

# DAVID LIESKE

DRITTE AUSSTELLUNG FUER PHOTOGRAPHISCHE ARBEITEN

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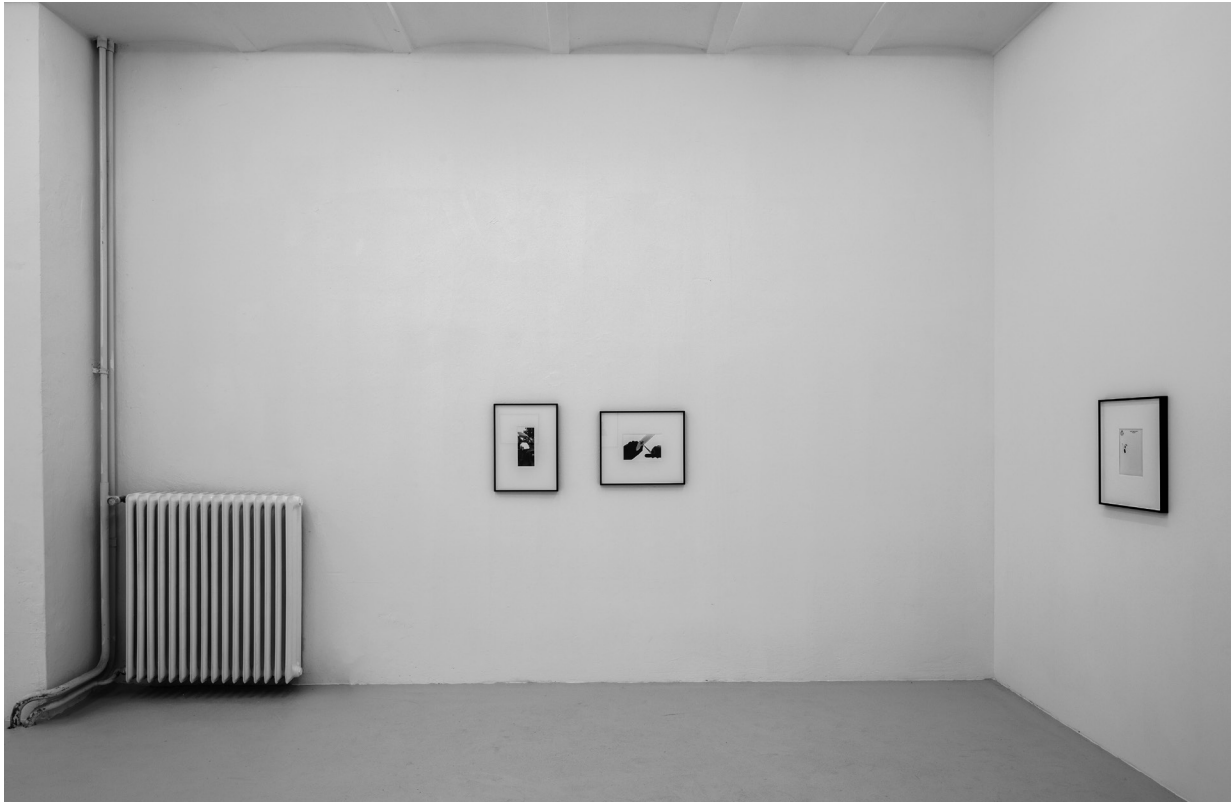


