

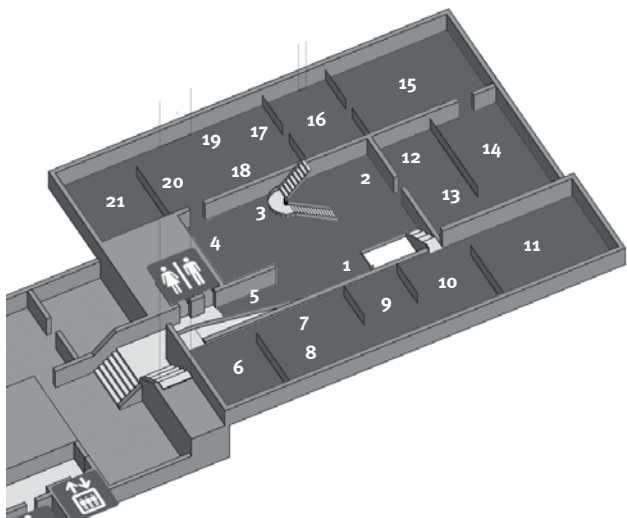
EGO DOCUMENTS

The Autobiographical in Contemporary Art

14.11.2008 – 15.2.2009

Kunstmuseum Bern

Floorplan



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Introduction

For what reason do artists give us insight into their private lives? Is it only to serve the viewers' curiosity and craving for sensation or are there perhaps social or even political reasons beyond this which justify this divulging of intimate details? What happens when artists write diaries, take snapshots of their families or shoot holiday videos? Are these automatically art or do they remain private memorabilia?

Questions such as these are posed in the exhibition *Ego Documents*. Almost one hundred works from the last forty years document the unbroken topicality of what is autobiographical in contemporary art. The media used are diverse and range from video films, photographs, prints, drawings, installations, painting and a slide show to performances. Quite differing approaches to expressing what is autobiographical emerge, and one can see that, in spite of the constant shifting of borders between what is private and what is public, the handling of autobiographical material is dealt with in many different ways. The spectrum ranges from an attempt to compile individual experiences into a narrative through strategies of self-documentation with the intention of imprinting oneself in cultural memory.

What is probably central to an autobiographical work is a systematic treatment of memories, the preoccupation with one's own transience as well as the determination to convert one's life experience into an artistic encounter for the viewer.

1 | Gerhard Johann Lischka

The film excerpt **Im besten Sinne des Wortes – Ein “mental_clip” zum Thema Identität** (In the best sense of the word – a “mental clip” dealing with identity) with the media theoretician and cultural philosopher Gerhard Johann Lischka was made for the program *Kulturzeit*. It was aired in a very abridged form on the television channel “3sat” on December 23, 2004. In a monologue lasting just fifteen minutes, Lischka speaks of the essence of identity which he defines by turns as a conglomerate, a construct, a medium, an ecstatic condition and as a subject defined as an object. During the filming he was given free rein by the author of the project, Franz Kasperski, expressing a cautious approach to the theme of identity which, ultimately, is not really knowable.

This attempt at a theoretical definition stands as a prelude to the exhibition. It is reminiscent of an earlier event, which took place in 2004 in the Museum of Fine Arts Bern, which was the impulse for the television piece. The exhibition *Ansichtssachen* was a compact composition of Lischka’s world view. It was compiled from countless travel photographs, worlds of images thematically ordered, television programs of media poetry, the human machine and the uninhibited perspective, and books and interviews which introduced the viewer to Lischka’s way of thinking and his relationship network, that is, to his identity. Today, almost four years later, it becomes obvious how valid this description of the concept – apparently obtained under duress – “in the best sense of the word” still is.

Martin Kippenberger (1953, Dortmund–1997, Vienna) was an artist, a curator, a gallery owner, a director of a museum, a publisher and always an actor playing himself at the same time. In just 20 years, the German artist created a varied body of work, which includes paintings, sculptures, installations, drawings, music, architecture, and literature. His current popularity can be attributed in no small part to the fact that he – as one of the first to do so – consciously avoided developing a definitive, recognizable style.

