf. between 7, *Städtische Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, Some 260 Miles From Here*, Gallery House London, ed. by Düsseldorf artists in cooperation with the Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, Düsseldorf 1973.



Exhibition view, *SUBJECT and OBJECT. FOTO RHINE-RUHR*, Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, 2020



Prospect 71 – Projection, Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, 1971



Exhibition catalog between 7, Katharina Sieverding, 1973



Exhibition view, SUBJECT and OBJECT. FOTO RHINE-RUHR, Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, 2020

“Düsseldorf stands for photography worldwide – just like Kraftwerk for electronic music and Beuys for the expanded concept of art.”

– Dr. Gregor Jansen, Director Kunsthalle Düsseldorf



Exhibition view, Marcel Broodthaers, Musée d'Art Moderne, Department des Aigles, Kunsthalle Düsseldorf



Exhibition view, Hans-Peter Feldmann, Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, 2010



Exhibition view, Josephine Pryde, *Miss Austen Enjoys Photography*, 2012

“To reflect the medium of photography from a contemporary perspective I consider it particularly important at a location, which has historically been strongly with photography, as a great potential, to update the discourse and open it up for contemporary urgent questions.”

– Kathrin Bentele, Director of the Art Association for the Rhineland and Westphalia

ART ASSOCIATION FOR RHINELAND AND WESTPHALIA

The *Art Association for Rhineland and Westphalia*, founded in 1829, has been regarded as a forum for art formulated in Düsseldorf from the very beginning: “The Art Academy and the Art Association were the two pillars that supported the city’s lively art life, which had an impact beyond the borders of the Rhenish and Westphalian provinces,”¹ Gerd Schäfer and Karl-Heinz Hering summed up in 1979. Through the developments of the *Düsseldorf School of Painting* and the emergence of a certain Düsseldorf Realism, photography has gained increased visibility at the Art Association, especially since the mid-1960s, for example with the series *World Exhibition of Photography*, which began in 1964 and was continuously followed by various group and solo exhibitions, such as the exhibition of the American photographer Berenice Abbott’s work in 1999 and most recently of Eileen Quinlan’s work in 2019. According to the director of the Art Association Kathrin Bentele, the medium of photography has been of great relevance, especially for (post-) conceptual image practices, but is currently being questioned and renegotiated by conditions of digital image production. She adds: “Reflecting anew on the medium of photography from a contemporary perspective is something I consider to have great potential, especially at a location that has historically been strongly intertwined with photography, to update the discourse and open it up to questions of contemporary urgency.”²

Kathrin Bentele continues to think constitutively about the tradition of artistic photography as it has emerged in Düsseldorf and refers, for example, to Christopher Williams, who teaches and represents younger photographic-conceptual practices as an important voice at the Art Academy. Drawing on the photographic practice of British artist Gili Tal, she adds: “Among other aspects, what is important to me is the reflection on what visual expressions we are currently confronted with in our everyday lives and what messages they actually convey in terms of social privilege and subjectivity. Photography is important in that.”³



Exhibition view, *ART OF THE TURKS – Modernization as Fiction*, 2015

1 5 x 30 – *Düsseldorfer Kunstszene aus fünf Generationen – 150 Jahre Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen*, exh.cat. Art Association for Rhineland and Westphalia and Municipal Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, Düsseldorf 1979, unpaginated.

2 Information Kathrin Bentele in the questionnaire sent out in advance of the Düsseldorf and Photography report on 10/18/2021.

3 Ibid.

KIT – ART IN THE TUNNEL

KIT – Art in the Tunnel, an exhibition space located between the tunnels for car traffic underneath the Düsseldorf Rhine promenade, organizes an exhibition every two years devoted to developments in contemporary photography. Current photographic positions by artists from the *Düsseldorf Art Academy* and the *Art Academy Münster* are presented in alternation, sponsored by the *DZ Bank Art Foundation* (Frankfurt am Main), which specializes in photographic forms of expression in its collection as well as in the works of teachers and graduates of the art academies in Düsseldorf and Münster.

The artistic director of the exhibition house, Gertrud Peters, who worked with Candida Höfer, Andreas Gursky, Thomas Ruff, Thomas Struth, Axel Hütte, and Jeff Wall for the gallery owner Jörg Johnen in Cologne at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s and is familiar with the medium of photography, sees the lively development of photography emanating from Düsseldorf reflected in Düsseldorf's social structure: "Artists like Ruff, Gursky, and Hütte live and work here [...]. Through them, thirty years ago, photography was recognized in the collective consciousness as museum-like, it became popular and marketable."¹

Against this background, Gertrud Peters increasingly pursues KIT's mission to promote the artistic individuality of young artists acquired in the art academies in the field of photography, in order to enable first institutional exhibitions and to enrich them by discursive formats such as workshops.

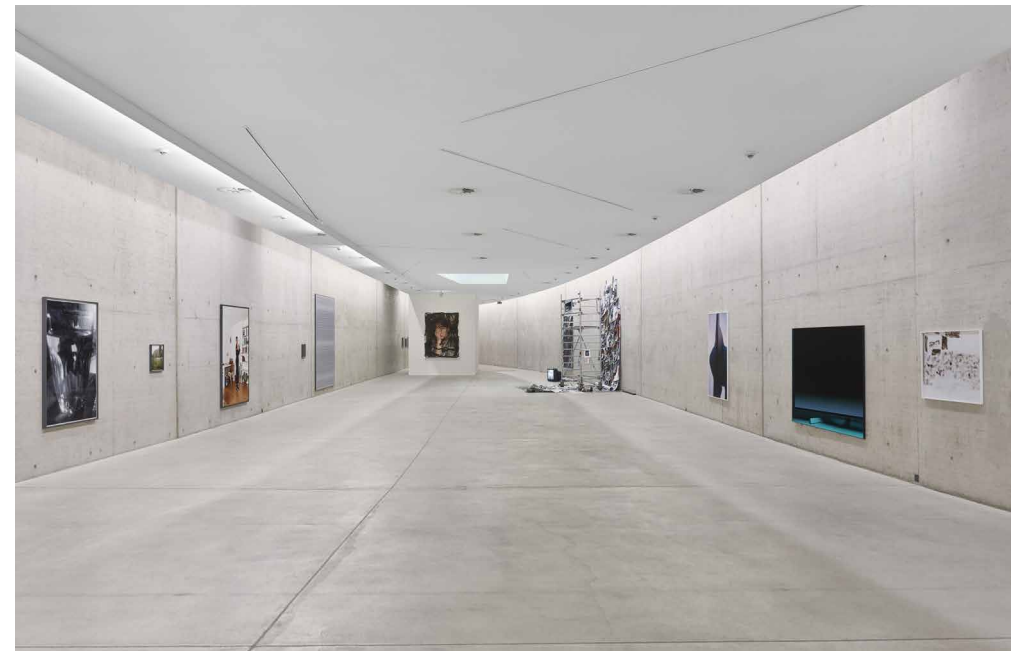
¹ Information Gertrud Peters from the questionnaire sent in advance of this report on 10/15/2021.



Art in the Tunnel,
exterior view



Alwin Lay,
Untitled at KIT,
2009



Exhibition view, *Von mir aus. Young Photography from Düsseldorf*, KIT, 2019

KUNSTSAMMLUNG NORDRHEIN-WESTFALEN

The *Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen* was established in 1961 by the state government as a foundation under private law for the purpose of publicly collecting and exhibiting its art holdings. It is divided into two exhibition buildings with different collection and exhibition focuses: The K20 at Grabbeplatz shows main works of classical modern art, while the K21 in the Ständehaus has presented international contemporary art since 2002 as an extension of the collection presentation, including some photographic works by Hans-Peter Feldmann, Margarete Jakschik, Simone Nieweg, Thomas Struth, and Wolfgang Tillmans. "As an international museum for 20th- and 21st-century art, photography, along with painting, sculpture, installation, and the moving image, is one of the important art forms that shape the profile of the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen," says Prof. Dr. Susanne Gaensheimer, director K20 K21 Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf.¹

In 2016, for example, K20, in cooperation with the *Julia Stoschek Collection*, showed the expansive 3D film installation *Nightlife* by the French artist Cyprien Gaillard, which was based on various imaging methods and projection processes related to photography and made it possible to experience thinking spatially through these visual possibilities. With the exhibition *Against Photography. An Annotated History of the Arab Image Foundation* by the Lebanese artist Akram Zaatari, K21 discussed the treatment of photography in the context of digitization, the visibility of its diversity, and the resulting possibilities for working with the medium. The *Arab Image Foundation (AIF)*, based in Beirut, is a collection of more than 500,000 photographic objects from fifty different countries, comprising photographs by some 250 amateur and 700 professional photographers and photo studios from the 1860s to the present day.

¹ Information Prof. Dr. Susanne Gaensheimer from the questionnaire sent in advance of this report on 01/27/2022.



Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, K20, exterior view



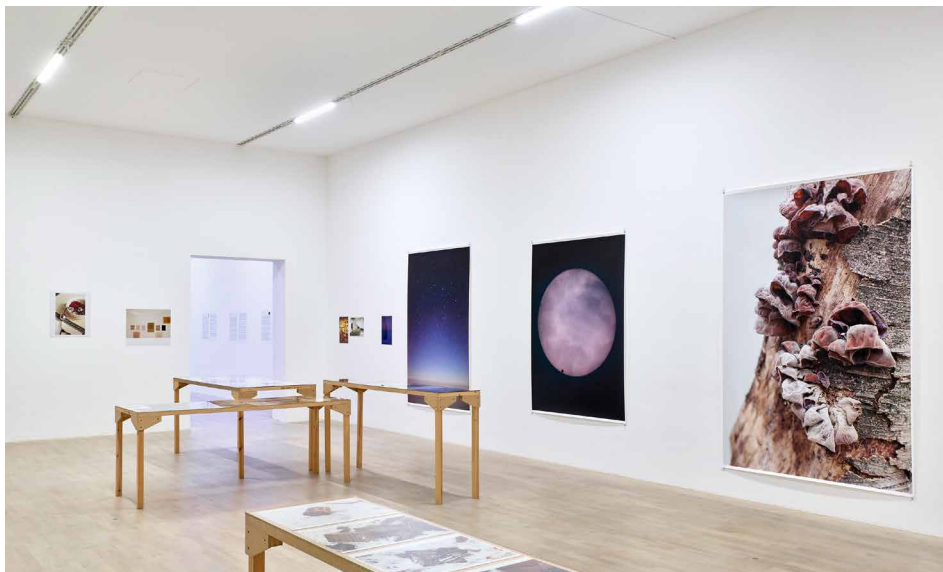
Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, K21, exterior view



Exhibition view, Cyprien Gaillard, *Where Nature Runs Riot*, K20, 2015



Exhibition view, Thomas Struth, *Photographs 1978 – 2010*, K20, 2011



Exhibition view, Wolfgang Tillmans, *K21*, 2013



Exhibition view, Akram Zaatari, *Against Photography. An Annotated History of the Arab Image Foundation*, K21, 2018

By making the diversity of the medium visible, a (research) opportunity has arisen here, to learn more about the historical and contemporary ways of dealing with photography and to reflect on its modes of operation.

CITY MUSEUM DÜSSELDORF



City Museum Düsseldorf,
exterior view

Photography occupies an important position for the *City Museum Düsseldorf*: It shows both the historical moments of the city's history in great variety and the already quite early use of the medium to depict urban developments within the city. Since the 1980s, significant holdings have come into the Photographic Collection of the City Museum, which has further expanded since that time along with recent advancements in indexing processes since the 2000s, remarks Dr. Christoph Danelzik-Brüggemann.¹ The director of the *19th Century/Photographic Collection* in the City Museum and a member of the *German Society for Photography (DGPh)* had already taken over the management of the *Graphic Arts Collection* at the *Kunstpallast Düsseldorf* in 2001 and was thus responsible for building the Photographic Collection there, i.e., through acquisitions, he further oversaw the supervision of the collection in addition to organizing exhibitions. From 2009, he also brought his expertise to bear at the City Museum, where in 2010 he organized Germany's first solo exhibition on Albert Kahn considered a pioneer of early color photography, and the initiator of his *Archive of the Planet*.

"Currently, the collection consists of about 80,000 photographs and video works, in which the development of photography since its invention and the recent history of the city are reflected," says Danelzik-Brüggemann. "Beyond the city limits, the view is directed to the world, thanks to many historical travel photographs. Today, the museum also acquires photographic works that address urban themes in international references. Another focus is on the people of the city, with a large collection of portraits and depictions of social and family life. The bequests of Dirk Alvermann and Ruth Lauterbach-Baehnisch, as well as works by important photographers –including Maren Heyne, Horst Schäfer, Walter Vogel, and Isolde Strauß – also characterize the collection which is accessible both in exhibitions and on the Internet,"² explains the director of the collection.³ Among the most important holdings of the City Museum is an extensive series by Tata Ronkholz and Thomas Struth on the Düsseldorf Harbor (around 1980), which can be classified as artistic photography and thus at the same time represents an exception in the collection, which is mainly characterized by commercial photography. These photographs form a cultural memory of places within Düsseldorf that no longer exist in this form.



Isolde Strauß, Self-Portrait, 1952

¹ Information Dr. Christoph Danelzik-Brüggemann from the questionnaire sent in advance of this report on 10/21/2021.

² Dr. Christoph Danelzik-Brüggemann on 03/25/2022.

³ The collection holdings can be searched via d:kult, accessible via <https://emuseum.duesseldorf.de/collections>, and via Europeana, accessible via <https://www.europeana.eu/de>.



Portrait of Ruth Lauterbach-
Baehnisch, 1928
Photo: August Sander



Dirk Alvermann, Familienidylle mit Weihnachtsbaum, Sheffield, 1965

Photography plays a significant role for the City Museum, it not only shows historically significant moments of the city's history, but also reveals through its diversity the early use of the medium to depict urban developments within the city.