GALERIE KARIN GÜNTHER

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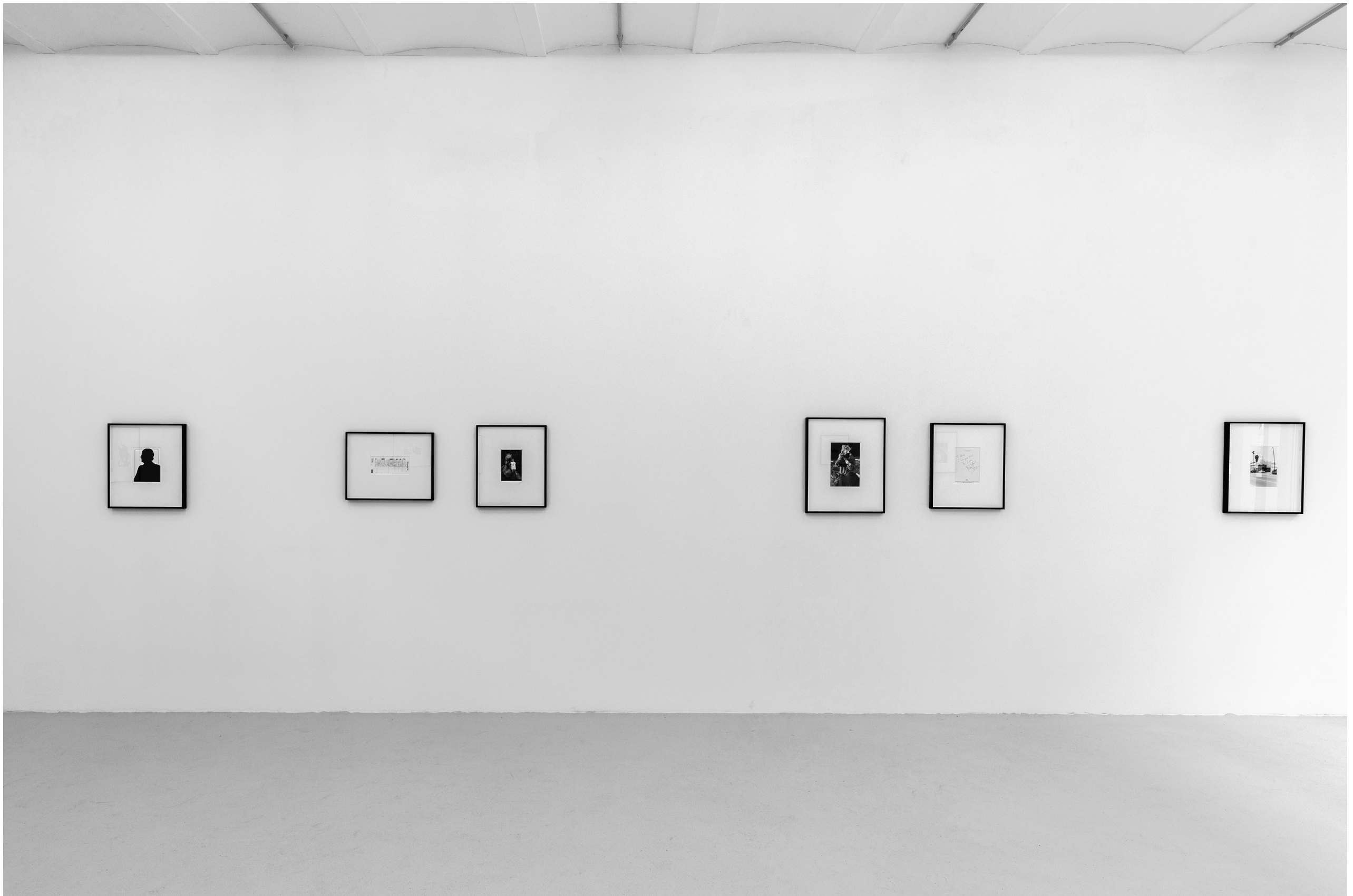


