

Biennale

The Lives and Loves of Images

29/02–26/04/2020

Wilhelm-Hack-Museum, Ludwigshafen

When Images Collide

Photography has always given rise to striking individual images, but in general, it has been a medium of combination. Photographs are brought together to form larger and more complex propositions about the world. Series, archives, collections, albums, suites, sequences, stories, narratives.

When visual culture was dominated by the printed page, the relations between images could be fixed. In the era of the electronic screen and the Internet, the daily experience of images often feels more like montage and collage: fragmentary and multi-directional.

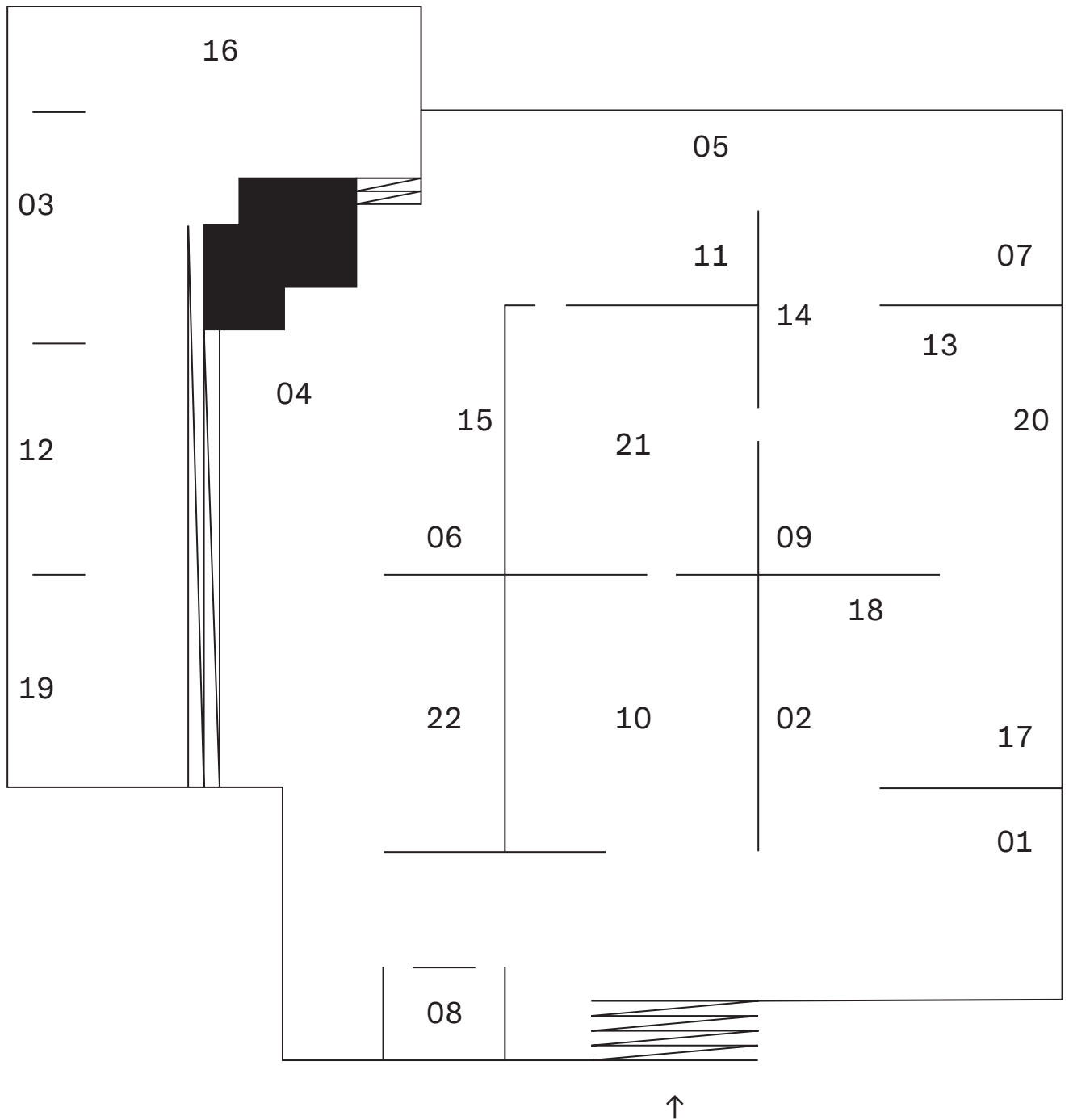
It is an environment suggestive of possible meanings but also one that distracts from resolution or conclusion.