Exhibition view, *From Moment to Moment – Jews in Düsseldorf after 1945*, 2015



Film Museum Düsseldorf,
exterior view

FILM MUSEUM DÜSSELDORF

“Since photography has accompanied the history of film from its beginnings, the photo collection of the Film Museum is correspondingly extensive. Currently, there are between 350,000 and 400,000 (analog) in our archives. These are regularly retrieved for, various publications in print and on the Internet, but also by researcher,”¹ says Andreas Thein, director of the collections at the *Film Museum Düsseldorf*.

In order to continuously expand and sharpen the diversity of these

holdings, the Film Museum has gathered medium and large, private and professional film photo collections from the region over the past fifteen years, including the archive of Heiko R. Blum (Cologne), the photo collections of the Cologne and Bonn cinematheques, the extensive photo archive of one of Germany's oldest film magazines – *Filmdienst* from Bonn – and the photo archive of the film distributor *Atlas* from Duisburg. “Since Düsseldorf was an important location for the German film industry, especially in the post-war period, the Düsseldorf Film Museum also contains photographic material from the respective company archives – because almost

all of the major film production and distribution companies, including international ones, had offices and in some cases headquarters in Düsseldorf, from Gloria-Film to Ufa to Warner Brothers,”² remarks Thein.

The medium of photography has an important function in the Film Museum in both archival and curatorial contexts. The value of photographs of films that are considered lost or have survived only incompletely is not to be underestimated, as they make it possible to close gaps in knowledge, explains Thein, adding: “Photographs can be found

extensively in the permanent exhibition of the Film Museum: They refer to films, to film history, to technology, and to important personalities. For the regularly curated special exhibitions, too, along with film clips, they are often more than just accompanying motifs, but central elements of the exhibitions, as in the current photo exhibition on the work of Christoph Schlingensiefel with film stills, set shots, and portraits.”³ The museum's permanent exhibition also focuses on the closely intertwined technical development history of photography and film, including the use of daguerreotypes, so-called cartes de visite, Japanese silk photography, and stereoscopic views of the world of the penultimate century.



Exhibition view of the permanent exhibition

1 Information Andreas Thein from the questionnaire sent in advance of this report on 10/21/2021.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.



Exhibition view of the permanent exhibition



Exhibition view of the permanent exhibition

THEATER MUSEUM OF THE STATE CAPITAL DÜSSELDORF/ DUMONT-LINDEMANN ARCHIVE

The *Theater Museum of the State Capital Düsseldorf/Dumont-Lindemann-Archive* is a central research, mediation, and documentation institution for the history of the performing arts: The institution's collection, as well as its research, documentation, and exhibitions of the house, focus on Düsseldorf and North Rhine-Westphalia theater history and the theater scene, as well as on modern theater.¹ Among these, it has a photographic collection comprising 800,000 items.² The director of the Theater Museum, Dr. Sascha Förster, sees opening up the archives housed in the Theater Museum as an important approach, along with dedicating himself to the holdings in a discursive manner, thereby enabling new dialogic forms between the audience and theater history to be made possible visually. In the context of



Theater Museum of the State Capital
Düsseldorf / Dumont-Lindemann-Archive,
exterior view

documentation, photography also has the function of passing on artistic gestures: "Since theater is a fleeting art, theater museums are dependent on visual archives in order to form a picture of theater history. In this regard, photographs represent those objects by which means we can most easily return to historical performances. [...] In the core holdings of the Theater Museum – the Dumont-Lindemann Archive – the photographic collection already plays a central role: on one hand as documentation of the Schauspielhaus productions, and on the other as a photographic record of the career of the great actress Louise Dumont. [...] These photographs not only depict Düsseldorf theater history, but are at

the same time pictorial testimonies of the photographic examination of North Rhine-Westphalian theater in recent decades."³

Düsseldorf has attracted renowned photographers who have understood theater photography not only as documentation, but also as artistic expression, Dr. Förster continues, pointing out: "Düsseldorf also stands for a lively engagement with photography in the spectrum of art and documentation."⁴



Scene photo from Bertolt Brecht's *Threepenny Opera*



Photographic collection of the
Theater Museum

For him as a theater historian, who is also a member of the Theater Advisory Board of the City of Cologne and serves on the board of the Düsseldorf Council of the Arts, photography fundamentally plays an important role, he says: "It helps me find approaches to theater history that go beyond the mere accumulation of facts. Because photography enables sensual encounters with the theater of the past and, moreover, with the photographer's respective contemporary view of theater."⁵ Photographs, he summarizes, are not just a reproduction of the past, but are there to bring theater history and the exhibition present into a dialog with each other.

1 Cf. <https://www.duesseldorf.de/theatermuseum/ueber-uns.html>, last accessed on 10/20/2021

2 Information Dr. Sascha Förster from an e-mail to the coordination office photography of the State Capital Düsseldorf on 10/21/2021.

48 Information Dr. Sascha Förster from the questionnaire sent in advance of this report on 10/19/2021.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

"Düsseldorf also stands for a lively engagement with
photography in the spectrum of art and documentation."

– Dr. Sascha Förster, Director of the Theater Museum



Photographic collection of the Theater Museum

KUNSTARCHIV KAISERSWERTH



Exhibition view, Bernd & Hilla Becher – Photo and Print, 2021

The exhibition program reflects impulses of conceptual artistic photography. The work of the Bechers offers a central basis for this.

The *Kunstarchiv Kaiserswerth* is an exhibition house for photography in an old school building in Düsseldorf-Kaiserswerth, immediately adjacent to the former home and studio of the photographer couple Bernd and Hilla Becher. Through the cooperation between the *Cultural Office Düsseldorf* and the *Studio Bernd & Hilla Becher*, a new location for photography was established in 2019 in Düsseldorf-Kaiserswerth under the direction of their son Max Becher.

The exhibition program will be carried out jointly with the *Photographische Sammlung/SK Stiftung Kultur Cologne* and the *Bernd & Hilla Becher Archive*.

In the *Kunstarchiv Kaiserswerth*, the photographic works of the Bechers will be exhibited and contextualized across the board – for example, with works by photographers who emerged from the Bechers' teaching at the Art Academy Düsseldorf and with subsequent photographic developments. The *Kunstarchiv* pays tribute to the work of Bernd and Hilla Becher with the aim of creating a forum at their place of work and life in which a discourse can develop on a now contemporary-historical photographic attitude and visual language in relation to contemporary photographic gestures.



Kunstarchiv Kaiserswerth, exterior view

ÆdT – Am Ende des Tages

Antlfoto

Aura

AWA-Bar

Baustelle Schaustelle

Benzulli

Betonbox

Bloom

Capri Raum

„die digitale düsseldorf“

Düsseldorfer Būdchentag

Düsseldorfer Künstlerinnen e. V.

Düsseldorf – Palermo e. V.

Förderkreis der Mahn- und

Gedenkstätte Düsseldorf e. V.

Filmwerkstatt e. V.

Freundeskreis Kulturbahnhof Eller e. V.

Gasthof Worrringer Platz

Gesellschaft für Kultur & Raumfahrt e. V.

Good Forever

High Beam

IKS – Institut für Kunstdokumentation
und Szenografie

Konsortium

Kunst im Hafen e. V.

Künstlervereinigung

Königsberger Str. 100

Künstlerverein Malkasten

LA CHAMBRE

Le Bureau

MAP Markus Ambach Projekte

Metzgerei Schnitzel.Kunstverein e. V.

NAILS projectroom

Neue Fotografie

Nidus Kosmos

NKR – Neuer Kunstraum

onomato künstlerverein

Papier und Gelb

Parkhaus im Malkastenpark

plan.d. Produzentengalerie e. V.

Prephotography

Regatta 2

Ross 31

Salon des Amateurs

Sauvage

Single-Club

Solaris 53 e. V.

Solar Beam

sonneundsolche

spam contemporary

Studio for Artistic Research

Studio for Propositional Cinema

The Box

The pool

Verein der Düsseldorfer Künstler,
gegr. 1844

Weltkunstzimmer

(Hans Peter Zimmer Stiftung)

WP8 e. V.

a. m.

INDEPENDENT INITIATIVES

The independent scene in Düsseldorf is extremely diverse and, with its trans-disciplinary spectrum – from visual arts to literature, theater, dance, architecture, and music – contributes significantly to the diversity of the city's cultural life and far beyond. For several decades, artistic processes have productively intertwined here, such as through the legendary artists' clubs *Creamcheese* (1967–1976), *Ratinger Hof* (1970s and 1980s, but especially 1974–1979, decisively run by Carmen Knoebel and Ingrid Kohlhöfer), *EGO – Club for Electronic and Experimental Music Performance* (1998–2000) to the *Salon des Amateurs*, a venue which has been shaping the artistic scene in the form of a bar designed by Marie Céline Schäfer in the building of *Kunsthalle Düsseldorf* since 2004. In these contexts, photography has always been part of what has materialized as artistic events in Düsseldorf: Walter Vogel (* 1932 in Düsseldorf), for example, photographed the evenings in the Eat-Art restaurant founded in 1968 by the artist Daniel Spoerri. The artists' group ZERO and Ferdinand Kriwet, together with filmmaker Lutz Mommartz, designed *Creamcheese*, among many other artists, and the bands *Kraftwerk* and *Can* played their first concerts here. The *Ratinger Hof* – designed with minimal lighting by Imi Knoebel – was well known for the poet Thomas Kling's performative readings as well as for the bands *Der Plan*, *NEU*, *DAF*, and *La Düsseldorf*, which led to the expansion of the punk and electro music scene: Free spaces in which trans-disciplinary and trans-cultural everyone could participate and which were always accompanied by the medium of photography, such as by Richard Gleim (*1941 in Düsseldorf, † 2019 in Düsseldorf), who as *ar/gee gleim* photographed the scene from the late 1970s.¹ The photographer and musician Stefan Schneider always links both in his artistic work.

These developments in photography are to be considered on the same level as the artistic practice and production, which in turn was formed by the *Art Academy Düsseldorf* and other academic structures. Since the 1960s, Düsseldorf has continuously made it possible to experience how the independent scene, as well as collecting and exhibiting institutions are mutually dependent. The fact that photographically documenting processes are also part of the discourse can be seen in archives such as the *Archive for Artistic Photography of*

the Rhenish Art Scene (AFORK) and numerous artists' archives, which have accompanied the scene photographically for decades and given it a familiar face beyond the city limits of Düsseldorf.

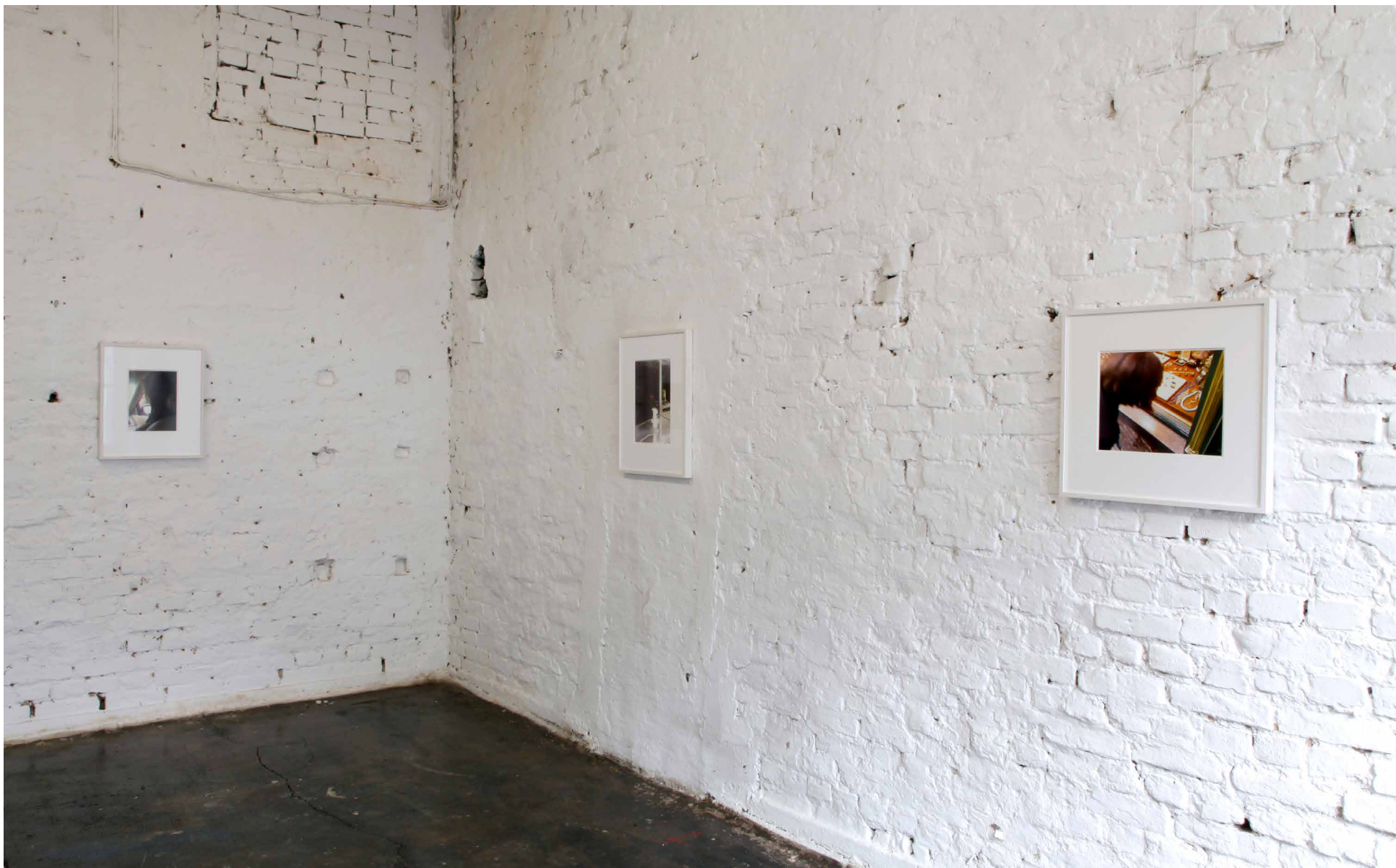
Off-spaces, artists' bars, and art in public spaces initiated by artists have enabled and created a variety of new structures: Artist collectives such as *hobbypopMUSEUM* and *Konsortium* have shaped the visual perception of the city, especially in the 2000s. From the 2010s, for example, Alex Wissel implemented various interactive project installations through, among others, the *Single Club*; Adam Harrison founded the *Studio for Propositional Cinema* as a place of discourse for photographic and cinematic images; and Stephan Macháč opened the *Studio for Artistic Research* next to the *AWA Bar*, which is also a space for free artistic expression through exhibition and conversation formats. Karl Heinz Rummeny has presented artistic works in the *Parkhaus* at the *Malkastenpark* for many years, with a focus on photographic positions. The artist couple Katja Stuke and Oliver Sieber (Böhm/Kobayashi) have made decisive contributions to photographic discourse for a number of years through their photographic work, curated exhibitions, and contextualizing formats, such as their independent magazine project *ANTIFOTO*. Since the late 1990s, Markus Ambach has been active in NRW with his MAP series: for example, with the urban project *Von fremden Ländern in eigenen Städten* (*From foreign countries in own cities*) (2018), as

part of which a photographic intervention and now permanent installation by Katharina Sieverding was implemented at the building of the former main post office and the Central, used as a (play) venue for the *Düsseldorf Schauspielhaus*. Since 2020, the so-called *Freiraum* (*free space*) of the choreographer Ben J. Riepe has formed a *Collaborative Conceptual and Working Space for the arts* in the center of Düsseldorf: such a place can once again be seen as emblematic of the multitude of actors who have been shaping the Düsseldorf art and culture scene for several decades and enriching it through their activities.