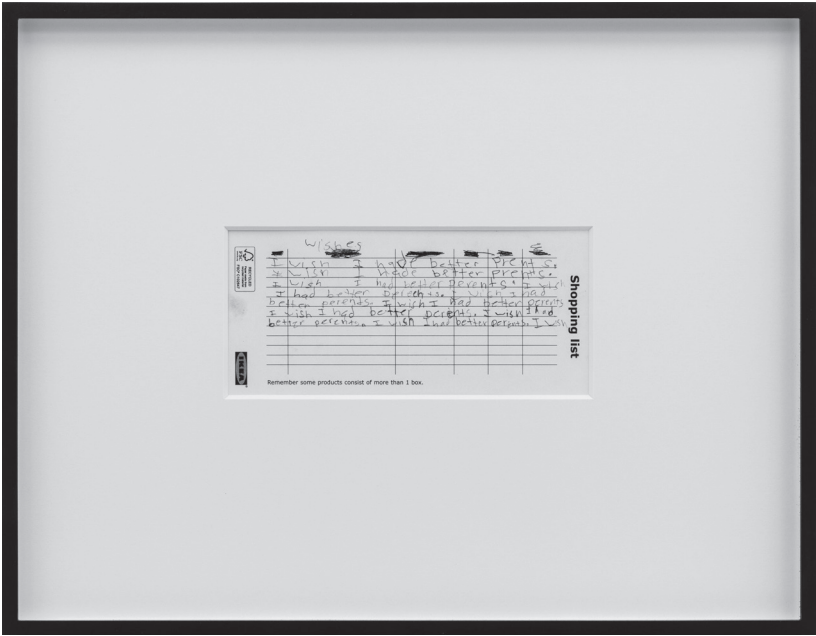














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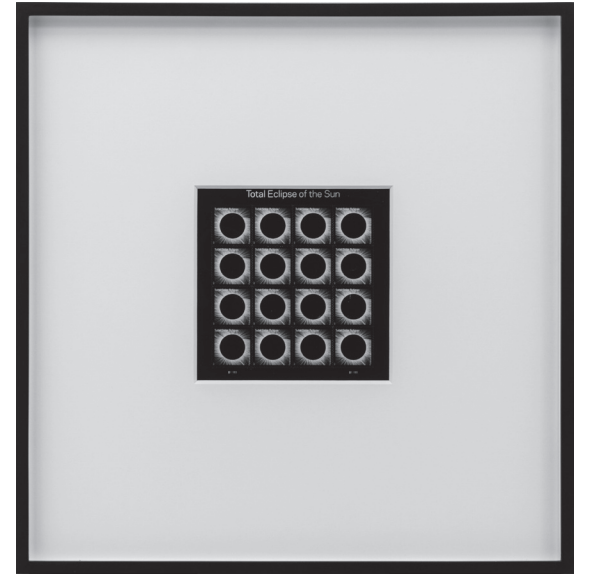








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- 1 David Lieske  
Photographische Arbeit (Le Panorama Vertical), 2022  
Silver Gelatin Print on Baryta Paper, 23,5 x 10 cm / Frame 52,5 x 38,5 cm  
Edition 1/5 + 2 AP
- 2 David Lieske  
Photographische Arbeit (Immortale/Immortale II), 2022  
Silver Gelatin Print on Baryta Paper, 15 x 22,5 cm / Frame 44,5 x 51,5 cm  
Edition 1/5 + 2 AP
- 3 David Lieske  
Photographische Arbeit (University Of Atlantis II), 2022  
Silver Gelatin Print on Baryta Paper, 21 x 16 cm / Frame 50 x 44 cm  
Edition 1/5 + 2 AP
- 4 David Lieske  
Photographische Arbeit (La Collectionneuse IV), 2022  
Silver Gelatin Print on Baryta Paper, 24 x 18 cm / Frame 53,5 x 46,5 cm  
Edition 1/5 + 2 AP
- 5 David Lieske  
Photographische Arbeit (Abstrakte Arbeit II), 2022  
Silver Gelatin Print on Baryta Paper, 14,5 x 14,5 cm / Frame 43,5 x 42,5 cm  
Edition 1/5 + 2 AP
- 6 David Lieske  
Photographische Arbeit (La Collectionneuse I), 2022  
Silver Gelatin Print on Baryta Paper, 20 x 16 cm / Frame 49 x 44 cm  
Edition 1/5 + 2 AP
- 7 David Lieske  
Photographische Arbeit (Negative Dialektik I), 2022  
Silver Gelatin Print on Baryta Paper, 10 x 22 cm / Frame 39 x 50,5 cm  
Edition 1/5 + 2 AP
- 8 David Lieske  
Photographische Arbeit (La Collectionneuse II), 2022  
Silver Gelatin Print on Baryta Paper, 18 x 12 cm / Frame 47,5 x 40,5 cm  
Edition 1/5 + 2 AP
- 9 David Lieske  
Photographische Arbeit (La Collectionneuse III), 2022  
Silver Gelatin Print on Baryta Paper, 25,5 x 17 cm / Frame 55 x 45,5 cm  
Edition 1/5 + 2 AP
- 10 David Lieske  
Photographische Arbeit (Negative Dialektik III), 2022  
Silver Gelatin Print on Baryta Paper, 23 x 15 cm / Frame 52,5 x 43,5 cm  
Edition 1/5 + 2 AP
- 11 David Lieske  
Photographische Arbeit (Negative Dialektik II), 2022  
Silver Gelatin Print on Baryta Paper, 20 x 14 cm / Frame 49,5 x 42 cm  
Edition 1/5 + 2 AP
- 12 David Lieske  
Photographische Arbeit (University Of Atlantis I), 2022  
Silver Gelatin Print on Baryta Paper, 29,5 x 26 cm / Frame 54,5 x 49,5 cm  
Edition 1/5 + 2 AP
- 13 David Lieske  
Photographische Arbeit (Immortale/Immortale I), 2022  
Silver Gelatin Print on Baryta Paper, 10,5 x 9,5 cm / Frame 39,5 x 37,5 cm  
Edition 1/5 + 2 AP
- 14 David Lieske  
Photographische Arbeit (Abstrakte Arbeit I), 2022  
Silver Gelatin Print on Baryta Paper, 14,5 x 14,5 cm / Frame 43,5 x 42,5 cm  
Edition 1/5 + 2 AP





