

Michael Schmidt
Natur
Curated by Thomas Weski

During Gallery Weekend Berlin Galerie Nordenhake presents its fifth solo exhibition of photographer Michael Schmidt (1945-2014). Schmidt's works are characterised by the persistent quest of finding a new approach to reality by means of photography.

Since the mid 1990s his oeuvre includes works that the artist created by using images from his working archive. The process of re-contextualising his individual shots forms an integral part of Schmidt's artistic practice. The interval between the shooting of the pictures and the revision enables a different perspective on the original subject. The artist also aims to reactivate the aesthetic potential of the archived material by employing different artistic criteria and creating new compilations of the works. This editorial process of not merely selecting but also re-arranging the photographs ultimately leads to a novel interpretation.

This process is employed in *NATUR*, a project that Schmidt completed shortly before his death in 2014. The exhibition of the delicate small-scale prints from negatives dating back to 1987-97 is preceded by the creation of a photo book, a practice at the core of Schmidt's work. The choice of the title indicates that the artist goes beyond the mere depiction of a specific landscape and articulates an idea of nature in a distinctive pictorial language. Schmidt's black and white images contain a wealth of silver tones and rich greys imbuing the images with an almost physical sense of gravity or lightness. The selection of the subjects, the employment of focus and blur and above all the implementation of light convey an existential understanding of nature and its significance for us.

Michael Schmidt was born in 1945 in Berlin, where he died in 2014. He is regarded as one of the seminal German post-war photographers. His works can be found in national and international collections and have been presented in numerous solo and group exhibitions. A major retrospective of Michael Schmidt's work curated by Thomas Weski is planned for 2020 and will be shown in one of the museums of the Nationalgalerie Berlin.

In 1976, Michael Schmidt founded the Werkstatt für Fotografie at VHS Berlin-Kreuzberg, which became a major forum for international discussions on photography in (West) Berlin. In 1987 he exhibited *WAFFENRUHE (CEASEFIRE)* at Berlinische Galerie. In 1988 the Museum of Modern Art, New York presented the work in the exhibition „New Photography 4“. In 1996 *EIN-HEIT* was shown for the first time at MoMA, New York under its English title *U-NI-TY*. This was the first solo-exhibition of a German photographer at MoMA since decades. In the same year, *EIN-HEIT* was presented for the first time in Germany at Sprengel Museum Hanover. In 1995 a first survey exhibition of his work was on view at Museum Folkwang Essen, after the museum had shown exhibitions of Schmidt in 1981 and 1988. In 2010 Michael Schmidt presented his comprehensive survey exhibition „Grey as Colour. Photographs since 2009“ at Haus der Kunst, Munich. Michael Schmidt participated in the 55th Venice Biennial in 2013, and the Berlin Biennial in 2006 and 2010. *LEBENSMITTEL (FOOD)* was presented in solo exhibitions at Museum Morsbroich, Leverkusen (2012), Galerie im Taxispalais, Innsbruck (2013) and at Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin (2013). In 2014 the artist was awarded with the prestigious Prix Pictet for his work *LEBENSMITTEL*. The Prix Pictet exhibition "Consumption" was on view at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London and then travelled extensively in both Europe and internationally.

The Foundation for Photography and Media Art with the Michael Schmidt Archive was founded in 1999, and since the artist's death is organising and preserving the artist's archive.

Exhibition: April 30 – May 28, 2016
Please contact the gallery for further information and press images

ARTISTS: MERİÇ ALGÜN RINGBORG CHRISTIAN ANDERSSON OLLE BAERTLING MIROSLAW BAŁKA ANNA BARHAM IÑAKI BONILLAS ANN BÖTTCHER MICHAEL BUDNY GERARD BYRNE JOHN COPLANS SARAH CROWNER JONAS DAHLBERG ANN EDHOLM SPENCER FINCH HREINN FRIÐFINNSSON PAUL FÄGERSKIÖLD FELIX GMELIN ZVI HECKER SOFIA HULTÉN FRANKA HÖRNSCHEMEYER GUNILLA KLINGBERG KARL LARSSON EVA LÖFDAHL MEUSER HELEN MIRRA ESKO MÄNNIKKÖ SIROUS NAMAZI WALTER NIEDERMAYR SCOTT OLSON MIKAEL OLSSON MARJETICA POTRČ HÅKAN REHNBERG ULRICH RÜCKRIEM MICHAEL SCHMIDT FLORIAN SLOTAWA LEON TARASEWICZ JOHAN THURFJELL ALAN UGLOW GÜNTER UMBERG NOT VITAL MAGNUS WALLIN STANLEY WHITNEY RÉMY ZAUGG JOHN ZURIER