Katharina Sieverding, *Global Desire Station District Düsseldorf*, 2018. Permanent installation from the exhibition project *Von fremden Ländern in eigenen Städten* (*From Foreign Countries in Own Cities*) by Markus Ambach Projects

¹ This is vividly depicted in the film *Keine Atempause – Düsseldorf, der Ratinger Hof und die Neue Musik* by Oliver Schwabe, released by WDR in 2016.



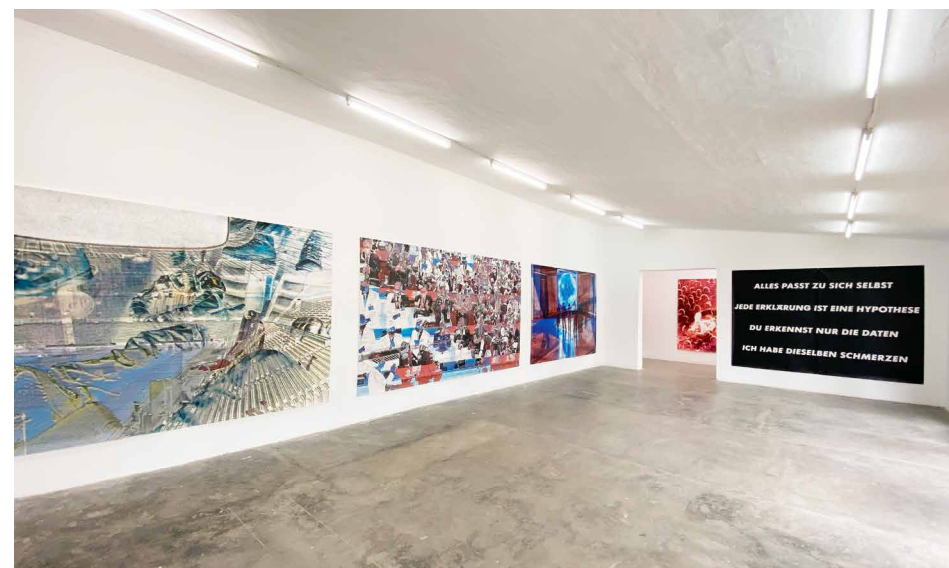
Exhibition view, Jeff Wall, *Nokia 3710*, Studio for Propositional Cinema, 2016



Installation view, Lukas Heerich, *BRACE FOR IMPACT*, Studio for Artistic Research, 2020



Installation view, Steffen Zillig, *Pessimismus organisieren (Organize pessimism)*, Benzulli 2012



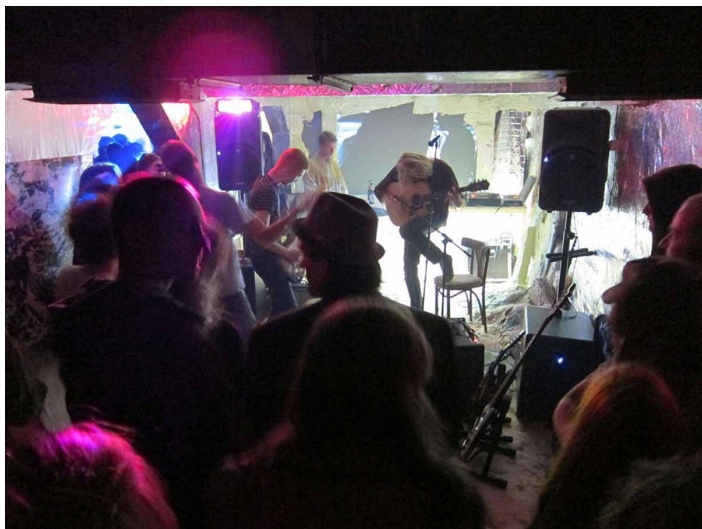
Installation view, Katharina Sieverding, *Parkhouse at Malkasten Park*, 2021



Good Forever, Projectspace, 2016



Installation view, Budhaditya Chattopadhyay, *Decomposing Landscape*, WELTKUNSTZIMMER



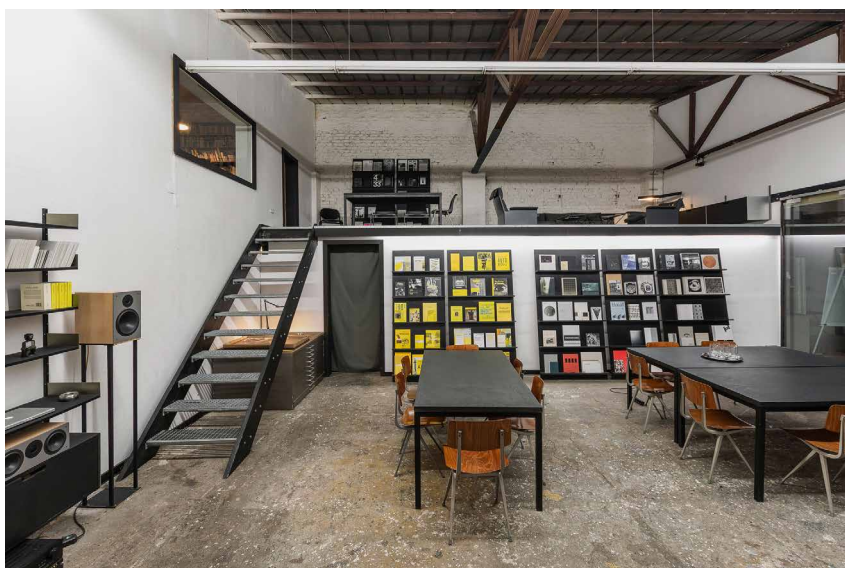
Single-Club, 2011



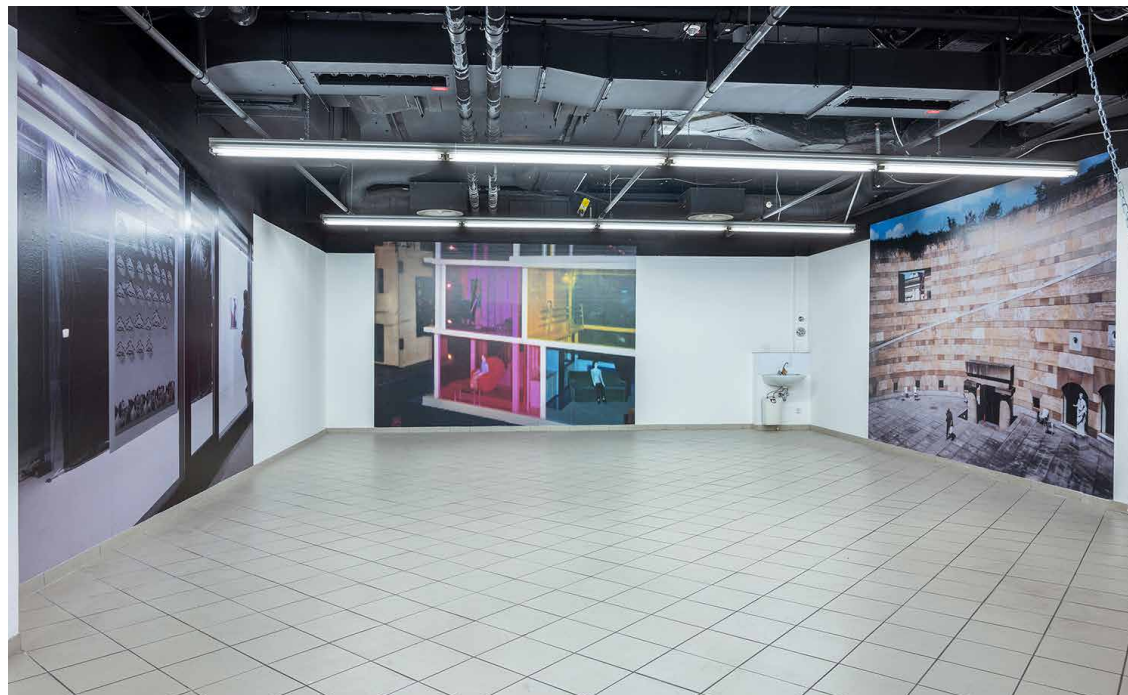
Good Forever, Projectspace, 2016



AWA, Artists' Bar, 2019



Papier + Gelb, Projectspace



Regatta 2, Projectspace in the subway station Heinrich-Heine-Allee,
exhibition by Michael Franz, Public Private partnership, 2021



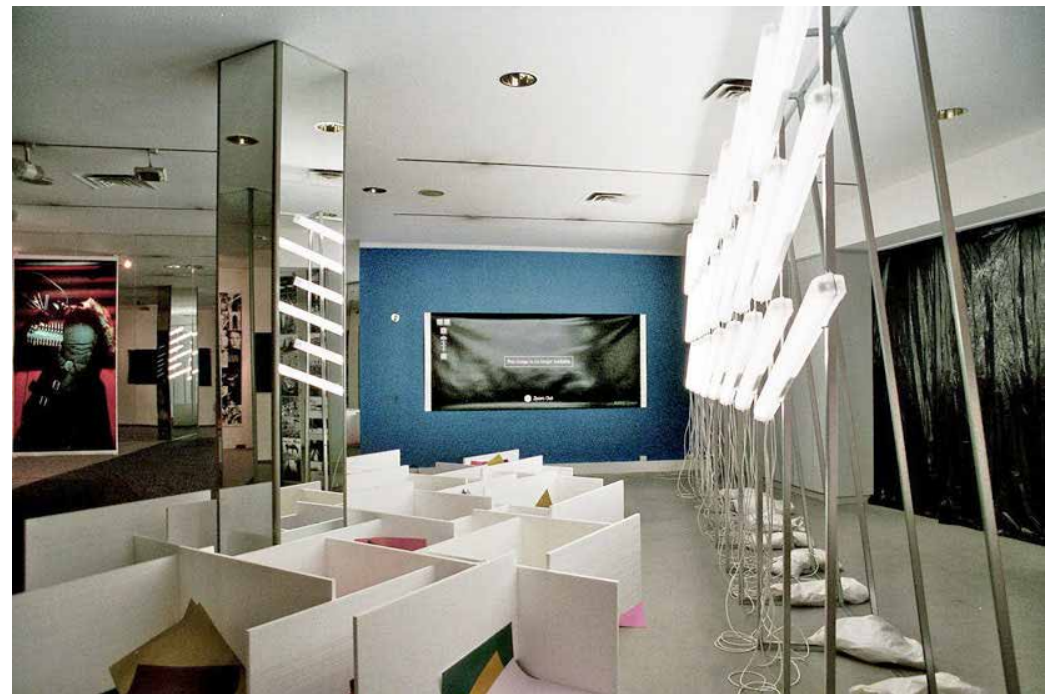
WP8, Artists' Association



Installation view, Niklas Taleb, AedT – Am Ende des Tages, 2018



ANTIFOTO Publication



Installation view, *HIGH BEAM*, temporary exhibition project, 2008

PRIVATE AND NON-PROFIT ART COLLECTIONS AND EXHIBITION HOUSES



**JULIA STOSCHEK
COLLECTION
DÜSSELDORF/BERLIN**

The *Julia Stoschek Collection (JSC)* is one of the world's largest private collections of time-based media art. With around 100 photographic works – by regional, national, and international artists – photography is the most important medium represented in the collection after time-based art. Düsseldorf is the founding location of the collection, which was first opened to the public there in 2007 in a listed factory building and has since been presented in the form of thematically oriented exhibitions. Julia Stoschek deliberately chose Düsseldorf:

"The Rhineland art scene has grown historically over several generations and has produced many renowned photographic artists. The diversity of artists, diverse art and educational institutes makes Düsseldorf a unique location for contemporary art."¹

The spectrum of photographic holdings in her collection ranges from important groups of works by Wolfgang Tillmanns, Katharina Sieverding, and Candida Höfer to current socio-political works by Thomas Demand, Adam McEwen, and Taryn Simon. Her collection is intended to reflect the present, Julia Stoschek tells us, elaborating: "I am fascinated by the virtuality of photography and the moving image, and by the question of what these art forms mean for our understanding of reality. Through the many different perspectives of the artists, we are constantly learning to see anew. This experience and my desire to present the collection to a broader audience in exhibitions still determine my actions today. The long-term archiving of the works is an important concern for me. At the Düsseldorf location, my works are stored according to the highest technical standards. At the JSC Düsseldorf, we have currently set up a research center where the collection can be researched. In a reference library, more than 4,000 publica-

tions on 20th and 21st century art are available, including more than 1,300 publications focusing on photography."²

¹ Information Julia Stoschek from the questionnaire sent in advance of this report on 10/28/2021.

