

Media release

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Gina Folly

Autofocus. 2023 Manor Art Prize

May 6–October 1, 2023, Kunstmuseum Basel | Gegenwart

Curator: Alice Wilke

The 2023 Manor Art Prize goes to the artist Gina Folly (b. Zurich, 1983; lives and works in Basel and Paris). Folly's work explores the potentials of photography, expanding the medium by developing novel formats, materials, and modes of presentation. The photographic gaze anchors a practice in which she analyzes and reflects on environments and experiences.

Folly's multilayered pictures, sculptures, and installations examine emotions and interpersonal relationships in her everyday life. Bringing situations, places, and objects into focus, her works interrogate commonsense conceptions of permeability and demarcation, naturalness and artificiality, or private and public spaces. They often turn the spotlight on what is inconspicuous and typically eludes our conscious attention. The artist charts a sensitive and critical response to the mechanisms of trivialization and marginalization associated with the values, codes, visual systems, or cultural-political structures that inform and govern our lives.

For her exhibition *Autofocus* at Kunstmuseum Basel | Gegenwart, Gina Folly is developing two new series of photographic works around the themes of 'being needed' and 'being in use.' The works address systems of social and economic relations and possible forms of an intergenerational transfer of agency and knowledge, negotiating the conditions of human existences and seeking to dismantle established hierarchies.

For *Autofocus*, Folly works with members of the association Quasi Tutto, a self-described "small service provider mostly run by retired women and men" who have set up a platform on which they offer all kinds of service—from gardening, decluttering, and installing TV and internet service to repairing old devices. The association, Folly argues, sets an example of why elderly citizens should flout the unwritten rules of retirement—the allegedly inevitable dead end of their economic and social existence—: taking initiative and banding together in a collective, they can unlock opportunities for fulfilling engagement. The artist shadows the members during their activities, photographing them with a medium-format analog camera.

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Giving the stage to a demographic that is marginalized by our society's system, she probes the question of how individual benefit and social utility are connected.

The portraits of the association's members are flanked by a series of sculptures, full-size reproductions of found objects the artist encountered in a public setting: benches bearing the Fujicolor logo. The park bench is a reference to the one activity that society readily allows and expects pensioners to engage in. But the Fujicolor benches also serve Folly as a placeholder for the status of analog photography, which has been superseded by its younger sibling, digital photography, and now exists only as a kind of hobbyist retiree. Finally, the sculptures are available for use by the visitors as seating furniture.

An artist's edition in the form of a small fanfold will be released in conjunction with the exhibition and made available for free at the museum.

Gina Folly received a master's degree in fine art from the Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK) in 2014. From 2013 until 2020, she ran the art space Taylor Macklin in Zurich.

Manor Art Prize

The Manor Art Prize supports young Swiss artists working in the visual arts: painting, sculpture, photography, video art, and installation art. Widely considered one of the most important emerging-artist's awards for contemporary art in Switzerland, it was established at Philippe Nordmann's initiative in 1982 in order to offer a platform for young Swiss artists. It is awarded annually by a jury of experts in six Swiss cities, alternating among Aarau, Basel, Biel, Chur, Geneva, Lausanne, Lucerne, Lugano, Schaffhausen, Sion, St. Gallen, and Winterthur.

Imagery and information on the exhibition

www.kunstmuseumbasel.ch/en/media

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