Hundreds of **Hotel-Zeichnungen** (Hotel Drawings) from the mid-1980s interweave some very different groups of work, themes, and reflections. Drawn on the letter-writing paper of some very diverse hotels, they present themselves as a form of a diary, which appears to sketch the course of a life. This turns out to be a false assumption though, for Kippenberger often used letter-writing paper from hotels where he never actually stayed. What appears to be personal drawings is rather a celebration of the figure of the restless Bohemian in this age of the global art market: Martin Kippenberger played the character of Martin Kippenberger, who repeatedly resembled the real person. Such ongoing ambivalence has preserved the complexity of the relationship between life and work – art is not life, but neither is it *not* life.

3 | Louise Bourgeois

Louise Bourgeois' (1911, Paris) works are often explicitly and directly autobiographical. In the **Autobiographical Series** of prints, the artist draws partly on motifs from earlier works in order to rework them as visual mementos for this portfolio. The 14 aquatint and drypoint etchings with emblematic titles depict everyday situations to a lesser or greater extent and are seemingly drawn by the hand of a child.

Bourgeois, who did not become known to a wider public until the 1970s – primarily thanks to in-depth reception of the work by feminist art critics – repeatedly mentions her traumatic childhood as the driving force behind her creativity: her father had a permanent affair with the governess and neglected the children as a result. In the process, Bourgeois does not hold back from referring to her personal experiences to produce occasionally drastic, symbolically loaded imagery, whether it be in the form of extensive installations or delicate drawings and graphics. It has become something of an institution that her biography is the key to interpreting her work, and it has literally become a legend as a result. This raises the question of the extent to which the artist may be hiding behind the same old accounts of early childhood experiences.

Elke Krystufek (1970, Vienna) has been prominent since the 1990s as a performance, video and object artist, as well as a painter. Her own body, or rather the fictional figure of Elke Krystufek, is always the focus of her work, which repeatedly addresses the phenomena of power, violence, sexuality, and the question of beauty. Her performances, which oscillate between ruthlessness and self-obsession, simultaneously revealing the actor's vulnerability and aggression, blatantly challenge the viewer in the sense that in defying conventions and norms they occasionally deliver images beyond the bounds of good taste.

In the painted self-portraits too, the viewer is confronted directly with the assertive stare of the artist. What is thrown into question here is the supposedly clear distinction between subject and object of observation. Written comments, both socially relevant and of a so-called private nature, accompany these self-portraits. In the end, however, even the private nature of what is shown by Krystufek is more of an assertion than a verifiable fact. She does examine the shrinking boundaries between the private and public sphere, for her body represents this indefinable zone. In spite of this, however, hardly anything about the private person named Elke Krystufek is learnt, beyond what is actually revealed in the work, yet absolutely everything about the fictional figure who goes by the same name.

4.2 | Elke Krystufek

The work **Dr. Love on Easter Island** by Elke Krystufek (1970, Vienna) stems from an intensive study of the work of Dutch conceptual artist Jan Bas Ader, who disappeared without trace after crossing the Atlantic in 1975. As She-Bas, the female reincarnation of Ader, Krystufek explores the Easter Islands, and comes across some symbolic objects of Western civilization. The Easter Islands were and still are a utopia to many travelers, or at least a place wistfully associated with an alternative world to that of Western society. When Krystufek then explores this terrain as the female reincarnation of the artist, she does so primarily with the intention of conveying social and institutional criticism, especially since Jan Bas Ader's disappearance was also frequently interpreted as an attempt to escape the rigors of an artist's life. Krystufek reflects her own status as an art figure: wearing a t-shirt featuring the weeping Jan Bas Ader from the work **I'm too sad to tell you** (1971) that has become something of a cult icon, and covering her face with a photo mask bearing the facial features of her mother, she's rising up out of the water like an Aphrodite to set foot on the island. From off-screen comes the voice of Dr. Love who, in dialogue with the artist, represents her cynical and authoritarian, power-wielding counterpart, and eventually turns out to be an indigenous woman. The film thus combines questions of artistic, personal, and sexual self-reference.

Annatina Graf's (1965, Zurich) series of images **Erinnern** (Recalling) consists of shimmering, silvery-blue acrylic paintings in horizontal format. The pale colors and personal nature of the motifs – primarily portraits of the artist's own children – accentuate the fragility of the works and point to the essence of what constitutes “memory”. However, these paintings do not directly reflect the current personal sphere of Annatina Graf; instead they convey it via an indirect medium since older photographs of the children serve as the basis for these works. These private photographs are the starting point for the artist to engage in a wide-reaching, general reflection on the phenomenon of memory.

