

## Private

Dirk Braeckman, Seiichi Furuya, Jacob Holdt,  
Larry Sultan, Mette Tronvoll, Tobias Zielony

January 13 - March 3, 2012

Photography has always been a medium of doubt. Where is the boundary between oneself and the other? Where does the border lie, where can it be reinforced, where can it be erased? The group exhibition 'Private' features works that distance themselves from the familiar and embrace the unknown. Pictures of objective conquest, family therapy, brief intimacy and political or private mission are created on the street, at home and in the indeterminate locations in between. At times everything is revealed at once, at times almost nothing at all. What connects the artists featured in the exhibition is a nomadic working method as well as an interest in the uncertain, multi-layered complex of themes around the concept of 'home'.

'Pictures from Home' by *Larry Sultan* (1946-2009) is a milestone in the recent history of photography. From the late 1970s through the early 1990s the American artist documented the life of his parents. This field experiment explores in a pragmatic yet intimate manner essential insights from the image-political discourses of the 1970s: the longer Sultan works on the series, the clearer his own involvement becomes and thus the impossibility of pure documentation. For his series 'Zgora' *Tobias Zielony* (1973) worked on the edges of urban constructs in Poland, photographing adolescents there. His careful staging blends with the global social codes of youth culture, which have come to represent a kind of surrogate home for young people. *Jacob Holdt* (1947) became well known in the late 1970s in both West and East Germany for his long-term journalistic project 'American Pictures'. This series shows the life of the lower classes in the U.S. in a direct, undistorted manner. The photo reportage, which the author still presents as a slide show, is part of the same photographic tradition of social documentary as the work of his countryman Jacob Riis. Holdt, however, shows no moral reservations, perhaps because he lived together with the individuals depicted. The work of the Belgian artist *Dirk Braeckman* (1958) wavers between the private moment when a picture is shot and the subsequent abstraction of the image in the dark room. With his obsession for materiality and texture, his technique of photographing excerpts of photographs and his emphatic use of flash, he celebrates the artificiality of the image. His self-reflective work resembles a visual diary without a table of contents. In her photographs *Mette Tronvoll* (1965) turns her eye to the temporary architecture of Mongolian nomads. For her series Tronvoll often seeks out locations on the edges of civilization. It is precisely the isolation and expansiveness of the landscape that reveal the contradiction between the idea behind the image and its typology. *Seiichi Furuya's* (1950) work is a visual labor of memory that has been shaped above all by his wife Christine Gössler, who committed suicide in 1985. From 1978 onwards he photographed Christine almost daily. His work now consists of a continual re-ordering and re-publication of the existing pictures.

Curator: Martin Germann

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