

FABIAN & CLAUDE WALTER GALERIE

PERCEPTIONS | People in American Photography

Imogen Cunningham | Jill Freedman | Nan Goldin | Saul Leiter | Vivian Maier | Sally Mann | Duane Michals | Jack Pierson | Herb Ritts | Jock Sturges | Jerry Uelsmann

Duration of the summer exhibition: 13 June – 29 August 2020

Opening: Saturday, 13 June 2020, 12 – 4 pm

The exhibition *PERCEPTIONS* at Fabian & Claude Walter Galerie was curated by Alessa Widmer and features works by American photographers, which concern themselves with issues like human contact, corporeality, intimacy as well as fragility. The photographs explore problems of everyday topics and situations, the necessity of which are made clear to us only at times marked by restrictions, distancing, and isolation. *PERCEPTIONS* aims to draw attention to the importance of the relationship between people - regardless of origin or skin colour. With its choice of high-quality vintage prints from private collections *PERCEPTIONS* outlines time travelling through 20th century history of photography.

One of the photographers taking up a vital position in early American photography is **Imogen Cunningham (1883-1976)** who, as a member of the modernistic group f/64, determined the development of the history of photography. Imogen Cunningham's interest is focussed on man and his environment. On the one side her works excel by a strong formalism and on the other hand by her sensitivity.

Also within the documentary photos of the 1950s through the 1970s, portraying everyday life on the streets of American cities, man as such becomes the centre of interest. Three vital exponents of this Street Photography are represented in the exhibition: **Saul Leiter (1923-2013)**, **Vivian Maier (1926-2009)** and **Jill Freedman (1939-2019)**. The subtle observation of chance occurrences, fleeting encounters and unexcited get-togethers are central topics of this kind of social photography always revolving around the subject of *man*.

Within their sequential photographs shown here, **Duane Michals (*1953)** and **Jerry Uelsmann (*1934)** present an overlapping of a number of single shots in the focus of attention of which is man and the narrative. In their photographs Michals and Uelsmann tell fragmentary stories. The viewers have to think non-visible stopovers on their own, by which the individual field of perception is being broadened. Michals reaches this through multiple exposures, while Uelsmann fits together several negatives in the darkroom.

The photographs of **Nan Goldin (*1953)**, **Sally Mann (*1951)**, and **Jock Sturges (*1947)** confront us with an unusual intimacy. We are immediately there with what's happening and have, while watching the photographs, a vague feeling to spoil those intimate moments by our presence. Goldin attains this with photographic impressions of some kind of parallel world on the fringe of society between identity search and delirious state, lust and loss, love and pain, while Mann and Sturges with their photographs grant insights into family life.

Herb Ritts (1952-2002) and **Jack Pierson (*1960)** on the other hand make a step back and examine the human – especially male – body with their photographs shown in a sculptural and yet natural way.

The exhibition *PERCEPTIONS* merges a many-faceted choice of important positions in the American history of photography and analyses the relations between photographer, those portrayed, and viewers. (Text: Alessa Widmer)