When Images Collide brings together a range of current practices that explore image combination. At the root of the exhibition is the diptych form, which is perhaps the building block of all editing, all image assembly. From here, it moves in several directions, toward complex collage in analogue and digital forms, toward the uses of the still image in film and video, and towards sculpture and installation.

Curated by David Company

**für aktuelle
Fotografie**

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Jean-Marc Caimi & Valentina Piccinni

- 01 From the series *Güle Güle*, 2019
34 Inkjet-Prints, 70 × 100 cm each

The artist couple Valentina Piccinni and Jean-Marc Caimi have been working at the interface of documentary and very personal photography since 2013. *Güle Güle* (Turkish for “goodbye”) was created during a one-month stay in Istanbul. Based on their numerous contacts with the local people, they created a portrait of the city and its inhabitants that intimately depicts major social issues as well as personal fates: Islamization, the Syrian refugee influx, the Kurdish conflict, the stigmatization of the LGBTQ community, the rapid gentrification processes leading to a loss of identity, as well as the extreme and dangerous marginalization of the poorer classes—all this is the theme of the series, which was recently published in their book bearing the same name.

The colourfulness of the individual photographs places a strange cheerfulness next to the partly brutal content. The collision of the images, which are mounted directly and rawly on the wall, without any distance between them, becomes a symbol of the contrasts that Istanbul unites—with all its social and political upheavals.

Jeff Cowen

- 02 *Self-Portrait / Csilla Szabo*, 2011
Silver gelatine print, 55 × 98 cm
- Nature Morte 27*, 2013
Silver gelatine print, mixed media, 152 × 244 cm

Courtesy Michael Werner Kunsthandel, Cologne

The work *Self-Portrait / Csilla Szabo* consists of two black and white photographs showing a room. There are photo paper boxes on the large table and the wall in the background is covered with photos. In contrast to the left picture, which is an inanimate still life, the right picture shows movement: The person sitting at the table - the title suggests, that it is the artist himself - is blurred. He is holding papers in his hand and in front of him on the floor is a vase with a bouquet of flowers. The left and right photograph together constitute a quiet pair of contrasts: inanimate - animate, death - life. The cohesion is formed by the medium itself, which is visible in the traces of processing on the edges of the artwork: they are evidence of production and emphasise the artisanal process of photographing and developing by the artist.

Nature Morte 27 is a juxtaposition of two photographs of a pumpkin taken just a few seconds apart. The play with sharpness and blur, movement and stillness and the limits and potential of photography as a medium are the main themes of Cohen's work.

At this point it is worth taking a look around the corner: Christoph Klauke's *Double Portraits* pursue the same concept—but show completely different results (see No. 10).

John Divola

- 03 From the series *Chroma*:
84DPT1, 1982
83DPT9, 1983

Vintage Cybachrome, 30,5 × 61 cm each
Courtesy Galeria Pedro Alfacinha, Lisboa

The work specifications are listed in reading direction (from left to right).

Chroma is the title of the comprehensive series by Californian artist John Divola, which was created in the early 1980s and combines a number of his interests: unnatural colour (through colourfilters in front of the flash), geometry and nature, and the way photographs oscillate between symbolic meaning and reality. Shortly after starting the project, Divola began arranging the individual images into pairs:

“I was interested in the idea of the diptych as a form that invites a first analytical examination: Why are these two images together and what is their relationship to each other?”

Colour plays an important role for him. How do pictures change when they are shown side by side? Does a juxtaposition of two photographs with one dominant colour result in the luminous colourfulness coming to the fore or are the formal similarities emphasised?

Stéphane Duroy

- 04 *Tentative d'Épuisement d'un Livre*, 2017
Photography, painting, newsprint, collages,
49,5 × 34 cm

Since 1977, Stéphane Duroy has worked internationally as a photographer, mostly in Europe and North America. His work consists of photographs from people and places which have been left behind by the inhuman forces of modern progress. Duroy has developed a photographic vision that is both bitter and hopeful, incisive and devastating, but still offers space for change and possibilities.