Wilhelm Champés *The Interior Of The Exhibition Building For Dritte Ausstellung Für Photographische Arbeiten*, Hamburg 13. November 1868

## “No Photography Allowed”

A Conversation between Nicholas Tammens and David Lieske

NICHOLAS TAMMENS: We have spoken a lot about how Hamburg, your hometown, shaped your work and your approach to the fields that you have worked in as a result—be it music, art, or fashion. While it may not appear at first glance that this show is particularly dedicated to the city, there are a number of references (or perhaps allusions) that bring it back to events or people in the city... be it former exhibitions, political protests, or even certain Academie professors. Perhaps this is a good place to start, to hear about these references and how you come to bring such a network of associations together, how does this come about for you?

DAVID LIESKE: I remember us talking about Cosima von Bonin's first Exhibition in Hamburg and her referencing other artists' first exhibitions whose names were written on floating balloons. Von Bonin certainly had a very important influence on my development as an artist. When I got to see her exhibition “Bruder Poul sticht in See” (2000) at the Kunstverein in Hamburg I was about 20 years old, and for the first time, confronted with an artistic practice that was so extended in the sense of what such a practice could be, that it seemingly offered opportunities for engagements that exceeded the gallery and museum experiences that I had previously had.

Twenty years later, the fact that I've never had a gallery exhibition in Hamburg on my own and neither allowed myself to do a photography exhibition—although I have used that medium since the very beginning of my practice—made me look for other “firsts”.

It was very exciting for me to stumble over the historically first photography exhibition in Hamburg titled: “Dritte Ausstellung Fuer Photographische Arbeiten” (1868)— it made me laugh that this exhibition was titled “The third exhibition ...” The first and second “first” Photography exhibitions in this sequence took place in Vienna and Berlin (1862/1864), cities which strangely happen to be important junctions in my own exhibition history as well.

Vienna being the site of my first museum exhibition (*Platoon RL-X*, mumok, 2015) and Berlin as the place where I exhibited last in a gallery that was very formative for my development as well. (*Everything That Doesn't Happen Today Doesn't Happen*, Galerie Buchholz, 2008).

I wanted to imply the spirit of a youthful departure into this exhibition which meant going backward a little bit (almost as a reset of my work for this moment) and trying to indulge, a little more than usual, in images that carry this particular energy, that trigger a certain desire for beauty and determination inside myself (and maybe also inspire it in others).