In **Erinnern**, the fleetingness and at times deceptive lack of ambiguity that are characteristic of memories are combined with the qualities of the photographic image, which serves as a memory prompt, but, like a memory, can also fade over time. The aluminum paint used in the paintings reveals the underlying motif in different ways, depending on how the light falls, and sometimes makes it disappear completely into the background. This is how Annatina Graf processes her experience that recalled images may present themselves in very different ways within a short space of time, that the things we see can vanish again, and that, in recalling something in painted form, no personal experience can be replicated as an objective event.

6 | Anri Sala

Using 16 mm film clips, whose soundtracks are missing, with his video work **Intervista – Finding the Words** (1998) Anri Sala (1974, Tirana) documents the lost ideals and delusions of state socialism. The film records show Sala's mother speaking at a socialist congress and representing a communist youth group as the spokeswoman in a television interview. Because his mother is unable to give him an answer, the artist begins an elaborate research. This leads him to various protagonists from the former circles of his politically active mother. A trip through Tirana that Sala makes with a former journalist, a man now working as a taxi driver in post-Socialist Albania, does not shed any light on the content of the interview conducted at that time, but does deliver images of Tirana which, as a ruined city, acts as a both fragmentary and monumental testimony to the misery of a whole nation. Eventually, some lip readers from a deaf-mute school succeed in reconstructing some of the statements made by Sala's mother, but the translation remains fragmentary – it seems as if the relevant ideological phrases have also disappeared from the collective consciousness with the demise of state socialism. **Intervista** thus highlights not only the impossibility of historically accurate recall. The work also effectively conveys the direct relationship between the private and the public; the personal biography and that of a people; the “small” personal story and the “bigger” official history.

Mona Hatoum's (1952, Beirut) video **Measures of Distance** (1988) is unique among her works to date for its exclusive use of autobiographical material. The film features a series of superimposed photographs that Hatoum took of her mother in the shower during a visit with her in 1981. Conversations interlaced with the laughter of the two women during the same visit feature the soundtrack of this work. The images betray the artist's ever-present, painful longing for her mother, who is forced to sit out the civil war in distant Beirut, while her daughter, more by coincidence than choice, is stranded in London. Arabic calligraphy is superimposed on the images – five letters from the mother to her daughter. The latter reads them aloud in a monotone voice. The mother talks openly about her body, her sexuality, her anger about the “bloody war”, and her longing for her daughters. The many different media encapsulated within this work reflect the emotional turmoil of the protagonists: while the father reacts jealously to the freely displayed nudity of his wife, the images of this are the only form of closeness left to the daughter. At the same time, she uses these images as defiant proof of self-confident and sexually fulfilled Muslim femininity. The use of photographs instead of filmed images, on the other hand, signifies that the longed-for physical closeness remains only partial – and the images missing from the video stand for that inexpressible, unfulfilled longing.

8 | Vittorio Santoro

Vittorio Santoro's (1962, Zurich) video **Discrepancy I** tells the story of Georg, who suddenly makes contact with the artist in real life, claiming that the two of them went to the same school together for a few months in Sicily some 25 years ago. Santoro can hardly remember it, but visits the man anyway. The meeting is like an interrogation. The recounting of the events is interspersed with silent sequences, which metaphorically echo the discrepancies between the memories of Georg and Vittorio Santoro. When Georg eventually switches to the time immediately prior to their most recent meeting, the camera zooms onto the back of his head, as though it wants to get inside his thoughts. The camera position also changes abruptly at this point. At the end, when the camera comes to rest on Georg's eye, a photo from the old school days is superimposed onto the image; the searching camera and the memory seem to come together.

With his reflective approach, Santoro visualizes the memory process itself. He addresses the way in which even the memories of others can become one's own, thanks to the power of suggestion. He does not only record Georg's memory but also models it emotionally for the viewer – including its gaps and contradictions. Instead of filling these gaps, he allows the viewer to sympathize with the recollection of fragmentary memories.

American painter and performance artist Carolee Schneemann (1939, Fox Chase) put together three experimental films she shot in the New York Underground of the 1960s and 1970s to form an autobiographical trilogy. The first two films of the trilogy, **Fuses** (1964–1967) and **Plumb Line** (1968–1971), are shown here.