In his book *UNKNOWN*, published in 2007, Duroy deals with the themes of exile and nonconformism. 100 copies of this book serve as the basis for his new, experimental work *Tentative d'Épuisement d'un Livre*, which can be seen here as a collage and text in two showcases. Ideas and images are taken up, recycled and redesigned. The collage becomes a means of archaeology and renewal. The past is not given the opportunity to freeze into structures that are quickly forgotten: the exuberant desire to connect them with the present brings them to consciousness and keeps them alive.

Sara Greenberger Rafferty

- 05 *Untitled*, 2018
Inkjet printed vinyl with grommets, 320 × 1400 cm
Courtesy Rachel Uffner Gallery, New York

The extraordinary large-format work by Sara Greenberger Rafferty can be seen as dealing with the rapid spread and reproduction of images since the establishment of the internet. Very different types of images are to be seen here: Selfies and screenshots, notations and results from online searches. Designed as a 14-meter-long mural, the work invites the viewer to come closer, to view it from one end to the other, to examine the hundreds of individual images and to attempt to make connections between them. What unites all these images? Do they form an inventory of the artist's interests? Which images do we encounter in which contexts, and how do we encounter them in everyday life? How do we become master of the flood of images and what new aesthetic potentials can be found within it?

Richard Hamilton

- 06 *Interior*, 1964/65
Screen print, 56,4 × 78,6 cm
Collection Wilhelm-Hack-Museum, Ludwigshafen

With the work *Interior* by Richard Hamilton, the exhibition *When Images Collide* enters into a dialogue with the collection of the Wilhelm-Hack-Museum: Randomly, Hamilton finds a still from the film *Shockproof* (1949) and edits it. Through printing it, he contrasts a lavishly decorated interior with confusing colour surfaces reminiscent of modernist architecture and design. The clash of these two styles is also reflected in the combination of the methods he uses—silkscreen printing and painting.

In contemporary photography, various artists also make use of the methods Hamilton used in 1964: the combination or processing of found materials—as you can discover in many works here in the exhibition *When Images Collide*.

Aaron Hegert

- 07 From the series *Shallow Learning*, 2018
Installation

The series *Shallow Learning* by the American photographer Aaron Hegert, born in 1982, which is presented here as a multi-part installation, deals with the question of how different people and computer algorithms look at photographic images. This series is based on individual images from an earlier project that Hegert had never published or exhibited. He fed all of these into Google Image Search, with which the origin of an image found online can usually be researched. However, since the search engine could not find the images offered online, it suggested a selection of similar photographs. An algorithm thus speculated on what the original photos showed. Hegert then selected images from Google's "best possible suggestions" category, placed them next to the original image in Photoshop and filled the area between the two images with the "content-based filling" function.

We have always been wondering, what we can learn about the world by viewing images. Now we also have to think about what pictures learn about the world by looking at each other.

Sohrab Hura

- 08 *The Lost Head & The Bird*, 2019
Single channel video, 12 iterations of 10 min each
Courtesy Experimenter, Kolkata

The video *The Lost Head and Bird* is introduced by the short story of the headless girl Madhu. Her former lover stole her head in revenge for not being able to possess her. Out of loneliness and desperation, Madhu seeks out a fortune teller who takes advantage of her blindness. Believing that it is a parrot with a terrible cough, Madhu buys a crow from the fortune teller.

The so-called "Idiot-photograph" gets involved in the story. He wants to photograph the headless woman, and all the wonderful and vicious things he sees along the Indian coast. Madhu and the "Idiot-photographer" merge into one, because—so the thesis—the border between the voyeur and the one at the mercy of voyeurism is more blurred than ever before. In the end of the epilogue, as Madhu goes back to the fortune teller to buy another crow, the story gets into an endless loop.

In its political metaphors, the story affects actors at different ends of the power structures, where hierarchy is manifested through gender and the dependence on superstition and religion. As soon as history repeats itself, a flood of images sets in, in which reality and fiction fuse together under Sohrab Hura's hard, irreconcilable gaze.