NICHOLAS: I think what you're already beginning to illustrate here with your answer is a certain fondness for self-referential gestures, not only your own, but I would also say that you have been attracted to that in other artists—while the example of Cosima's gesture is at once about other artists, it establishes her within a certain field of influence. Alongside this, I also recall you showing me the advertisement by Van Laack featuring Marcel Broodthaers, which seems like such an uncanny use of the artist's image. I would say that both err on the side of a kind of self-design, in lieu of the more negatively associated “self-promotion”. At the front of my mind is the work you made for mumok, where you commissioned an auto-biography that can only be read in the Museum... a gesture that combines strategies of both von Bonin and Broodthaers in different ways, and from what I hear, it's lean into gossip also promoted some small controversies. But what I'm interested in here is how this exhibition pulls some of that in, and there are some images from your past which illustrate certain moments in your biography or career, yet for the viewer, we are perhaps left to gather the myth elsewhere. Would you care to elaborate more on these images? One, in particular, would be the photo taken by Pete at the demonstration.

DAVID: I am always interested in a high tension between different levels of potential meaning. The photograph you mention works inside the exhibition as an agent of several capacities. As you know, the referential framework for the exhibition is a historic exhibition whose aim was to exhibit not photographs alone but the medium of photography in its entirety.

The motivation to include that particular photograph started with its formal and historical obscurity, as it was shot on a discontinued “Panorama” film by Kodak by my friend and long-term collaborator Peter Kersten. The fact that Pete mis-used the panorama option (that combines a section of two slides into one) for a vertical photograph made it a kind of double obscurity (aside from what is documented in the shot). If we look at the image more closely there are several tensions within that image as well. This moment, where I am being searched by a police officer before entering a demonstration superficially gives the impression that some sort of authoritarian force or dominance is acted upon me. As I remember it, the situation was actually quite different, and started with me spotting that same police officer prior to what happened in the picture and telling Pete how handsome he was.

By sheer coincidence, it was he who had to search me (as everyone was being searched before entering the meeting site). It was a very joyful moment for me to be padded down by that particular officer, which you can probably see in my body language, and of course, I had asked Pete to take a photo to document that moment.

For me, this sums up quite well what I would identify as a libidinous and highly privileged relationship between white middle-class youths (like myself at that moment) and their relationship to power and state-force which mostly exists on an iconographic and symbolic level.





Uliano Lucas, Piazzale Accursio, Milan, 1971

The fact that the “panorama” is in this instance vertical, determining a high and low, further illustrates that power relation (instead of broadening the spectrum and allowing more context in a way a horizontal panorama would.)

Passolini wrote the poem “Il PCI ai Giovani” after student protests in Rome in 1968 in favor of the police. “Quando ieri a Valle Giulia avete fatto a botte coi poliziotti / io simpatizzavo coi poliziotti” (“When you and the policemen were throwing punches yesterday at Valle Giulia / I was sympathising with the policemen”). The poem implies a class hypocrisy on the part of the establishment towards the protesters, asking whether young workers would be treated similarly if they behaved in the same way: “Occupate le università / ma dite che la stessa idea venga / a dei giovani operai / E allora: Corriere della Sera e Stampa, Newsweek e Monde / avranno tanta sollecitudine / nel cercar di comprendere i loro problemi? / La polizia si limiterà a prendere un po’ di botte / dentro una fabbrica occupata? / Ma, soprattutto, come potrebbe concedersi / un giovane operaio di occupare una fabbrica / senza morire di fame dopo tre giorni?” (“Occupy the universities / but say that the same idea comes / to young workers / So: Corriere della Sera and Stampa, Newsweek and Le Monde / will have so much care / in trying to understand their problems? / Will the police just get a bit of a fight / inside an occupied factory? / But above all, how could / a young worker be allowed to occupy a factory / without dying of hunger after three days?”