Fuses is a blend of images of lovemaking with images of the natural surroundings of Schneemann's house. They are also manually re-worked to convey the optical equivalent of the artist's own sensations. **Fuses** made Schneemann famous, since its erotic permissiveness was scandalous even for the liberal 1960s. While the first film is an ode to the sexual fulfillment of a couple, **Plumb Line** documents the traumatic dissolution of a relationship and the subsequent nervous breakdown of the filmmaker. This crisis, however, is not explicitly shown. Instead it is only made palpable in the spoken commentary and the analytical nature of the montage. The artist arranges private holiday snaps from the previously carefree couple's relationship in such a way that the first signs of the coming disaster are visible. In both of her experimental films, Schneemann addresses strong human emotions, such as sexual lust and mental as well as physical pain, from a decidedly female viewpoint. The autobiographical element arises from the nature of the photographic material used and persistent inside perspective that is filled with poetic intensity and sensual complexity.

10 | Pascale Wiedemann / Daniel Mettler

Pascale Wiedemann (1966, Chur) was almost 30 years old when she began casting her own clothes in epoxy resin blocks for her **Selbstportraits** (Self-portraits). With their detailed labels, they tell the story of their origin, use, and consequent significance in the life of the artist. The textile keepsakes stem from a phase in her life that was artistically fruitful but overshadowed by chronic eating disorders. Therefore the unusual method of preservation is probably also based on the desire to use clothing as the frozen physical representation of her body, as a creative means of exorcizing and locking up her own story of suffering.

Two colour photographs from 2008 present another form of self-portrait of the artist couple **Pascale Wiedemann** and **Daniel Mettler** (1965, Chur). The photos show one pile of clothes each out of the entire wardrobe currently still worn by the couple, separated by gender. In keeping with the prevailing stereotypes, the female pile of clothes turns out to be bigger and almost swamps the expansive, curvaceous Eames chair, while the much smaller, male pile of clothing is balanced gracefully on the more pared-down Saarinen chair. The autobiographical story arises from this arrangement in passing: the viewer not only learns more about the private development of the artist couple, but is also presented with a new way of looking at clothes. These textile wrappings no longer have to be cast in resin or turned into pieces of art, but continue to be used as clothing. This is why only a photograph of them appears, since the clothes – now that the eating disorder has been overcome – have become indispensable.

Ana Strika's (1981, Zurich) **Paper Cuts** (2008) are about autobiographical experiences, impressions of everyday life and set pieces from dreams interwoven to form poetic collages of landscapes and figures. With no respect for actual proportions, the rules of composition, or any thematic logic, these fragmented sketches overlap one another and are interspersed with snippets of text, as one mysterious anecdote emerges from the next. From her firm roots in the Eastern European tradition of animated film and *laterna magica*, Strika does not simply draw these surreal scenarios, but cuts them out of thick paper and expands them into environments by either hanging the paper cuts in the middle of the room or fashioning them into cylindrical shapes. Depending on the position of the light sources, these paper cuts throw light or shade silhouettes into the room and transform the two-dimensional nature of the paper into a traversable installation. When the cylinders then start turning on their own axis, the **Paper Cuts** also move and become a primitively executed, self-perpetuating film sequence. The cut-out scenes are intensified by various sound effects, a carefully composed soundtrack, and recited passages. The synchronicity achieved in this way of the most disparate events with their very differing degrees of reality points to the actual purpose of the artist: to highlight the simultaneity and equal validity of factual knowledge, memory, and subjective perception. She manages to achieve this with poetic ease. This is also why her works have been interpreted by some as "dreaming with open eyes".

12 | Nicholas Nixon

Ever since 1975, American photographer Nicholas Nixon (1947, Detroit) has photographed his wife Bebe and her three sisters at their annual get-togethers. Of the many films he shoots, he retains just one meaningful photograph each time and adds it to his growing series of **The Brown Sisters**. In doing so, the material conditions of these portraits, such as the planned print format (8 x 10 inch), reduction to black and white, and also the order in which the siblings appear – from left to right: Heather, Mimi, Bebe, and Laurie – remain the same, including the agreement of the subjects to be present not only in body, but also “in soul”.