In hallucinatory intensity, Hura's images show the multi-layered identity of the new India and the restless dynamics within. In a thunderous crescendo, the flood of images are telling a story of ecstasy, anger, paranoia, loss, lust and disgust. Like a feverish dream, *The Lost Head & The Bird* destabilizes itself over twelve variations—the iconoclastic images question the role of the picture maker in a changing social and political culture characterized by a strict caste system of insurmountable social discrepancies.

David Jiménez

- 09 *AURA Dyptich No 239*, 2018
Pigment ink print on cotton paper, 114 × 83,3 × 5 cm
AURA Dyptich No 119, 2016
Pigment ink print on cotton paper, 114 × 83,3 × 5 cm
AURA Dyptich No 116, 2016
Pigment ink print on cotton paper, 114 × 83,3 × 5 cm

"The natural state of any photographic image is ambiguity, uncertainty." The sequences of images in Jiménez' books, or in his diptychs or triptychs on gallery walls, are increasing this ambiguity even further. By looking at two pictures, the viewer gains impressions and insights from the encounter with each individual picture or the connection between them. The space between is spatial and temporal, intuitive and intellectual, unconscious and conscious. The placing of images next to each other often imply a narrative or a continuous movement through time and place dominated by casual relationships – but these aspects don't seem to be the most important to Jiménez. The composition seems to be rather aesthetically formal. His work conveys the atmosphere of a vivid vision, a clear dream with an inner logic at the limit of our understanding.

Christoph Klauke

- 10 From the series *Double Portraits*:
Marvin Kosberg, 2005
2 C-Prints, 28,5 × 22 cm each
Michael Wojas, 2000
2 C-Prints, 28,5 × 22 cm each
Kate Coyne, 2000
2 C-Prints, 28,5 × 22 cm each
Fiona Banner, 2000
2 C-Prints, 28,5 × 22 cm each
Ravi Ponniah, 2001
2 C-Prints, 28,5 × 22 cm each
Lena Mahr, 2005
2 C-Prints, 28,5 × 22 cm each
Minga Lily, 2005
2 C-Prints, 28,5 × 22 cm each
Eugene Gauggel, 2003
2 C-Prints, 28,5 × 22 cm each

In his series *Double Portraits*, Christoph Klauke analytically explores the classic medium of portrait photography. For Klauke, the face functions as a mirror of thoughts

and emotions. In order to capture a moment of letting go and complete authenticity, Klauke takes two portraits with his bellows camera at intervals of a few seconds. The models try to sit still and are aware that the photographer will take two pictures. On first viewing, the images may appear almost identical—but on closer inspection, blurriness becomes visible, the changed facial expression and perhaps even what Klauke is trying to capture: letting go.

Kensuke Koike

- 11 *One of them*, 2019
Switched vintage photo, 13,5 × 8,7 cm
Ground Observer, 2016
Switched vintage photo, 18,3 × 13,6 cm
The Core, 2013
Switched vintage photo, 7 × 10 cm
My little P (extinct in the wild), 2014
Cut vintage photo, 14 × 6,8 cm
Buch der Natur, 2014
Switched vintage postcard, 13,6 × 8,7 cm
Mirror of Truth, 2016
Cut vintage photo, 13 × 8,5 cm
Patrol, 2013
Torn vintage photo, 13,5 × 8,3 cm
Prayer, 2012
Switched vintage photo, 14,5 × 10 cm
Out of joint, 2019
Switched vintage photo, 13,5 × 8,6 cm
Indirect Approach – first attempt & second attempt, 2013
Switched vintage photo, 14,1 × 19,6 cm
Random Encounter, 2015
Cut vintage photo, 8,8 × 5,5 cm
Identified flying object, 2014
Switched vintage photo, 9 × 14 cm

Courtesy Rossana Ciocca, Milano

It is worthwhile to get very close to the works of Kensuke Koike—not only because they are among the smallest exhibits in *When Images Collide*, but also and above all to admire the craftsmanship of the artist, who was born in Japan in 1980 and now lives in Italy. Koike works with photographic foreign material, including images he finds at flea markets. He often uses black and white portraits as the basis for his surreal-looking collages. Without a negative and thus without the possibility of reproducing the original image, Koike has only one attempt to edit the image with a few precise cuts. In doing so, he shifts individual pictorial elements. In the work *Out of joint* for example, he removes eyes, mouth and nose from the face and lets them “float” next to it. In the work *One of them*, he duplicates a man’s face in nine different ways and inserts it back in its original place. Koike uses all the components of the original, leaving nothing out and adding nothing—theoretically, the original image could be reassembled.