NICHOLAS: This final point you make, about the relationship to power being mostly an iconographic one for middle-class youth, is nicely also reflected in another image in the show: the photograph of a model wearing a t-shirt saying “L’etat et moi” (the state and me). Originally commissioned as a fashion editorial, this image also carries this tension you speak of—naturally, the subject is a model who was dressed by you: she is not dressed as her “authentic” self, but we read the sub-cultural queues of how she is dressed as within this symbolic realm of contemporary fashion that collapses its references and constantly recontextualizes forms of clothing—we need only think about the origins of the bomber jacket or cargo pants in military attire. I’m curious to hear more about how photography used in fashion underwrites some of these images—and here I’m careful not to say “fashion photography”, because I think what your work shows is that such a category is a certain invention, as we know, the history of photography is the history of its application. What I’m really asking here is about the process of making the photograph, it’s who, what, where, and how, to put it in the most simple of terms, but also to think about how these things shift depending on the use of the photograph—and well, we can also talk about first and second-order uses...

DAVID: The second order is the pivotal point here. I was very excited while reading through the historic reception of “Dritte Ausstellung für Photographische Werke” (1868) to discover that there was a certain

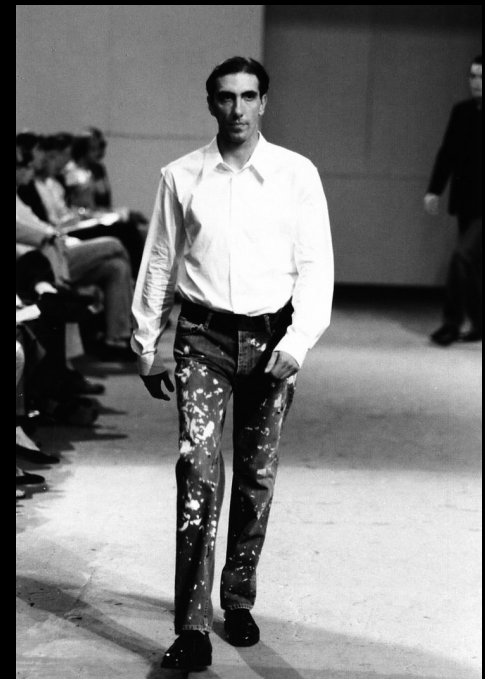
consensus about photography being incapable of producing artistic authorship like paintings or sculptures do for example. Therefore, the general agreement was that photography would be best applied as a means of reproduction of paintings in order to make them available to study outside of the sites of their physical presence (analog to the plaster reproduction of the Staatliche Gipsgiessereien that produces replicas of antiquities for Universities). So, I had my own work and pieces from my archive reproduced for the exhibition now following that sentiment.

A reason why I chose to reproduce this particular picture, which comes from the second issue of my fashion magazine 299 792 458 m/s (with Rob Kulisek) was its particular reference to Hamburg on the T-Shirt that the model is wearing—a piece of merchandise for Blumfeld’s second studio album. Blumfeld is still considered the most formative band of what was later known as the “Hamburger Schule” (a label that was maybe more a curse than a blessing for the acts to follow), so this garment carries a lot of weight in relation to Hamburg’s cultural history as a result. My own label DIAL was often was talked about somewhat in relation to that scene (as a new generation, continuation... etc..). This particular shirt was gifted to me by Jutta Koether who is a teacher at Hamburg’s Hochschule für Bildende Künste today.

Strangely, even after intensive research, I could not fully determine who the person depicted on that T-Shirt is. This relative anonymity connects it to another work in the show *Photographische Arbeit (Abstrakte Arbeit II)* which shows a puzzle deconstructing the portraiture part of the former 1000 DM banknote (which was described as Germany’s most “well-loved face” on the puzzle’s backside). Today historians not only debate who the person depicted on west Germany’s highest banknote was, but also the identity of the artist whose work was reproduced there. A good example of something being “well-loved” for the abstract value it represents rather than what it actually is (...which is vague / unknown).

The Helmut Lang Jeans I chose for Morgan to wear have a similar meaning to me personally (as I used to own a pair in the 2000s). And of course their wonderful imitation of the real-life painter (artist)—which is always a high point for me when fashion goes there (again a second-order usage).