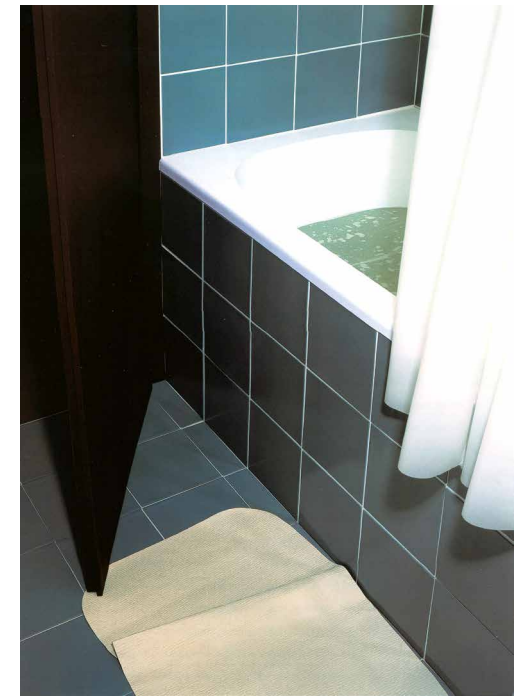
² Ibid.



JSC Düsseldorf, interior view

"The diversity of artists, diverse art and educational institutes makes Düsseldorf a unique location for contemporary art."

– Julia Stoschek, art collector



Thomas Demand, *Badezimmer*, 1997



Installation view, *GENERATION LOSS*, 2017



Philara Collection, exterior view

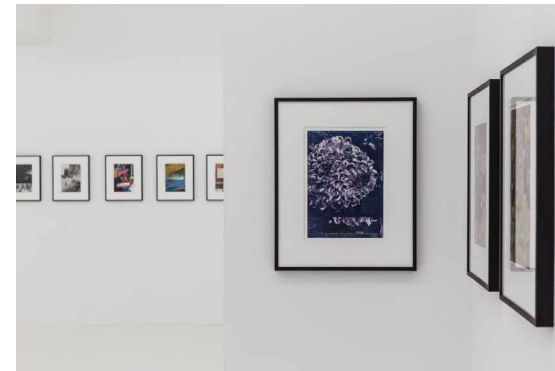
PHILARA COLLECTION

The *Philara Collection* is a private collection of contemporary art and comprises around 1,500 works of art that Gil Bronner began amassing in the mid-1990s. With the former *Leitz factory* in Düsseldorf-Reisholz, which Bronner acquired in 2006, the collector had not only gained an exhibition space for his collection holdings, but also created a production site for artists with seventy studios, which is still used today by local artists and classes of the *Düsseldorf Art Academy*.

Through the extensive conversion of the former *Lennarz* glass factory, a new comprehensive exhibition building was established in Düsseldorf-Flingern for the Philara Collection in 2016: In collaboration with the Düsseldorf-based planning office *Sieber Architects*, 1,700 square meters of exhibition space that can be used in a variety of ways were created, complemented by a 550-square-meter sculpture terrace on the roof and a catering area. The spacious exhibition space serves both the presentation of the collection and curated temporary exhibitions. In addition, events such as theater performances, concerts, talks, and symposia are realized in cooperation with various institutions.



Installation view, Ricarda Roggan, *Ex Machina*, Philara Collection, 2019



Installation view, Johannes Wohnseifer, *Das 20. Jahrhundert (The 20th Century)*, Philara Collection, 2014

The strong connection to the Düsseldorf Art Academy is reflected in Gil Bronner's collection, which has acquired works from many of the exhibitions shown by him in the former Leitz factory as well as in the new Collection House (up to five exhibitions per year). Thus, local young artists are equally part of the Philara Collection as established Düsseldorf artists, which include Thomas Ruff and Hans-Peter Feldmann, and internationally active artists such as Melanie Gilligan, Kara Walker, and Pae White.

KAI 10 | ARTHENA FOUNDATION

KAI 10 | ARTHENA FOUNDATION is a foundation institution for international contemporary art in Düsseldorf's media harbor. The house has shown numerous photographic positions in thematic group exhibitions since it was founded by Monika Schnetkamp in 2008, says artistic director Julia Höner. The focus is on the wide range of photographic styles and approaches of international artists and thus the mutability of the medium. As an example, Höner cites the examination of photographic archive material, as in the works of Peter Piller, the essayistic portrayal of social groups, as in the photographs of Tobias Zielony, and the scenic-experimental object photography expressed in the images of Barbara Kasten. "Renowned artistic photographers and up-and-coming graduates of the Art Academy are always included in our exhibitions. In addition, the local photographic industry with its well-equipped production facilities guarantees high quality standards in the new production of artworks,"¹ says Höner in reference to the Düsseldorf location in connection with the exhibition program of her house and the photographic works presented there.

"Renowned artistic photographers and up-and-coming graduates of the Art Academy are always included in our exhibitions. In addition, the local photographic industry with its well-equipped production facilities guarantees high quality standards in the new production of artworks."

— Julia Höner, Artistic Director KAI 10 | ARTHENA FOUNDATION



KAI 10 | ARTHENA FOUNDATION, exterior view



Thomas Hirschhorn, *Subjecter (Katastrophé)*, 2010

In her curatorial work, Höner occasionally deals with new, digital image phenomena and their influence on current art – also with a view to the extent to which these provide information about our present. It is this aspect to which she attaches innovative value, which is why she is convinced that "[j]ust any new institution that dedicates itself to questions of conservation and that, while conducting research, not only refers to the history of photography, but also takes on current, digital image phenomena and develops related image-scientific questions, would be a gain for the region and would also strengthen Düsseldorf as a location. Especially in post-pandemic times, grants and other funding instruments are important to secure the future of photography in the region and, not least, to communicate the relevance of artistic photography to the wider society."²



Rabih Mroué, *The Pixelated Revolution*, 2012

¹ Information Julia Höner from the questionnaire sent in advance of this report on 11/02/2021

² Ibid.

**ART COLLECTION OF THE
STADTSPARKASSE DÜSSELDORF /
ART AND CULTURE FOUNDATION
OF THE STADTSPARKASSE
DÜSSELDORF**



Stadtparkasse
Düsseldorf,
exterior view



Beat Streuli, Untitled, 2000, Façade Stadt-
sparkasse Düsseldorf

The Art Collection of the Stadtparkasse Düsseldorf, created during the 1970s, was expanded in 1995/96 through a focus on photography, for example by the purchase of the 51-part series *Düsseldorf Avant-garde* by Bernd Jansen, which brings together portraits of important artists from the Düsseldorf art scene between 1968 and 1995.

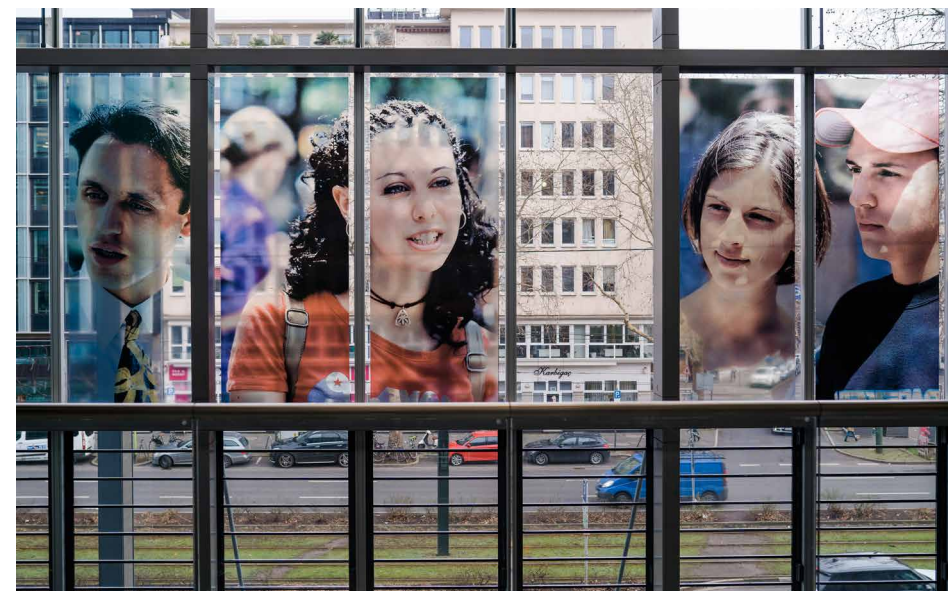
This acquisition, as well as the ongoing purchase of groups of works – including 60 works from a portrait series by Thomas Ruff from the 1980s, works by Boris Becker, by Bernd and Hilla Becher and by Katharina Sieverding – is to be understood as a

clear positioning of Stadtparkasse Düsseldorf towards the city's artists. Its attitude is also expressed in the façade design of the Stadtparkasse's main branch on Berliner Allee, which was realized in 2000 by Beat Streuli as a glass wall with photographic portraits of young people of the city. In the context of this anniversary year of the Stadtparkasse Düsseldorf, the Art and Culture Foundation of the Stadtparkasse Düsseldorf was also founded.

In 2008, through a cooperation with the Kunstpalast, the *Collection of the Stadtparkasse Düsseldorf* in the Kunstpalast followed, which since 2018 has been accompanied by a targeted expansion of the museum's photographic holdings, with the focus on the Stadtparkasse's acquisition of photographs. The company's close ties to the city and the region are reflected in the collection's holdings of works by artists who have significantly shaped the city of Düsseldorf and continue to do so. By focusing on the medium of photography, the Stadtparkasse has therefore initiated, for example, the exhibition series *Made in Düsseldorf*, in which it presents, in cooperation with the NRW-Forum, artistic photography that has a connection with Düsseldorf and the Rhineland.

Stefan G. Drzisga, Managing Director of the Art and Culture Foundation of the Stadtparkasse Düsseldorf and curator of the Art Collection of the Stadtparkasse Düsseldorf, and Katharina Wettwer, also curator of this collection, emphasize the importance of the *Art Academy Düsseldorf* and its teachers, as a result of which this medium has acquired an important status in the city, but above all in art history.¹

¹ Information Stefan G. Drzisga and Katharina Wettwer from the questionnaire sent in advance of this report on 10/20/2021.



Beat Streuli, Untitled, 2000, Façade Stadtparkasse Düsseldorf

BIENNALE FOR PHOTOGRAPHY:
DÜSSELDORF PHOTO+
BIENNALE FOR VISUAL AND SONIC MEDIA



Exhibition view, *Bodies That Matter*, düsseldorf photo+ at NRW-Forum Düsseldorf, curated by Pola Sieverding,
left to right: Yaldah Afsah & Ginan Seidel, Collier Schorr, Berni Searle

In 2020, the first edition of *düsseldorf photo+* was launched as a prelude to the *Biennale for Visual and Sonic Media*, which will take place from 2022 onwards, with over sixty exhibitions and events in selected galleries, off-spaces, museums, and foundations. The thematically open orientation of the exhibition format, which takes place every two years in Düsseldorf, focuses on time-based media art and also offers an inventory of the current Düsseldorf photo scene. The *düsseldorf photo+* Biennale was founded and organized by Christine Erhard, Dr. Rupert Pfab, Thomas W. Rieger, Carl Friedrich Schröer, Pola Sieverding, and Ljiljana Radlovic. According to the curatorial team, the reason for conceiving a biennial for photography in Düsseldorf was the enormous potential in the field of photography combined with the developments that have been taking place in Düsseldorf since the 1960s: "In the city of the expanded concept of art, where Joseph Beuys and Nam June Paik worked for a long time, the boundaries between static and moving images have long since fallen and lens-based processes have been established for decades."¹ The Biennale's aim is to make these developments visible, to update them, and to think about them in the present: "Photographic images are the basis of a large part of our contemporary communication and an indispensable medium with which we form an image of the world. Exploring this potential, critically

questioning it, and making it productive, especially in a city with such a rich history and practice in the photographic field, is what makes it so appealing."²



Team *düsseldorf photo+* with the former mayor Thomas Geisel and the former cultural director Hans-Georg Lohe, 2020



Exhibition view, *düsseldorf photo+*, left to right: SMITH, Talia Chetrit, Pola Sieverding, Wolfgang Tillmans, Berni Searle



Exhibition view, *düsseldorf photo+*, left to right: Collier Schorr, John Coplans

The team explains their understanding of the current role of the medium and why this Biennale has a "+" in its name as follows: "Since its invention, photography has been in a state of flux, which has always been dependent on technical development. However, the speed of change has increased massively in recent years – and with it the medium's relevance in the social context. The '+' in the name indicates that photography today is to be understood comprehensively: audio-visual techniques and computer-generated image designs have long been an integral part of our everyday culture. And likewise, discourses on photographic images and the way they are read, produced and used always reflect social developments."³