Peter Puklus

- 12 *Handbook to the Stars*, 2009–20
Installation, various dimensions
Courtesy Štokovec, Space for Culture

Peter Puklus’ installation includes thirty-five copies of his small hardcover book *Handbook to the Stars*. While a book in its form has a fixed order of pages, the open pages overlap on the wall, so that the images are read and linked in several directions. The individual photographs appear fragmented on the individual pages of the book, but in the installation they extend beyond the edge of one page and reappear on the other—they function side by side and individually, sliced but also joined together. Through the books on the wall, a wholeness and unity becomes visible, as if it were a constellation composed of individual stars, whose effect however, unfolds only when we recognize forms in the constellations. Puklus’s *Handbook to the Stars* is a reflection on the potential of photography, how it materializes (as a book, on the wall, in newspapers, etc.), how we (re)find patterns and forms, and how diverse the effects are that images achieve.

Timm Rautert

- 13 *Japan – Osaka Я*, 1970
Dyptich, film negative collage,
Silver gelatine print (2017), 50,8 × 61 cm each
Japan – Osaka 11, 1970
Dyptich, film negative collage,
Silver gelatine print (2017), 50,8 × 61 cm each

Courtesy Parrotta Contemporary Art, Cologne/Bonn

- 14 *New York (Harpers Bazaar)*,
from the series *Artwork*, 1969
Silver gelatine print (1989), 38,6 × 57,8 cm
New York (Harpers Bazaar),
from the series *Artwork*, 1969
Silver gelatine print (1989), 38,6 × 57,8 cm

Courtesy Parrotta Contemporary Art, Cologne/Bonn

The two diptychs are experiments with the medium of photography, which Timm Rautert, now almost 80 years old, has been pursuing since his studies with Otto Steinert at the Folkwang School in Essen in the 1960s. Questions about the randomness of the individual image (why do I choose this particular individual image on the film reel and not the preceding or following one, which usually differ only slightly?) are just as important as the question of cropping, image borders and sections—in short, the entire context. Rautert describes it as follows: “[The context] serves both to show and to hide: every photograph that is taken hides the photograph that is not taken.

The two photographs Harper’s Bazaar by Timm Rautert from 1969 are a product of chance: As a young student he hoped to meet the celebrated art director of Harper’s Bazaar magazine, Alexey Brodovitch, with whom he had exchanged letters. He was unaware that Brodovitch, due to his age, had left the magazine shortly before. So it happened that Rautert set eyes on the moodboards in the office of his successors Bea Feitler and Ruth Ansel—and took pictures of them.

They are wild contemporary witnesses, colourful collages and visual worlds of association that are reminiscent of Aby Warburg’s Mnemosyne Atlas or André Malraux’s Musée Imaginaire. A crazy, desolate interpretation of Malraux as a man of art can be seen at the Kunstverein Ludwigshafen in the exhibition All Art is Photography—it’s worth having a look at this, too.

Anastasia Samoylova

- 15 *Black and White Mountain*,
from the series *Landscape Sublime*, 2015
Inkjet-Print, 76,2 × 101,6 cm
- Aspens*, from the series *Landscape Sublime*, 2014
Inkjet-Print, 60,9 × 91,4 cm
- Beaches*, from the series *Landscape Sublime*, 2014
Inkjet-Print, 76,2 × 101,6 cm

Courtesy Galerie Caroline O'Brien, Amsterdam

- 16 *Four Seasons*, from the series *Landscape Sublime*,
2018
8 Inkjet-Prints, 91 × 91 cm; 91 × 121,9 cm;
91 × 152,4 cm; 91 × 182,9 cm (2 panels each)

Courtesy Galerie Caroline O'Brien, Amsterdam

One work in the exhibition *When Images Collide* is already visible to visitors before they enter the Wilhelm-Hack-Museum: A huge banner stretches across the outer facade. Printed on it is the work *Six Real Matterhorns* by the Russian-American artist Anastasia Samoylova, commissioned for the 2020 Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie. The image collage consists of six "real" Matterhorns and a fake, namely a photograph of the Matterhorn replica at Disneyland—but how do they differ?

