

Joachim Schmid

26.01—06.03.2021

Photoworks

For the second time, P420 is pleased to present a solo exhibition by the German artist Joachim Schmid (Balingen, 1955), with the title *Photoworks*.

Already active on the German scene since 1980 as a photography critic, essayist and publisher, in 1982 Schmid founded *Fotokritik*, a completely self-produced magazine that immediately became a vehicle for his theories.

His reflections do not have to do with so-called art photography, but with everything that is “left out” and therefore does not aspire to a condition of “authorship.” He explores the photography that manifests itself when millions of cameras produce billions of photographs, investigating its many hidden meanings in a pioneering approach.

There was once a time when photographs were used. Not photographs as images, as files, to display or swap on a smartphone, but true, printed photographs, on paper, objects with a body, a weight, that could be held in the hands, caressed, kissed, ripped. Schmid began in the very early 1980s to be interested in the mass of photographs generated by pop culture for an infinity of purposes, none of them artistic in nature. In particular, he has examined the photograph as object, with its thickness, its front and back. He gathers photographs wherever it is possible, at flea markets, on the street, or from anyone who has photographs they would like to discard.

His systematic gathering is free of scientific or classifying intent, but has the sole aim of bringing out the immense concealed potential of the photographs themselves. Schmid immediately began to work (in 1982) on one of his vastest projects, *Bilder von der Straße* (Pictures from the Street), comprised of all the photographs he has been able to find in public places over a span of 30 years. Found one by one, archived and catalogued in numerical order with indications of when and where they were discovered, the pictures form a monumental museum of images balanced between the content they have conserved and that which has been lost, discarded, removed, taking them to the verge of definitive oblivion. “All I know about them is the place and date of the finding... the rest is imagination” (Joachim Schmid).

“No new photographs until the old ones have been used up,” Schmid wrote in 1989, with a phrase that immediately became an exemplary definition of his poetics.

The exhibition brings together a selection of works – from the most recent *Il Mare* (The Sea, 2019) to *Zur Theorie der Fotografie* (Towards a theory of photography) made in 1986, from the *R. Flick Collection* (2017) and *The Artist's Model* (2016) to the series *Statics* (1995-2003), to name some of them – through which for almost 40 years Schmid has ironically short-circuited the recognized canons of photography, widening its boundaries, skeptically questioning the role of the author and artistic intention with respect to the results achieved.

Opening hours

Tuesday—Saturday

10.30—13.30 / 15.00—19.30

Joachim Schmid's work has been exhibited internationally and is held in the collections of many major international institutions. In 2007 *Photoworks* and Steidl published a comprehensive monograph *Joachim Schmid Photoworks, 1982–2007* on the occasion of his first retrospective exhibition at The Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery in Saratoga Springs, NY. He has published more than one hundred artist's books, and at the end of 2009, Schmid founded the ABC Artists' Books Cooperative, a group of artists dedicated to self-publishing using print-on-demand technology.