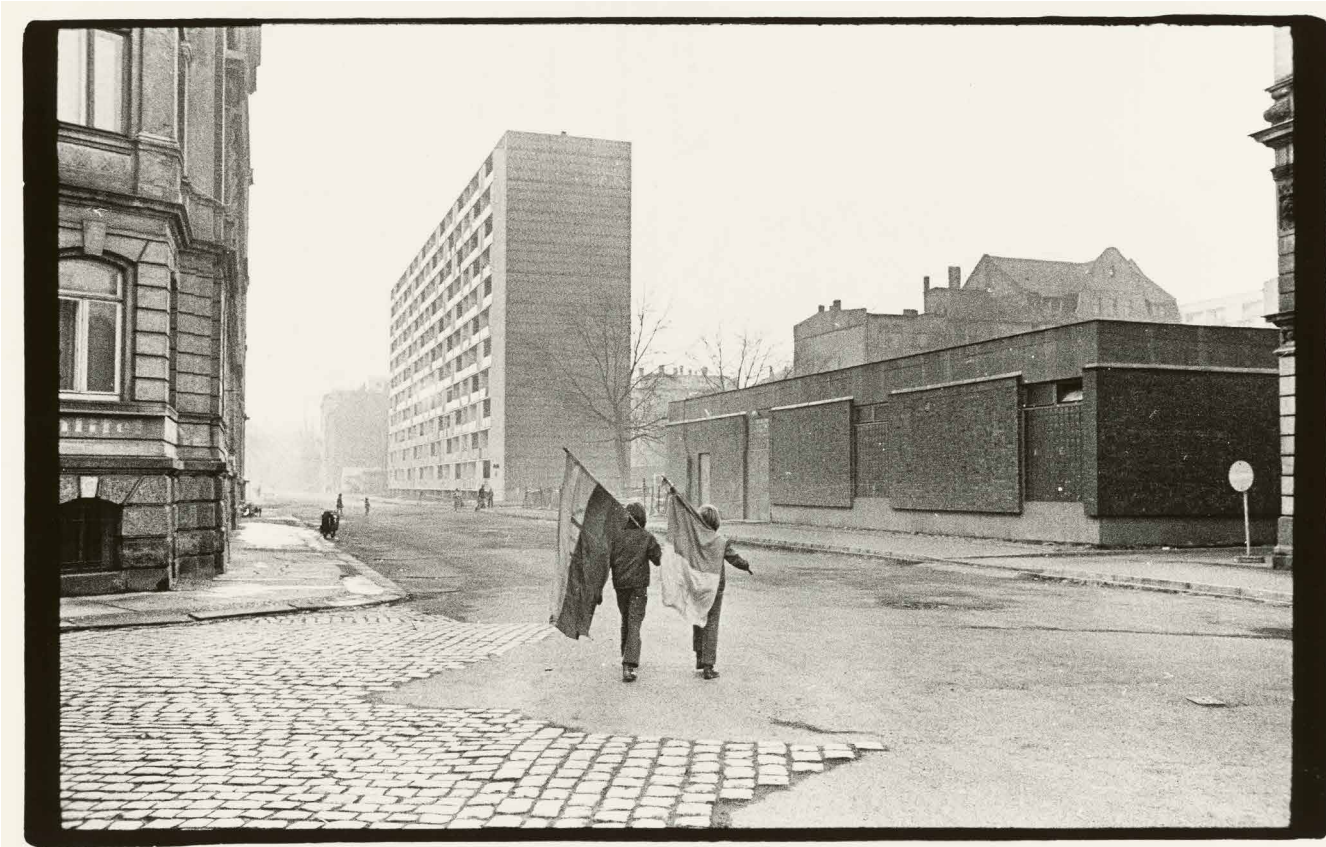
The Biennale *düsseldorf photo+* took place in Düsseldorf in May 2022 and will be continued in 2024.

¹ Information Dr. Rupert Pfab, Ljiljana Radlovic, Thomas W. Rieger, and Pola Sieverding from the questionnaire sent in advance of this report on 11/04/2021.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

BERND AND HILLA BECHER PRIZE



Evelyn Richter, *Musikviertel, Leipzig*, 1976

The Bernd and Hilla Becher Prize 2020 was awarded for the first time to the photo artist Evelyn Richter and the photo artist Theo Simpson.

Since the fall of 2020, the State Capital of Düsseldorf has awarded the *Bernd and Hilla Becher Prize*. The art prize consists of a main prize and a sponsorship prize. The main prize is aimed at artists, curators, and personalities who have rendered outstanding services to photography and related fields such as film, video, and other image-generating media. The sponsorship prize is awarded to artists whose work focuses on photography, visual media, and media art.

The internationally oriented prize was developed on the initiative of the organizers of the *Biennale düsseldorf photo+* and will be awarded in cooperation with them every two years during the festival by the State Capital Düsseldorf on the recommendation of an independent jury of international experts in honor of Bernd and Hilla Becher.

With their life's work, the Bechers have had a significant influence on the City of Düsseldorf. Their photographic documentation of industrial buildings and industrial production sites in Europe and the United States has become a unique collection of photographs of buildings, many of which no longer exist. They also set new standards in the understanding of photography through their joint teaching at the *Art Academy Düsseldorf*, which continues to have international appeal today. A comparable style-forming effect emanated from the *Düsseldorf School of Painting* in the 19th century.

The Bernd and Hilla Becher Prize 2020 was awarded for the first time to the photo artist Evelyn Richter (* 1930 in Bautzen, † 2021 in Dresden) and the photo artist Theo Simpson (* 1986 in Doncaster). In particular, Evelyn Richter was honored as one of the most important and internationally renowned representatives of humanistic artistic photography in the former GDR. With her photographs, Richter shows human life in its diversity through aspects that relate concretely to her fellow human beings, for example with her photographic studies of living and working conditions. The photographer taught at the *Leipzig Academy of Visual Arts* from 1981 to 2001. In 2009, the *Evelyn Richter Archive of the Ostdeutsche Sparkassenstiftung* was founded at the *Museum of Fine Arts Leipzig*. In 2020, the *Albertinum* in Dresden showed her life's work on the occasion of her 90th birthday. Currently, the *Evelyn Richter Archive* is preparing a comprehensive exhibition of the photographer's work together with the *Kunstpallast Düsseldorf*, where it will be shown in the fall of 2022.

ASSOCIATION FOR THE FOUNDATION AND PROMOTION OF A GERMAN PHOTOGRAPHY INSTITUTE – DFI E.V. WITH COOPERATION PARTNERS

The Association for the Foundation and Promotion of a German Photography Institute – DFI e. V. is the initiator for the German Photography Institute in Düsseldorf. The starting point for this initiative is the idea of a center of excellence for photography that has been significantly promoted by Düsseldorf photo artists since 2009. The exchange of experience gained from their daily work with photography and an awareness of the many challenges associated with the medium have led to the founding of this association based on an artists' initiative. In collaboration with cooperating experts, DFI e. V. has subsequently developed the concept for a German Photography Institute in Düsseldorf. The association sees itself as a driving force in the debate concerning a national photo institute.

The DFI e. V. works closely with the State Capital Düsseldorf and has been cooperating since 2021 with the *Photographische Sammlung/SK Stiftung Kultur* in Cologne, in collaboration with Max Becher, director of the *Studio Bernd & Hilla Becher Kunstarchiv Kaiserswerth*, the *Art Academy Düsseldorf*, the *Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron Cabinet* in Basel, and the *Depot Boijmans Van Beuningen* in Rotterdam. The central concern and project of this growing cooperative community is the establishment of an international competence center for issues related to photography. This new institute is to be founded with the aim to sustainably develop and preserve the value of photography as a cultural asset.

Together with its cooperation partners, the association would like to create an awareness for the medium in all its forms of existence: Specifically, new ways of thinking are to be promoted and strategies developed that – in theory and practice – concern a way of dealing with the photographic that is appropriate to the demands of time and the sustainability of the medium.

In this sense, the German Photography Institute is understood as a physical place and a digital platform of constitutive participation: Thus, against the background of a network guided by far-reaching cooperation, a transnational competence and research network is developing that brings together national and international actors, and stimulates and supports a trans-disciplinary exchange – at an artistic, (image-)scientific, media-technical, archival, restorative, economic, curatorial, and public reception level. In this way, the existing is to be proactively preserved, established structures strengthened, and a

contribution made to the contextualized further development of the medium. "A culture of remembrance based on photographic works is closely linked here with research projects that are directed towards the future. An essential starting point here is the human being: no photograph exists without the author. Intention and motivation are always part of the image. Algorithm, C-print, print, frame, collection, and pre- and posthumous legacy are always related to individuals, workshops, and studios, whose knowledge and experience have to be individually considered and integrated in the institutional processing,"¹ says the DFI e. V.

The basis and essence for addressing the concept of a Photography Institute are exchange, networking, and dialog. Against this background, the DFI e. V. in cooperation with the State Capital Düsseldorf will offer the event series *Towards Photography* in 2022: In this series, essential topics of photography will be presented for discussion, which will accompany the process of building up the German Photography Institute.²

Towards Photography is an open format and sees itself as a forum for discourse between artists, theorists, scientists, authors, the local art and culture scene, and the interested public. In talks, lectures, and panel discussions, which take place both on site in Düsseldorf and online, the events enable a direct exchange with each other.

What questions will be addressed to the future Institute of Photography, which areas of cultural life will participate? What demands does photography – beyond conventional genre boundaries – place on such an institution? How do archives define themselves and how can vital knowledge be generated through them? And what forms of mediation does the medium of photography need?

All events will be mediated and documented by means of a digital platform. The series of events will take place from April 27 to July 13, 2022 in the *Salon des Amateurs* at the *Kunsthalle Düsseldorf*.

As a cooperating educational institution, the *Art Academy Düsseldorf* will offer the seminar *Photographic Collections in the Artistic and Art Scientific Practice. Inquiries in the Field*, which will include colloquia, workshops, studio and institution visits for students of the Art Academy. The seminar will be the first event between the cooperation partners DFI e. V., the Art Academy Düsseldorf, and the *Photographische Sammlung/SK Stiftung Kultur*, Cologne.

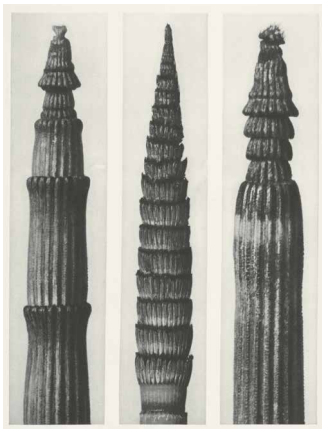
The concept for the establishment of a German Photography Institute (DFI) in Düsseldorf can be found at: deutschesfotoinstitut.org

1 Moritz Wegwerth, Chairman of DFI e.V. on 02/06/2022.

2 Texts on events and the association were provided by DFI e.V.: *Towards Photography* by Ania Koliszko; information on the seminar conducted by Gabriele Conrath-Scholl.

COOPERATION PARTNERS

The Photographische Sammlung/ SK Stiftung Kultur, Cologne



Karl Blossfeldt, Winterschachtelhalme
(Winter Horsetails), undated, [Urformen der
Kunst, 1928]



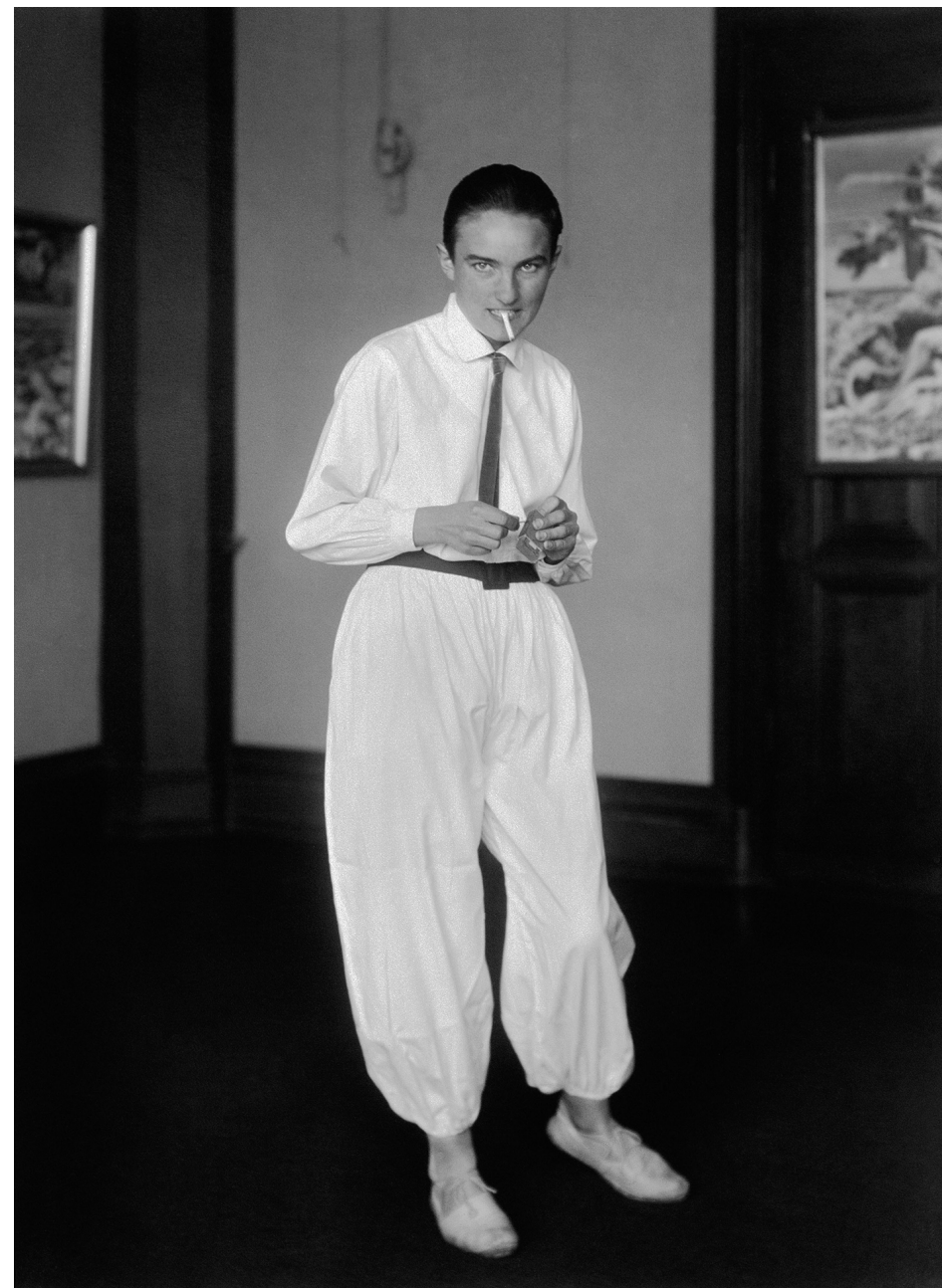
Bernd and Hilla Becher, Hochofen (Blast Furnace), Völklingen,
Saarland, D, 1986

The Photographische Sammlung/SK Stiftung Kultur in Cologne houses the *August Sander Archive* and comprises the world's largest collection of original prints, preserved glass negatives, Sander's correspondence, and library. Another important holding of the institution is the archive of Bernd and Hilla Becher. These archives unite two photographic work collections in the Rhineland. Following on from this, a collection has been built up that reflects the tradition, present and future development of documentary photography.