Samoylova's works from her series *Landscape Sublime*, which she began in 2013, seem playful and cheerful. They present motifs that people like to photograph and look at: mountains, sunsets, beaches, flowering twigs, lavender fields. Samoylova works with photographic material that she finds on the Internet and that is made available there without copyright restrictions. She arranges the collected images according to search terms, prints them out and arranges them in her studio into three-dimensional sculptures, which she then photographs. Landscape images are often found in advertisements or on product labels, so they surround us constantly. As a result, we often already have images of landscapes in our minds that we have never seen in reality, but only as (standardised) images. Samoylova is not concerned with the landscape itself, but with its perception, with the individual and collective notion of landscapes that has been and is being shaped by the enormous and constantly growing number of images.

Samoylova's work is strongly influenced by the Russian avant-gardists—take a look at the permanent exhibition of the Wilhelm-Hack-Museum, there you will meet their models/her models/her inspiration.

In addition, Anastasia Samoylova is also represented in the exhibition *Walker Evans Revisited* in the Kunsthalle Mannheim at the Biennale with a—completely different—work. Would you like to get to know the artist's range? Have a look there as well!

Martina Sauter

- 17 *Pool/Grün*, 2013
Dual panel collage, chromogenic print behind acrylic glass, 140 × 105 cm
- Leiter*, 2011
Dual panel collage, chromogenic print on aluminium, 30 × 19 cm
- Lived Differently*, 2011
Dual panel collage, chromogenic print, 65 × 45 cm

Diamonds, 2012

Dual panel collage, chromogenic print, 45 × 68 cm

Uhr, 2012

Dual panel collage, chromogenic print, 30 × 45,5 cm

Reports, 2011

Dual panel collage, chromogenic print, 30 × 44 cm

Courtesy The Ravestijn Gallery, Amsterdam

Jalousie, 2013

Dual panel collage, chromogenic print, 30 × 31 cm

Courtesy Galerie Löhrl, Mönchengladbach

Martina Sauter works with the fragmentary narrative implications of still images. She combines individual images from popular films with her own photographs. While film editing is characterised by the fact that one shot follows another, Sauter's editing is a form of superimposition in which the physical edge of one image is superimposed on another. This distance between the image panels creates a three-dimensional distance that formally transports the filmic jump cut into the photograph. The result is a form of image combination that lies somewhere between montage and collage.

The reinterpretation of the film sequences can be experienced through the artist's physical, three-dimensional cut, but this is only really visible on the original—so feel free to take the step closer. Only in this way will you experience how much value can be placed in the original of the multifaceted reproducible medium of photography.

Peter Sorge

- 18 *Oh, what a kiss*, 1969

Lithography, 47 × 39 cm

Collection Wilhelm-Hack-Museum, Ludwigshafen

Oh, what a kiss is one of two works from the collection of the Wilhelm-Hack-Museum shown in this Biennale exhibition.

As a representative of critical realism, Sorge investigated how two images from different contexts produce a new pictorial meaning when combined. In the work *Oh, what a kiss*, you can see a Royal Air Force V-bomber in the left half of the picture. This type of bomber was designed for the use of nuclear weapons and was part of the UK's nuclear deterrent force until the late 1960s. Sorge contrasted this with a kissing couple. The critical content is conveyed to the viewer through the aesthetic presentation. The combination of these opposing image contents could be understood as an appeal that Sorge addresses to the viewers: "Make love, not war" – a slogan that was created in the same year and speaks out against all kinds of war and violence and for peaceful coexistence.

