

## Sigmar Polke

"ZEITREISE" – Photographs 1966 – 1986

Collection Georg Polke

Berlin: Goethestraße 2/3, 6 March – 9 May 2020



Galerie Max Hetzler is pleased to announce the solo exhibition "ZEITREISE" – *Photographs 1966 – 1986. Collection Georg Polke* with photographs by **Sigmar Polke** from the Collection Georg Polke at Goethestraße 2/3.

In his early photographs, Sigmar Polke proves to be an experimental quick-change artist and alchemist in the darkroom. Most of the photographs have only recently been revealed, characterising Sigmar Polke as a protagonist of the art world and perceptive chronicler with a unique sense of humour. The broad set of photographs

points to a life of constant companionship with the camera, and takes its viewer on a journey back in time to the late 60s and 70s up until Polke's participation in the 1986 Biennale.

In numerous photographs Polke depicts his immediate surroundings: in his home, at first in Düsseldorf, from 1972 onwards at the Gaspelshof in Willich, later on in Cologne, and also of visits to vernissages and of travels. This creates "incredible documents of being present" (Bice Curiger), which bear witness to the photographer's zest for life and compassion, his alertness and presence. Life and art merge into one another in his images, whereby the Rhenish art scene of the 1970s always tended to stage itself in front of the lens.

Polke defies rules in an extremely carefree way in his photography, constantly searching for ways to escape the triviality of everyday life. By processing his photographs with various technical and photochemical interventions, Polke explores the limits of the medium, leaving the sentiment of photography as a mere form of documentation far behind. He purposely blurs and disrespects exposure time, solarises, erases certain parts of the image and plays with double exposure. Spontaneously manipulating and superposing negatives, on occasion under the influence of hallucinatory substances, contributes to giving his work a particular mystical glow. Through the processing, the motifs become ambiguous and ambivalent, at the same time they are alienated by a surreal picture language and undergo a superelevation, whereby Polke's photography significantly gains characteristics of his paintings.

*"Polke uses deliberately produced 'mistakes' and random effects as a kind of catalyst. By doing so he creates humorous images that break from everyday life and endow a mysterious aura to the trivial."* (Dr. Fritz Emslander, Stellvertretender Direktor, Museum Morsbroich, Leverkusen, 2018)

Some of the photographs in the Georg Polke Collection derive from the photographic laboratory at the Gaspelshof in Willich, which Sigmar Polke partly left to his son Georg in 1978, while another part was given to Georg Polke by his father in 1986.

For many years the photographs remained fairly unknown and first came into the public eye in 2018 in the exhibition *Sigmar Polke. Fotografien 70-80* at the Museum Morsbroich, Leverkusen, and were presented the following year in the exhibition *Sigmar Polke's Photographic Infamies* at LE BAL, Paris.

The exhibition is complemented by a large-scale vitrine showcasing almost all monographic publications by and about Sigmar Polke. The vast collection (Prigge Collection, Eifel) spans all exhibition catalogues and publishing house publications as well as the majority of distributed invitation cards, leaflets and other ephemera. Apart from this it comprises rare catalogue editions, catalogues with original drawings by Polke and limited edition artist books. The bibliophile collector Thomas Prigge has been following Polke's exhibitions and publications intensively since the late 1960s and assured that he "always kept everything".

Prigge's large archive cabinet contains the entire Polke collection published to date, spanning from Polke's first publication on the occasion of his first solo exhibition at the Galerie Rene Block (Berlin, 1966) to the most recent exhibition catalogues. Over many years the passionate collector rounded off his archive with true rarities – including for example the typescript of Polke's self-interview in 1966, the artist booklet on the occasion of the legendary exhibition *Fünf in Köln* (Kölnischer Kunstverein, 1979), published in only a few photocopies, as well as unique works, such as Polke's collaged comic *Diabolik* (1979) and his randomly executed klecksographs *ohne Titel (Stenogramme)* in a binder from 1985. The numerous publications on Sigmar Polke's photographic oeuvre are presented in display cases.

**Sigmar Polke** (1941 - 2010), lived and worked in Düsseldorf, Cologne and Hamburg. Polke's work was part of solo and group exhibitions in renown institutions, such as Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Siegen (2018); Museum Frieder Burda, Baden-Baden (2017); Städel Museum, Frankfurt am Main (2016); Museum Abteiberg, Mönchengladbach (2015); Tate Modern, London; The Museum of Modern Art, New York (both 2014); Museu de Arte de São Paulo Assis Chateaubriand, São Paulo (2011); Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg (2009); Städtische Galerie, Karlsruhe (2008); J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles (2007); The National Museum of Art, Osaka, Japan (2006); Ueno Royal Museum, Tokyo (2005) and Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas (2002), among others. His works are in the collections of the Centre Georges Pompidou – Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris; Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, Bilbao; The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; The National Museum of Art, Osaka; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam and Tate Modern, London, among others.

Further exhibitions, fair participations and events:

11 March – 16 May 2020

**Christopher Wool**

41 Dover Street W1S 4NS London

14 March – 25 April 2020

**Jeremy Demester**

*OUIDAH*

Bleibtreustraße 45, 10623 Berlin

21 March – 9 May 2020

**Ida Ekblad**

*A DEEP MEDICINE*

57, rue du Temple 75004 Paris

7 - 15 March 2020

**TEFAF Maastricht**

Press contact:

Galerie Max Hetzler  
presse@maxhetzler.com  
Berlin: +49 30 346 497 85-0

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