

Trace – Formations of Likeness

Photography and Video from The Walther Collection

April 14 – July 23, 2024

Haus der Kunst

Curated by Anna Schneider with Damian Lentini and Hanns Lennart Wiesner

“A collection should provide access and be open to exposure to different interpretations. A collection should not be static.”—**Artur Walther**

“The notion of the portrait is not purely normative, but philosophical as well. It oscillates from the event of making the self visible to the gaze of another, but also to the gaze of an entire society—from adjudicating notions of the body politic through mimicry, gesture, and pose, to constructions of gender and sexuality, femininity and masculinity, from Africanism to Westernism”—**Okwui Enwezor**

Haus der Kunst presents a major survey exhibition of The Walther Collection, a New York-based art foundation internationally recognized for their critical engagement with contemporary and historical photography, as well as lens-based media art. The more than 1000 works on display by a diverse group of artists from different cultural backgrounds, as well as archival, documentary and vernacular photography, offer a global context to reflect on the divergent trajectories of photography today. Collectively, they showcase the medium's capacity as both an instrument for empowerment and formation of the self, as well as its complex uses as a tool for control and subjugation.

The exhibition's core focus is portrait photography—of people, objects, and places—and the tracing of societal transformation across geographic spaces and contrasting socio-political and cultural landscapes. The photographic portrait is deployed as a means to shape identity, to advocate for social change and as a subversive strategy for visibility, often through an intimate investigation of politics of memory, history, and embodiment.

The substantial breadth and dialogical scope of the exhibition, which encompasses works from the last three centuries and brings together artists from Africa, America, Europe, Japan, and China, enables audiences to consider not only the parallel histories of the medium, but for its materiality, taxonomy, and serial structures to be revealed and drawn into question.

With works by anonymous artists, Richard Avedon, Martina Bacigalupo, Sammy Baloji, Yto Barrada, Bernd & Hilla Becher, Jodi Bieber, Karl Blossfeldt, Candice Breitz, Edson Chagas, Song Dong, Grace Ndiritu, Em'kal Eyongakpa, Rotimi Fani-Kayode, Samuel Fosso, Yang Fudong, Kay Hassan, Pieter Hugo, Seydou Keïta, Zhang Huan, David Goldblatt, Sze Tsung Nicolás Leong, Ma Liuming, Christine Meisner, Sabelo Mlangeni, Zanele Muholi, Eadweard Muybridge, J.D.'Okhai Ojeikere, Dawit L. Petros, Sheng Qui, Jo Ractliffe, Rong Rong, Thomas Ruff, August Sander, Accra Shepp, Malick Sidibé, Thomas Struth, Munemasa Takahashi, Guy Tillim, Hentie van der Merwe, Ai Weiwei, Cang Xin, Huang Yan, Lu Yang, Xu Yong, Luo Yongjin, Kohei Yoshiyuki and others.