NICHOLAS: And importantly there is an adaptation of that method in your exhibition, which also photographically reproduces two found pieces of paper: one Ikea receipt where a child has written “I wish I had better parents”; and another showing a drawing, perhaps better described as a doodle, on hotel stationery. The first carries a kind of a Freudian joke, while you have said that the second work references your former professor Michael Krebber, in that it appears as an accidental work by him. But I want to somewhat propose that this in itself is slightly Oedipal—where Krebber fulfils the role of father. Of course, this is a kind-hearted dedication, but part of it is also the simplicity of “reproducing” the Krebber gesture that gives it another meaning, in the fact that even this fake Krebber is not even an original but a photographic reproduction.



Helmut Lang Spring/Summer 1998 Ready-to-Wear Fashion Show



Mischa Barton as Marissa Cooper in *The O.C.* on Fox Television, USA 2003-2005

I find it interesting how all these different subjects pass into the photographic apparatus and achieve a kind of standardization as black and white photographs, framed quite classically. It's by virtue of their standardization that we're able to get here... and now I realize that I've made a mistake... because you also reproduced a third piece of paper with the dedication "Dear David, I love your Art! Xo Love, MB". While I might like to pretend M.B. could be Marcel Broodthaers, you said that this came from a chance meeting with the American actress Mischa Barton, how did each of these elements find their way into the show?

DAVID: Marcel Broodthaers describes his relationship to the "error" of being involved in something as "useless" and "apolitical" as art in his artist's book *No Photographs Allowed* (1975) as a "guilty pleasure". I probably don't have to further explain how the other M.B. has been mine to the point of obsession, which is why when I met her and asked for her autograph and she replied: "what should I write?" I panicked and said: "I love your art?" At that moment I didn't understand that this completely turns the power dynamic of asking for someone's autograph on its head. Marcel Broodthaers who endlessly elaborated on the significance and insignificance of his own signature would hopefully have been amused. "Defense De Photographier" (M.B.'s original title for the publication I mentioned earlier), for me as a non-french-speaker, also very much reads as "In defense of the Photographer or Photography..." This further implies that an artist needs good reasons or a "good defense" in order to uptake an artistic or photographic practice—which might be provided by the endorsement of a celebrity, in my case by M.B.

The stoic repetition of the statement "I wish I had better parents" that I found on a repurposed IKEA shopping list (retitled: "Wishes")—presumably written by a child—made me think of one of Hamburg's most celebrated conceptual artists of the seventies: Hanne Darboven. An artist often criticized for her bourgeois background (as one of the offsprings of Hamburg's Darboven coffee clan) to the point of delegitimizing her practice with sexist attacks, claiming that her work was nothing but occupational therapy for "bourgeois daughters". As much as the IKEA note alludes to an underprivileged child's pain of longing to escape its parent's economical background, in relation to an artist's biography, "better parents" could also mean the exact opposite.

The last work you mention, titled *Photographische Arbeit (University of Atlantis II)* is the reproduction of a drawing I found scribbled on a piece of stationery from the "Colledge Libre De Jully" (a catholic private teaching establishment, place of pilgrimage, and royal education). My obsession with universities and academia are probably connected to my own failure in institutional education, and are the source of a constant feeling of illegitimacy that I try to compensate with overdetermination in some of the artworks' referential provenances. Like Plato's "Atlantis," the myth of this "University" incorporates its own disappearance—like the vanished face in the drawing that is trying to communicate—which works well when legitimacy is at stake.



Marcel Broodthaers *Defense De Photographier*, 1975



"HIS DREAMS HAD BEEN EVEN MORE TERRIFYING AND WONDERFUL THAN USUAL. HE FOUND HIMSELF LYING FULL-LENGTH IN AN ENORMOUS OPEN WOUND. THE EXPOSED, GENTLY BUBBLING, CUSHIONY FLESH WAS VERY COMFORTABLE; BUT HE KNEW THAT IF HE MOVED EVEN HIS EYELID HE WOULD INFLICT TERRIBLE PAIN ON THE GIANT IN WHOSE WOUNDED RED BOSOM HE LAY."  
DENTON WELCH - "IN YOUTH IS PLEASURE" (1945)

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# DAVID MESKE

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DRITTE AUSSTELLUNG FÜR PHOTOGRAPHISCHE ARBEITEN



GALERIE KARIN GÜNTHER