Eva Stenram

- 19 *Vanishing Point*, 2016

Digital print on silk, C-Print, 81 × 108 × 4 cm (framed work), 1000 × 130 cm (textile)

Drape IV, 2012

Fibre based lambda print, 50 × 50 cm

Drape I, 2011

Fibre based lambda print, 50 × 50 cm

Drape XI, 2013

Fibre based lambda print, 50 × 50 cm

Drape VIII, 2012
Fibre based lambda print, 50 × 50 cm

Drape VII, 2012
Fibre based lambda print, 50 × 50 cm

Drape VI, 2012
Fibre based lambda print, 50 × 50 cm

Split, 2016
Digital print on cotton, armchair, C-Print,
35,2 × 61,2 × 4 cm (framed work), 74 × 74 × 60 cm
(armchair)

Courtesy The Ravestijn Gallery, Amsterdam

Eva Stenram, who works with found visual material, gives immaterial online images a physical form through prints, fabrics and furniture. With the help of Photoshop, she alters what is depicted, not to perfect it, but as a tool of collage and montage. The results are humorous edits that reclaim a space, but at the same time strangely negate the space. Especially in her works *Drape I*, *Drape IV*, *Drape VI*, *Drape VII*, *Drape VIII*, *Drape XI* the digital game with the portrayed can be seen. Originally, the altered images showed pin-up photographs from the 1960s. By using the curtain, the artist reverses their original meaning and use: the women are hidden, their charms - which are the real purpose of the pictures - are thus made invisible.

In *Vanishing Point*, the fabric worn by the woman depicted is produced as a length of fabric and placed next to the photograph. With the help of photography it is possible to represent reality in a lifelike way. It extends the photography into the room. Stenram also applies this procedure to *Split*, taking up a depicted piece of fabric again, transforming it into an armchair and making the photograph literally tangible. A play with the boundaries of the medium, of two- and three-dimensionality, reality and virtuality, but also of revealing and concealing, are created here.

John Stezaker

20 *Goddess*, 2018
Collage, 29,5 × 23,6 cm

Glove III, 2018
Collage, 29,2 × 23,5 cm

Mother Night II, 2018
Collage, 30 × 23,3 cm

Mother Night III, 2018
Collage, 35,5 × 27,9 cm

Camouflage I, 2018
Collage, 27 × 19,9 cm

Muse, 2018
Collage, 29,8 × 23,6 cm

Hand, 2018
Collage, 35,6 × 38,1 cm

Glove II, 2018
Collage, 35,7 × 28 cm

Glove I, 2018
Collage, 35,6 × 24,3 cm

The Voyeur, 2018
Collage, 29 × 20,1 cm

Courtesy Galerie Gisela Capitain, Cologne

21 *She*, 2019
Full HD, H.264 (codec),
25 frames / second, 8 sec. (loop)

He, 2019
Full HD, H.264 (codec),
25 frames / second, 8 sec. (loop)

Courtesy Galerie Gisela Capitain, Cologne

British conceptual artist John Stezaker has been working with found objects from popular postcards and advertising film stills for more than forty years. He is particularly interested in anonymous actors who were photographed for advertising purposes but never made a film. He calls these actors "virgins" and recognizes a certain melancholy in their faces, as they are destined to be forgotten. Usually only a silhouette of the face remains in his collages, which is then combined with a pin-up or advertising photography. Almost obsessively, he collects these photographs in order to disfigure them and create something surprising. Stezaker is convinced that all images are basically ambiguous. They are full of unconscious forces and unfulfilled longings. In order to free these longings, it often only takes a subtle change in our perspective.

In his video installation *He & She*, Stezaker dedicates himself to the familiar gender duality of mainstream images. Furthermore, the mode of representation—the dizzying sequence of portrait photographs—addresses the crowd of daily visible actors in American cinema culture, who seem almost interchangeable in their comprehensive visual presence.

Batia Suter

22 *100% Wool (+ Hexamiles)*, 2019–20
Installation, mixed media

Batia Suter puts together complex assemblages of found visual material, which she presents in the form of books and installations. Her spectrum and source material is broad—almost as broad as the possibilities of photography itself—but her strategy is to detach it from any clear sense of origin, so that in her new configurations only the raw potential of the images and the question of their meaning counts. In this installation, Suter combines images of old woollen blankets, which were reconstructed on the computer, (*100% Wool*) with the video work *Hexamiles*, creating unexpected associations and resonances. Many images in the video work *Hexamiles* represent wastelands and the old impressions alternate between romantic and threatening, evoking feelings of majesty and disorientation at the same time. By layering them on top of each other, a multitude of different environments merge into composite virtual landscapes that we may only know from dreams and fairy tales (see No. 19).