Gabriele Conrath-Scholl has been director of the Photographische Sammlung since 2007. Her discerning eye and her reflected reference to the photographic have characterized her years of involvement with the medium of photography. In discussing what significance the medium can have for a Photography Institute in Düsseldorf that engages in city-wide collaborations, she emphasizes the importance of the Rhineland and specifically also that of the regional State Capital: "Düsseldorf can point to an important artistic tradition in which photography is incorporated in a variety of ways. In this context, particular importance is attached to the Art Academy. [...] Behind all these personalities with their works stands a great and precious chapter in the history of art and photography, created

in Germany and radiating internationally into contemporary art and photography in a highly influential way. This valuable cultural heritage should be protected locally and reflected in many ways. [...] The city [...] thus proves to be a nucleus for the artistic acceptance of the medium with far-reaching effects. Last but not least, a large number of photographic actors, studios and related companies are based in Düsseldorf. [...] Against this background, Düsseldorf can offer networking as well as synergies in multiple different directions."¹

¹ Information Gabriele Conrath-Scholl from the questionnaire sent in advance of this report on 10/19/2021.



August Sander, Frau eines Malers (Wife of a Painter) [Helene Abelen], around 1926/27

**Depot Boijmans Van Beuningen,
Rotterdam**



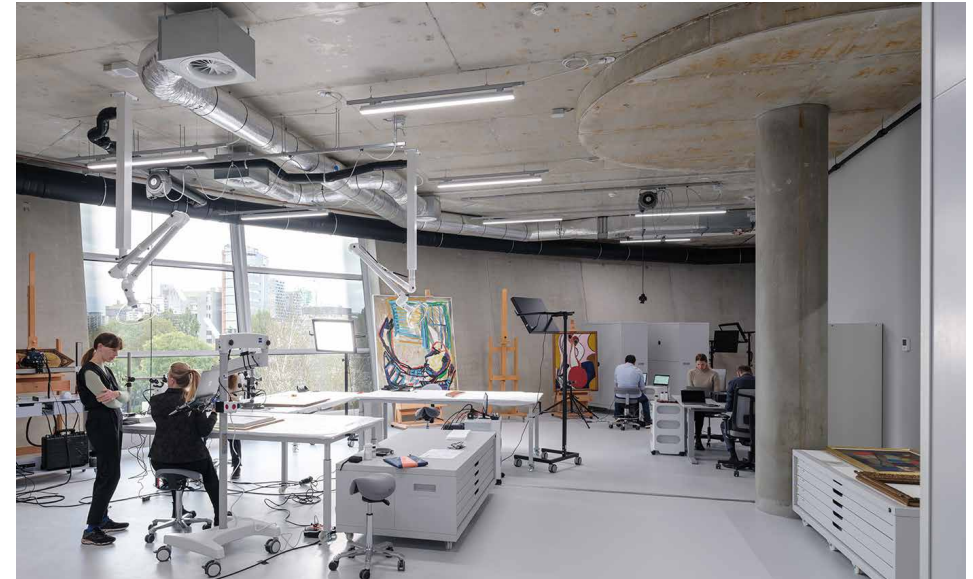
Depot Boijmans Van Beuningen, exterior view

The *Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen* is the largest art museum in Rotterdam. Its collection comprises 151, 000 objects, of which 48,719 can presently be seen online. In order to give more visibility to works of art as a whole, the museum has had a depot built which is the only one of its kind and was opened in November 2021 in the Museum Park in Rotterdam. The architecture of the depot, designed by the *Architectural Office MVRDV*, makes it possible for visitors to experience the holdings and processes associated with the *Boijmans Van Beuningen Collection*. The transparency of the building, constructed in the form of a glass showcase, makes it possible to see works from the holdings in regularly rotating presentations, even outside of curated exhibitions: a staircase running through the entire structure makes it possible to access the entire range of artworks that the museum depot holds. Visitors can also visually participate in conservation processes or the preparation of artworks for transport.

The Depot Boijmans Van Beuningen has offered its co-operation to the DFI e. V. with regard to the perspective of a *German Photography Institute*.



View into the archive and show depot of the Depot Boijmans Van Beuningen



Restoration workshop in the depot of Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen



Photographs and paintings in the depot of Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen

**JACQUES HERZOG AND
PIERRE DE MEURON CABINET,
BASEL WITH THE RUTH AND
PETER HERZOG COLLECTION,
BASEL**



Jacques Herzog und Pierre de Meuron
Kabinett, Basel

The historic photography collection of Ruth and Peter Herzog comprises some 500,000 objects of worldwide origin, which the collector couple has continuously assembled since the 1970s. From the beginnings of photography around 1839 to the 1970s, the collection traces the genesis of the photographic medium as well as the history of analog photography and shows the facets of the medium through a variety of material, format, technique, presentation formats, and thematic spectra.

Thus, by means of the *Ruth and Peter Herzog Collection*, not only various production and development processes of the photographic image can be traced, but also the photographic genesis of photographic viewing: via albums, framed objects, and plate negatives, differentiated subjects and references to the world are conveyed. The collection includes amateur, advertising, and travel photography, family and vacation albums, soldiers' and war report albums, landscape photography, photographs of expeditions and colonial workers, collections of artists' portraits and – in terms

of the media – of photographic dealers.

In 2020, excerpts from the Ruth and Peter Herzog Collection were presented for the first time as part of the exhibition *The Incredible World of Photography* at *Kunstmuseum Basel*. At the same time, the processed collection was made accessible to the general public via an extensive on-line database.

“Accumulating an immense global mosaic of the life of as many inhabitants on this planet as possible – I have to admit that’s a pretty ambitious goal that we’ve set for ourselves and our collection... Human beings are the focal point of the collection. What makes us human? What do people wish and hope for, what do they dream about? We are intrigued by the fact that, since 1839, there has been a medium capable of recording the history of humankind in meaningful and extremely concentrated images. Our store of photographs is useful to a wide variety of university disciplines, and it allows entirely different kinds of museums to collaborate.”¹

– Peter Herzog

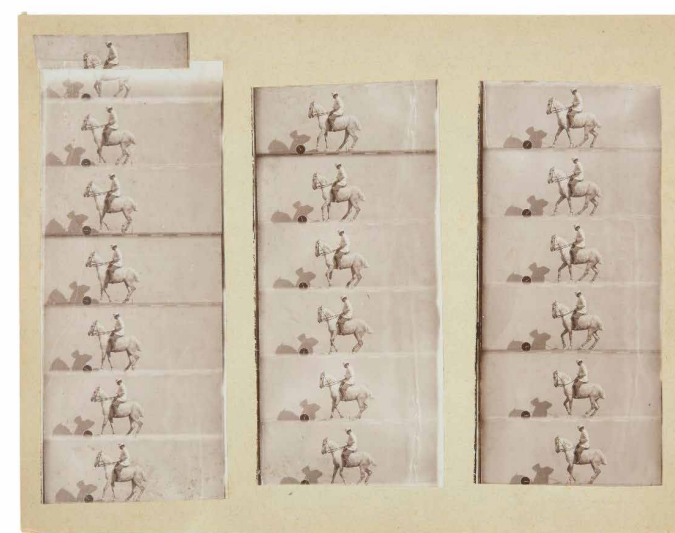
1 Peter Herzog, Oral History, 07/07/2016, 11/24/2016,
<https://www.fotosammlung.com/collection.html>,
last accessed on 04/03/2022. Further information under
www.kabinett.org and www.fotosammlung.com.



Unknown Photographer, Stereophotographs
about Switzerland and France, 1907–1933



L. Fulpius, Portrait of a young boy in
Carabbia, 1916



Etienne-Jules Marey, Motion study of a horse and rider, 1894



Unknown Photographer, Views of the Yellow Stone Park in color, 9.–16.7.1919

DC OPEN AND THE DÜSSELDORF GALLERY NETWORK

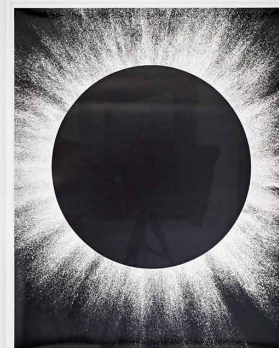


On May 13, 2021 the gallery weekend *DC Open* took place in the Rhineland – a joint venue of the Düsseldorf and Cologne galleries, which present their respective new gallery programs together at the beginning of the season in the fall of each year. Most recently, fifty participating galleries showed works by the artists they mainly represent in their programs, accompanied by a program for curators and collectors including, for example, leading museums in the Rhineland that also participate. Due to its diversity and openness, the DC Open has become an internationally appreciated event in the field of contemporary art.

Such a mutually supportive and binding network for art recipients, as exists between the galleries in Düsseldorf and Cologne, is also essential for the art scene within the City of Düsseldorf. Traditional galleries such as the *Konrad Fischer Gallery* in Flingern, the *Hans Mayer Gallery* near Grabbeplatz, the *Ute Parduhn Gallery* in Kaiserswerth as well as the *Schönewald Gallery* in Flingern, and the *Beck & Eggeling Gallery* on Carls-platz form a stable foundation. And many new galleries have also been able to establish themselves successfully in recent years: Decisive representatives on the art market are the *Van Horn Gallery*, led by Daniela Steinfeld, which also brings art immaterially through dialogs to the object with its podcast *Voices on Art*, which has been maintained since 2020, the *Rupert Pfab Gallery*, which has shown Simone Nieweg's photographs from the beginning, the *Sies + Höke Gallery*, which maintains also the off-space *Capri* and the *Linn Lühn Gallery*, the *Cosar gallery*, and the *Max Mayer Gallery*, which has been setting progressive impulses for ten years. Important photographic positions as those of the artists Barbara Kasten and Ketty La Rocca have been brought to Düsseldorf by the *Kadel Willborn Gallery*; for some years now, young Düsseldorf photographers such as Sebastian Riemer and Moritz Wegwerth have been showing their works at the *Setareh Gallery*.

The fact that the DC Open promotes the participation of off-spaces with a decisive gesture indicates that these galleries are just as important for the Düsseldorf gallery context.

Galleries as such have been an integral part and a continuously growing structure in Düsseldorf since the 1960s – their work, characterized by a sustained active commitment to art, is indispensable for any subsequent discourse on art and artistic photography.



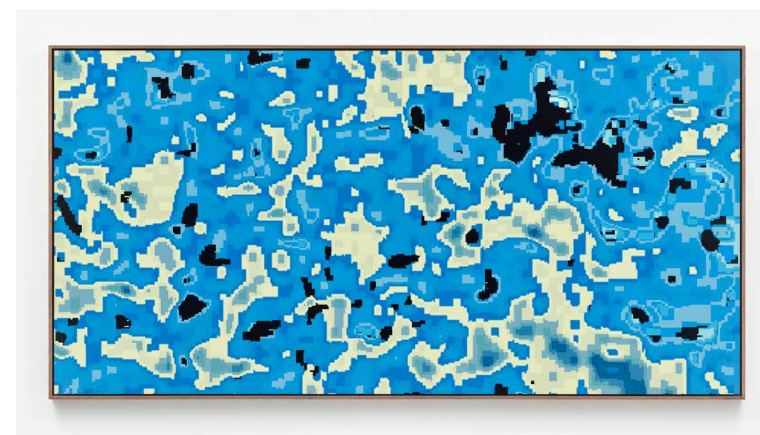
Exhibition view, Taiyo Onorato & Nico Krebs, FUTURE MEMORIES, Sies & Höke Gallery, 2021

GALLERY KONRAD FISCHER

Through its founding couple, Dorothee and Konrad Fischer, the *Gallery Konrad Fischer* picked up on contemporary art developments and synergies in Düsseldorf early on and has significantly promoted them through a bold exhibition program since 1967. Thus, they began presenting artistic and conceptual photography at a time when the medium was neither established in curatorial practice nor in the art market. "With the first gallery presentation of the works by Bernd and Hilla Becher in 1970, the Fischers paved the way for their career,"¹ explains Thomas W. Rieger, who has been the gallery's director for fifteen years. The Fischers thus opened up a new field of discourse surrounding photography in Düsseldorf. Moreover, as one of the co-curators of *documenta 5*, Konrad Fischer introduced the Bechers' photographs to a wider public as early as 1972. Starting from these impulses, a new way of thinking about and, above all, through photography was able to develop, which Dorothee and Konrad Fischer continuously confirmed through exhibitions by artists of subsequent generations such as Thomas Ruff, Axel Hütte, Candida Höfer, Katharina Sieverding, Petra Wunderlich, Simone Nieweg, and Juergen Staack.



Gilbert & George, *The Red Sculpture*, Gallery Konrad Fischer, 1976



Jan Dibbets, *Final C*, 2020

"As early as the late 1960s, Düsseldorf was considered a nucleus of conceptual photography and, with the Becher class at the Düsseldorf Art Academy, made a significant contribution to the further rapid development of the medium and its current status and numerous technical and cross-media innovations in the field of modern photography can also be traced back to the dialogue between artists and technicians in Düsseldorf – think of the Diasec process, large-format prints, subtle color processes, the use of digital photography, and image processing programs. Not to forget the role of teaching at the Düsseldorf Art Academy with such important former and current teachers – Jeff Wall, Thomas Ruff, Christopher Williams, Andreas Gursky, Marcel Odenbach, Nan Hoover, Ellen Gallagher, Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, and Keren Cytter – and the significant role of institutions, companies, and private individuals collecting in Düsseldorf."² The gallery still represents the Bechers' estate and is accompanying preparations for an extensive exhibition of their photographs at the *Metropolitan Museum of Art* in New York.

In the early years after the gallery's founding, the Fischers invited artists who used photography as one of their media – including Bruce Nauman, Gilbert & George, Jan Dibbets, Hans-Peter Feldmann, Douglas Huebler, John Baldessari, Lothar Baumgarten, and William Wegman – to Düsseldorf to develop projects on site. In doing so, they promoted collaborative thinking and positioned themselves in favor of cooperative processes. Such an attitude, which focuses on both strengthening networks and specific artistic development, has in turn given rise to forms of photography that are still effective worldwide today.



Gilbert & George, *The Red Sculpture*, Konrad Fischer poster, 1976

¹ Information Thomas W. Rieger from the questionnaire sent in advance of this report on 10/14/2021.

² Ibid.

GALLERY HANS MAYER

Founded in 1965 by Hans Mayer as an (op)art gallery in Esslingen, Mayer moved his field of activity in 1969 first to Krefeld and then to Düsseldorf, where in 1971 he had his own premises set up by Max Bill on Grabbeplatz and, after a minimal relocation about 100 meters away, has now been running his *Gallery Hans Mayer* in cooperation with *Gallery Max Mayer* in the *Schmela House* since 2020. The gallery program, which has now been maintained for over fifty-five years, is characterized by Hans Mayer's trans-disciplinary outlook. From very early on, his interest was in photography. In 1969, as part of the opening of his *Art Market for Graphics and Objects* in Düsseldorf, he sold prints by Andy Warhol, for whom private photographic images, including those of Düsseldorf customers, became the basis for Warhol's silkscreen prints in subsequent exhibitions – as in 1979, when Warhol and Beuys met through Mayer in his gallery on Grabbeplatz. A large number of photographic archive recordings from the Gallery Hans Mayer provide insight into this.

With Helmut Newton, Dennis Hopper, Jürgen Klauke, Bill Beckley, and Peter Hutchinson in particular, Hans Mayer exhibited artists who in various ways made the medium of photography a vocabulary of their artistic work.



Gallery Hans Mayer, exterior view



Jürgen Klauke, Prosecuritas cycle (Phantom Photography), Gallery Hans Mayer, 2018



Joseph Beuys and Andy Warhol at the opening of Warhol's exhibition *Indians, Portraits, Torsos*, 1979

Mayer has a special connection to the work of Peter Lindbergh: "Pit Lindbergh, who in the mid-1970s was still working as the painter 'Sultan' had a part-time job in my gallery. I convinced him that he would be able to realize his creative energy much better as a photographer than if he continued to be a painter. He has also remained true to his extensive ties to other fields: Art, dance, fashion, and therefore later as a photographer, with his epoch-making works, he fitted very well into my gallery – and to Düsseldorf! [...] Düsseldorf, as a distinctly international state capital, very well connected in terms of transport, is a city that intelligently combines the so-called 'high and low' like no other city in the Federal Republic of Germany."¹

The relocation of the gallery to Düsseldorf was and is essential for his activities on the art market. Mayer still appreciates the proximity to the immediate artistic events that radiated strongly from the Art Academy and its teachers. "Düsseldorf is a place," Mayer says, "where a great many interesting fields come together, and close to the public. Many important, extremely influential photo artists, who [...] characterized, shaped, and awakened the view for the photographic areas of art, firmly established it in the art field in the first place, come from the Düsseldorf Art Academy [...], even artists of the 19th century, who dealt with photography, worked from there."²

¹ Information Hans Mayer from the questionnaire sent in advance of this report on 10/29/2021.

² Ibid.

INSTITUTIONS FOR RESTAURATION, DIGITIZATION AND RESEARCH



RESTORATION CENTER DÜSSELDORF

The *Restoration Center of the State Capital Düsseldorf* was founded in 1976 as a municipal cultural institute with the aim of preserving, maintaining, and researching art and cultural assets. It provides conservation and restoration services to the city's museum, archives, and exhibition halls. In the 2000s, the center was one of the few institutions in Germany to succeed in establishing the Department of Photo Restoration and an associated, specialized full-time position. With the appointment of the graduate photo conservator Jessica Morhard, this position has been filled by an expert who develops strategies for the conservation and art-technological research of the Düsseldorf photo collections on an international level and accompanies loans and exhibitions according to conservation standards. Among

the 3.5 million objects under the care of the Restoration Center are included diverse photographic holdings ranging from the beginnings of photography to the present and covering a wide range of photographic techniques.

Jessica Morhard is a trained photographer and has been involved for years at the national level in professional groups dedicated to the preservation of photographs. For the context of her work, the existing photographic competencies and facilities in Düsseldorf are important, so above all are the structure of production, collection, and exhibition sites: "In and around the Ehrenhof alone, we have the Academy as a training facility and place of artistic creation, the Kunstpalast, and the NRW-Forum as places of collecting and exhibiting, as well as the



Restoration Center Düsseldorf, Identification of the image carrier on a group of 35mm negatives from the photographic collection of the City Museum Düsseldorf



Jessica Morhard, Dipl. (FH) restorer of photography, at the Restoration Center Düsseldorf



Restoration of a matt collodion photograph from the photographic collection of the City Museum Düsseldorf. Photographer unknown, "Ledigheim Eisenstrasse, room with two beds".

Restoration Center with its instrumental infrastructure, its specialized and networked staff, and finally, the specialized library as a Competence Center for Conservation and Art Technological Research,"¹ says Morhard.

She appreciates this versatile structure for her professional practice: "In my work as a photo restorer at the Restoration Center Düsseldorf, I have the opportunity to approach the questions of restoration and conservation of photographs in a broadly diversified field of objects and tasks. The conditions at the Restoration Center are excellent: our infrastructure allows for scientific research methods, we have professional exchange with the specialized departments – including the newly founded in house Department of Media Art Restoration where we conduct networked research on an international level."²

The restoration of photographs is to be given even greater importance in Düsseldorf in the future. The Restoration Center in the Ehrenhof will be reopened in the third quarter of 2022, equipped with the highest quality and most recent technology.

¹ Information Jessica Morhard from the questionnaire sent in advance of this report on 10/15/2021.

² Ibid.

LVR CENTER FOR MEDIA AND EDUCATION

Emerging from the municipal Film and Picture Office, founded in 1922, and subsequently from the Landes- and Stadtbildstelle Düsseldorf, the LVR-ZMB is considered “the photographic memory of the Rhineland.”



LVR State Image and Media Office, Digitization Department

Located at Düsseldorf’s main train station, the *LVR Center for Media and Education (LVR-ZMB)* is the central media service provider for the Rhineland Regional Association and also serves as the Media Center for the City of Düsseldorf. Emerging from the municipal Film and Picture Office, founded in 1922, and subsequently from the Landes- and Stadtbildstelle Düsseldorf, the LVR-ZMB is considered “the photographic memory of the Rhineland.”¹ The focus of the LVR-ZMB photo archive is on the cultural history of the Rhineland over the past 100 years, with the holdings featuring views of Düsseldorf in particular. Landscape photographs are supplemented here by motifs from thematic spectrums such as architecture, art, industry, crafts, customs, and folklore. The LVR-ZMB’s extensive image archive is expanded through the continuous in-house production of photographic views, primarily through estates, donations, and purchases – such as the estate of the photographer Christine Langensiepen, whose collection consists of approximately 90,000 negatives and documents the Düsseldorf music scene from the mid-1970s to the end of the 1990s. In 2020, the photo collection of photographer Herby Sachs, whose photographs were dedicated to Jewish life in Cologne and the Rhineland, was added to the photo archive. Task and goal of the LVR-ZMB is the ongoing digitization of the views in order to ensure a transparent and barrier-free handling of the archival materials. To date, the center has made photographic views available to its (scientific) users as printouts or digital copies.

¹ https://medien-und-bildung.lvr.de/de/unser_angebot/fotoarchiv/fotoarchiv.html, last accessed on 11/11/2021.

**HEINRICH HEINE UNIVERSITY,
DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY**

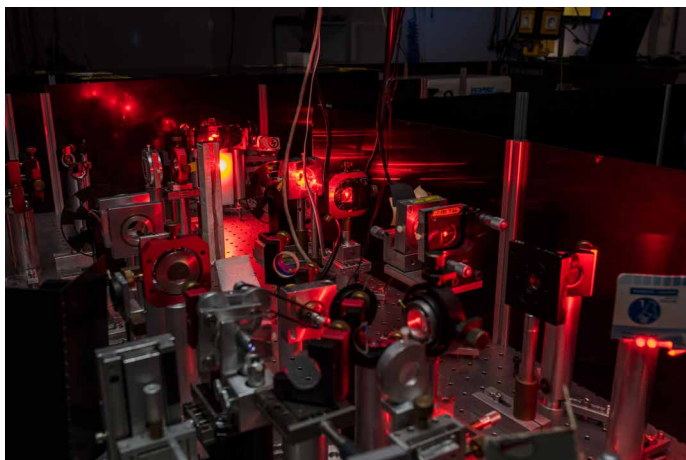
With 29 institutes and working groups in the fields of inorganic chemistry, biochemistry, bioorganic chemistry, organic chemistry, physical chemistry, and theoretical chemistry, as well as approximately 1,500 students in the study programs biochemistry, chemistry, economic chemistry, and natural sciences, chemistry forms an important area in the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences at *Heinrich Heine University (HHU)* Düsseldorf. The *Scientific Institution of Chemistry at HHU* and is closely networked with the *Research Center Jülich* in research and teaching.¹

"In the Department of Chemistry at HHU, there is extensive expertise in the areas of dyes and pigments, and also for polymeric carrier materials as well as adhesives and composite systems. In addition to fundamental questions on luminescence, which the institute investigates from theoretical, analytical, synthetic, and application perspectives

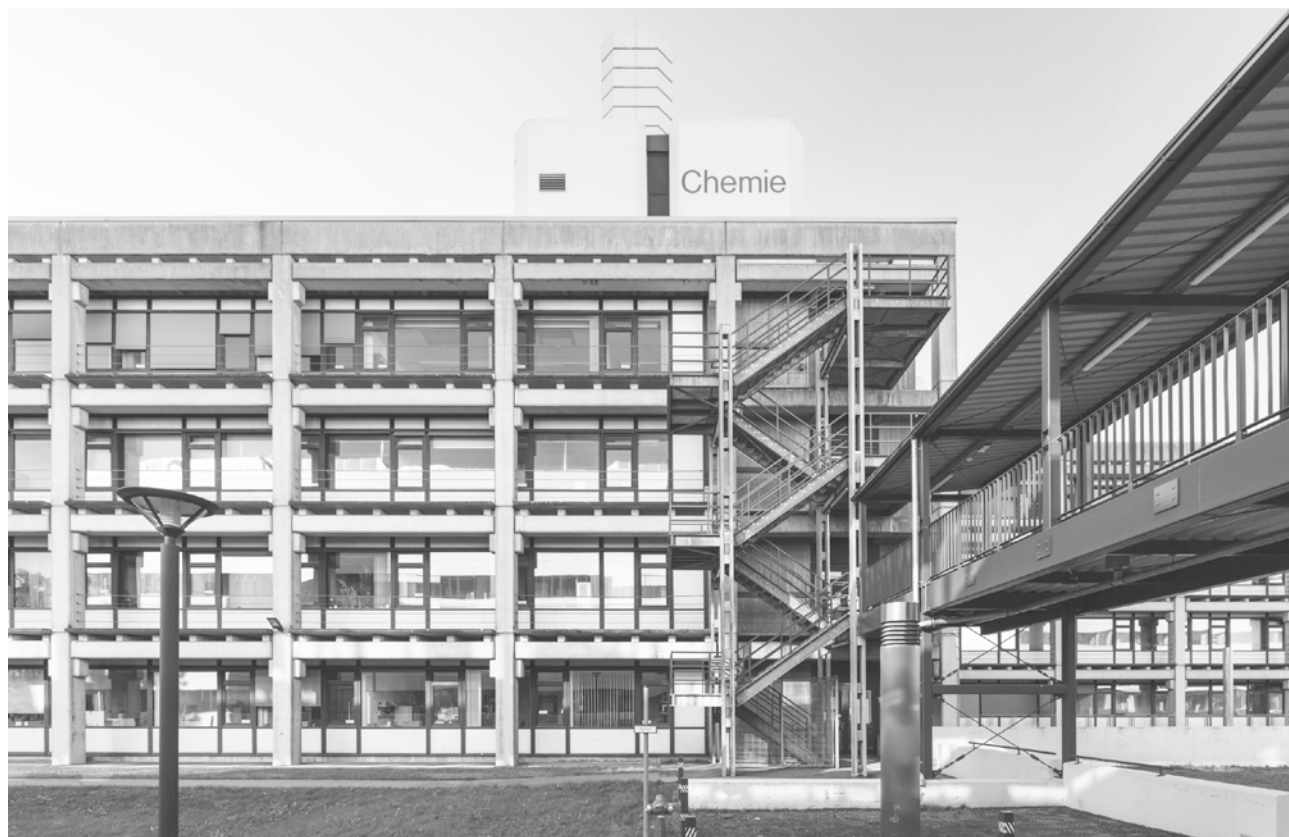
(i.e., within the framework of its own graduate college), aspects such as long-term durability and photo-chemically induced degradation processes of such materials also play an important role,"² says Prof. Dr. Constantin Czekelius. He and his research group for *Asymmetric Synthesis and Catalysis at the Institute of Organic Chemistry and Macromolecular Chemistry* are interested in making their experience, knowledge, and approaches available for cooperation with the DFI and participating in the research work.

¹ Cf. <https://www.chemie.hhu.de/>, last accessed on 11/02/2021.

² Information Prof. Dr. Constantin Czekelius in an e-mail to the Coordination Center Photography of the State Capital Düsseldorf on 06/07/2021.



Laboratory, Heinrich Heine University, Department of Chemistry



Heinrich Heine University, Department of Chemistry, exterior view

IMAI FOUNDATION – INTER MEDIA ART INSTITUTE

The non-profit operational foundation *IMAI – Inter Media Art Institute* was founded in 2006 to preserve, present, distribute, and further develop the audiovisual archive of the Cologne Media Art Agency 235. The foundation houses over 3,000 video works, ranging from the pioneers of the 1960s to the experiments of the

of the Rhenish underground of the 1980s and 1990s to young contemporary positions from all over the world. In addition, the foundation supports more than 120 international artists in the distribution of their videos. Regularly research projects and conferences on topics such as reproduction, duplication, and distribution in contemporary media art and the archiving of fragile bequests from sub- and countercultures. The foundation maintains office and archive space at the Kreativhof in Birkenstraße, where researchers and curators can view the archive and meet for workshops. In the *NRW-Forum Düsseldorf*, the foundation also operates the exhibition space *Videolounge*, where visitors can interactively explore the history of international video art.

In addition, changing video art programs are curated for large-scale projection.

This text, written by Linnea Semmerling, was made available by the *IMAI Foundation – Inter Media Art Institute*, Düsseldorf.



Videolounge of the Foundation IMAI – Inter Media Art Institute at the NRW-Forum Düsseldorf

DÜSSELDORF: PRODUCTION SITE FOR PHOTOGRAPHY

711rent
Calumet Photographic
Canon Deutschland
Conzen
DIC Corporation Europe
Dr. Krewani Bilderrahmen
EGA-Rahmen
Einrahmungen Darius Zielinski
Eizo Europe
Epson Deutschland
Foto Centrallabor Oedekoven
Foto Koch
Foto Leistenschneider
Fujifilm Europe
Grieger
hsl Fachlabor
Kaschierhaus Hofmeister
Nikon Deutschland
Schwan Glas
Schwarzweiß Fotolabor
terhardt
Wacom Europe
a. o.

It is not the artistic or utilitarian photographic image idea alone that produces photographs. Since photography is a technical medium, its images are always simultaneously part of a broader photographic production process and network. (Specialized) cameras, lenses, and innovative computer-based techniques, for example, are just as much a part of the creation of a photographic image as paper, pigments, chemicals, glass, wood, and metal – and last but not least, it is the people with specialist knowledge who are responsible for and implement specific work steps from capturing and processing to the presentation of an image.



Image production and -processing at Grieger

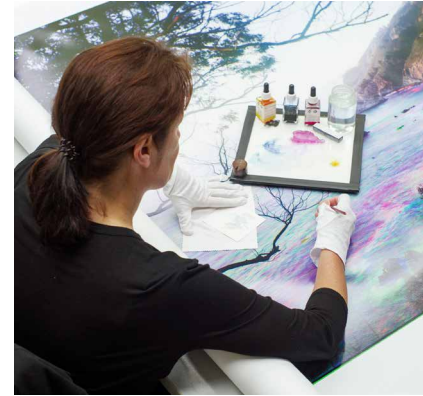
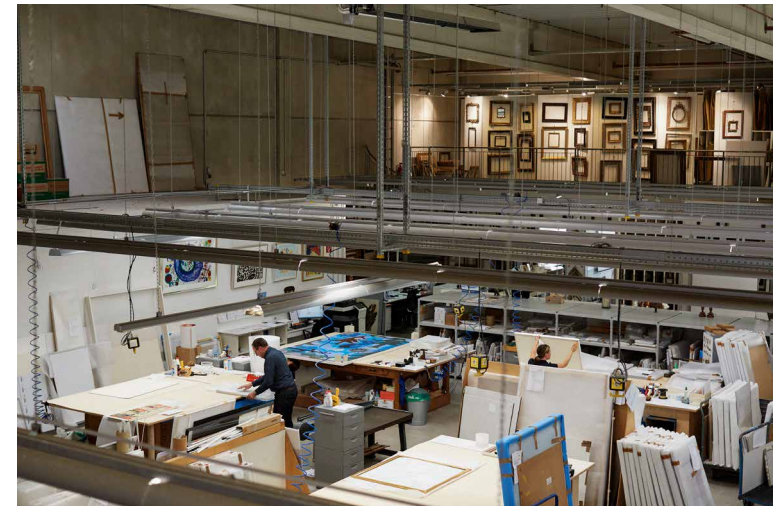


Image retouching at Grieger

Against the backdrop of a large number of image-producing companies, Düsseldorf, as Germany's largest business location, has a far-reaching network within a geographically dense radius that includes all image-producing processes in photographic production and facilitates them in a sustainable and goal-oriented manner.

Numerous international companies that have gained importance for the development of the medium of photography and the photography-based image industry have their European or German headquarters in Düsseldorf or in its immediate vicinity. In particular, globally active Japanese companies specializing in optical and printing

technologies have settled in the Rhineland metropolitan region: *Canon*, for example, is located in Krefeld, *Eizo* in Mönchengladbach, *Epson* in Meerbusch, while *Nikon*, *Fujifilm*, and *Wacom* have chosen Düsseldorf as their location. Düsseldorf is considered the largest Japan business location in continental Europe. The Danish manufacturer *Phase One*, on the other hand, which is regarded as a producer of high-end digital camera systems and digital gear, has its German headquarters in Cologne. The Japanese chemical company *DIC Corporation*, known worldwide for high-quality color pigments and color technologies relevant in photography, for example for digital prints and displays, has set up its European headquarters centrally in Immermannstraße in Düsseldorf.



Production and processing at Conzen



Frame workshop terhardt

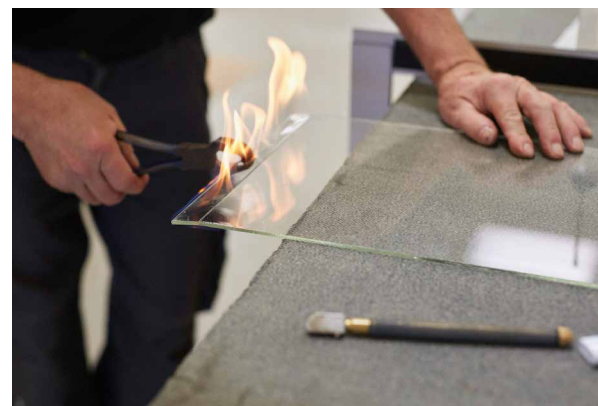
In addition to the global players, it is the medium-sized and in some cases family-run companies that have provided important impulses in the production networks in Düsseldorf. The specialist laboratory Grieger, founded more than fifty years ago in Esslingen, has been based in Düsseldorf since the 1970s and is now part of the London-based *HENI Group*. Grieger specializes in the production of artworks and artistic photography, especially in large format – from museum exhibitions to art-on-construction projects. With decades of experience, *Grieger* has expertise that has gained worldwide recognition and led to international collaborations with artists, galleries, and museums.

As a specialized laboratory for high-quality image services, the *hsl* professional laboratory, also located in the center of Düsseldorf and has been producing photographic images for advertising agencies, industry, and publishing houses, as well as for photographers and artists in Germany and abroad since 1987.² In addition to handprints

and professional film processing, the focus is primarily in digital image processing. Since the mid-2000s, *hsl*'s focus has been on artistic photography.

Noteworthy is the large number of frame builders in Düsseldorf that produce frames of high material quality and processing technology, including *Einrahmungen Darius Zielinski* not far from Düsseldorf's main train station, *EGA-Rahmen* in Düsseldorf-Flingern and *biglas Dr. Krewani* in Düsseldorf-Bilk. In particular, the company *terhardt* in Düsseldorf-Heerdt has become a household name worldwide for its high-quality picture frame construction. Since 1987, many meanwhile internationally active photo artists, galleries, and museums have been customers of the Düsseldorf carpenters Kina and Frank Terhardt. Quality and handwork in large format are the leitmotifs of the manufactory.

The *Conzen* factory in Düsseldorf-Flingern has been manufacturing picture frames for 167 years. The fifth-generation family business was founded in 1854 as a painting frame and mirror factory and is now part of *Werkladen Conzen Kunst Service GmbH*. This includes, for example, cooperation with *Bild & Rahmen Werkladen* in Cologne, which, like *Conzen*, is one of Germany's largest framing companies and with which *Conzen* merged in 2014.



Processing at Conzen

It is the values of experience rich in tradition and the convictions of the respective profession that go hand in hand with them that combine in Düsseldorf with current international developments to form a synergetic infrastructure, from which diverse manifestations of the photographic have emerged over a considerable period of time.

1 Cf. brochure *Where Business Works – Düsseldorf – Nähe trifft Freiheit*, published by the State Capital Düsseldorf, Düsseldorf 2019, p. 3.

2 The specialist laboratories Grieger and *hsl* merged to *Grieger GmbH* in August 2022.

CITY MAP DÜSSELDORF



Captions

Teaching

- HS** Hochschule Düsseldorf
KU Art Academy Düsseldorf

Institutionen

- 20** Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, K20
21 Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, K21
FO NRW-Forum
FM Filmmuseum Düsseldorf
KH Kunsthalle Düsseldorf
KK Kunstarchiv Kaiserswerth
KP Kunstpalast
KT KIT – Art in the Tunnel
KV Art Association for Rhineland and Westphalia
SM City Museum Düsseldorf
TM Theater Museum Düsseldorf

Private Collections /

Exhibition Spaces

- 10** Kai 10 | Arthema Foundation
JS Julia Stoschek Collection
PH Sammlung Philara
SP Kunst- und Kulturstiftung der Stadtsparkasse Düsseldorf

Research

- HH** Heinrich-Heine-Universität
IM IMAI – Inter Media Art Institute
LV LVR-Center for Media and Education
RZ Restoration Center Düsseldorf
VL IMAI Videolounge

Galleries

- AH** Achenbach Hagemeyer
BE Beck & Eggeling
BS Bengelsträter
BO boa-basedonart gallery
CO Cosar
DR Galerie Droste
EF Art Edition-Fils
KF Konrad Fischer Galerie
LH Lucas Hirsch
KW Kadel Willborn
KH Anna Klinkhammer Galerie
KD Kunst & Denker Contemporary
LB Galerie Lausberg
LP Martin M. Leyer-Pritzkow
LU Ludorff
LL Linn Lühn
ML Markus Lüttgen
HM Galerie Hans Mayer
MM Galerie Max Mayer
MO Mook Gallery
NK Nidus Kosmos
NB noir blanche
UP Galerie Ute Parduhn
RP Galerie Rupert Pfab
PR Petra Rinck Galerie
68 Ruttkowski;68
SW Galerie Schönewald
MS Galerie Clara Maria Sels
SE Setareh
SX Setareh X
SH Sies + Höke
FS Galerie Franz Swetec
PT Galerie Peter Tedden
VH Van Horn
VO Galerie Voss
WP wildpalms

Independent Initiatives

- AE** ÆdT
AF Antifoto
AU AURA
AW AWA-Bar
BS Baustelle Schaustelle
BK BBK Düsseldorf
BB Betonbox
BL Bloom
DD die digitale düsseldorf
DB Düsseldorfer Büdchentag e. V.
DK Düsseldorfer Künstlerinnen e. V.
DK Düsseldorf – Palermo e. V.
FW Filmwerkstatt e. V.
KE Kulturbahnhof Eller e. V.
GP Gasthof Worringer Platz
KR Gesellschaft für Kultur & Raumfahrt e. V.
IK IKS – Institut für Kunstdokumentation und Szenografie
KH Kunst im Hafen e. V.
MK Künstlerverein Malkasten e. V.
LA LA CHAMBRE
LE Le Bureau
MA MAP Markus Ambach Projekte
NP NAILS projectroom
NF Neue Fotografie
NK NKR – Neuer Kunstraum
ON onomato künstlerverein
PD plan.d. Produzentengalerie e. V.
PP Prephotography
31 Ross 31
SA Salon des Amateurs
AR STUDIO FOR ARTISTIC RESEARCH
S& sonneundsolche
TB The Box
TP the pool
DK Verein der Dusseldorfer Künstler, gegr. 1844
WK Weltkunstzimmer
W8 WP8 e. V.
ZF ZERO foundation
ZW Zweck e. V.

Production

- 71** 711rent
CP Calumet Photographic
CA Canon Deutschland
CO Conzen
DI DIC Corporation Europe
KR Dr. Krewani Bilderrahmen
EG EGA-Rahmen
DZ Einrahmungen Darius Zielinski
EI Eizo Europe
EP Epson Deutschland
OE Foto Centrallabor Oedekoven
FK Foto Koch
FL Foto Leistenschneider
FJ Fujifilm Europe
GR Grieger
HS hsl Fachlabor
KH Kaschierhaus Hofmeister
NI Nikon Deutschland
SG Schwan Glas
SW Schwarzweiß Fotolabor
TE terhardt
WA Wacom Europe

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VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2022. Weitere Arbeiten von:
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Katharina Maderthaner, Dominic Osterried, Michail
Pirgelis, Bands: Die Singles, Fragil, Stabil Elite, Yilmaz
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Christina Irrgang (*1983) is an artist and media scholar, author, and musician.

She completed her doctorate at the *Karlsruhe University of Arts and Design* on photographic image strategies under National Socialism and deals with visual continuity of National Socialism in her current research projects. Since 2010 she has been writing and publishing texts on contemporary art. In her work as a freelance writer, she focuses on techniques of democratic communication and conversation, from which conceptual dialogues sometimes emerge.

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