The women reveal themselves both as individual personalities as well as the siblings of one family – with their changing feelings for one another, which are reflected in minimal changes in posture. The pictures allow the women’s life stories to be surmised and a panorama of human experience to be discerned. The autobiographical quality of this work stems from the close relationship the photographer has with his models. It is thanks only to this rapport and loving trust that such very personal images are even conceivable, which, due to the conceptual nature of the project, still retain a certain distance.

In this way, Nixon not only judiciously transforms the private into something public and extends the definition of a “family snapshot” with his strictly regimented approach. The series, which has since grown to encompass some 33 pieces, is also fascinating for its tangible and graphic documentation of the passing of time.

Since 1966, Japanese artist **On Kawara** (1933, Kariya-Aichi) has been producing his so-called **Date Paintings**. This body of work, which now numbers thousands and is also known as the **Today Series**, consists of horizontal canvases each inscribed with a date on a monochrome background, plus a box containing a newspaper clipping from the same day. Kawara's concept dictates that each work must be started and finished on the inscribed date. Otherwise the artist destroys the unfinished work of the day.

The different **Date Paintings** vary from one another in the format of the date: Kawara observes the conventional system of writing the date in whatever place he is currently residing. The newspaper clipping also gives an indication of the place where the painting was made, thus revealing an autobiographical fact about the otherwise publicity-shy artist. There are no typical brushstrokes, nor any traditional visual imagery. Time as an abstract dimension becomes a concrete figure in these paintings: the dates are presented as an apparently mechanically-generated series of digits and letters, and the works also represent a moment in time of the artist's life. The newspaper clippings on their part function as mundane, everyday, and "temporal" evidence of reality. With these clippings, the **Date Paintings** do tell us something about the time in which we live, but reveal little about Kawara's attitude to it.

14 | Darren Almond

The large-scale, three-screen video projection **Traction** is the most autobiographical work to date of British artist Darren Almond (1971, Wigan), whose photographic, film, and installation work repeatedly centers on the themes and symbols of history, memory, and forgetting.

Traction refers to the individual story of Almond's father's life. The story of Almond's father, a construction worker, is linked to more general questions, such as how life can be seen in retrospect as a "passion story", and how the passage of time is revealed through the traces left on a human body. The body of the father, which "charts" some severe injuries, hard labor and pain, is not visible in the images themselves and only presented via the medium of language, however, it becomes the map of an exemplary history. On the right-hand screen, the down-to-earth father himself is in view while he is being questioned by his son. The visual counterpoint to this is the left-hand screen depicting the mother listening to her husband's account, who is obviously emotionally moved and torn between laughing and crying. Finally, the central projection screen shows the raking arm of a mechanical digger, which may initially seem to represent the father's occupation, or symbolizes the harm it has caused, but also denotes the memory work the father is doing as he uncovers the "buried" episodes of his life. In doing so, he is unearthing the family history and literally reconstructing it.

The installation **Curriculum** by Isabelle Krieg (1971, Fribourg) consists almost entirely of the artist's utensils and studio equipment, with a stream encased in epoxy resin running through them. The furniture, tools and raw materials are augmented by completed and unfinished works from earlier phases of her creations. Apart from the splashing of the water, tunes hummed by Isabelle Krieg can be heard, each corresponding to a different period of her life and acoustically reviving the relevant memories. The title of the work is a reference not only to running water but also to the artist's career and the course of her life (*curriculum vitae*), which is subjected to a kind of stock take in this installation, and in that sense temporarily put on hold.

The juxtaposition of nature and culture is typical of the entire oeuvre of Isabelle Krieg. The natural, organic world that is usually only present on the fringes of the artist's everyday working life is here explicitly incorporated into the everyday world. On the other hand, in **Curriculum** Isabelle Krieg's studio and art materials spill over to form a veritable landscape within the exhibition room. In many instances, Isabelle Krieg interlaces her artistic work to a greater or lesser degree with explicit elements of her own life story: the most direct example of this autobiographical element would be her performance, poised between self-dramatization and self-exposure **Ich erzähle Ihnen mein Leben!** (I will tell you the story of my life), which is staged on the premises of the Kunstmuseum specifically for this exhibition on November 18, 2008.

16 | Jack Pierson

Multimedia artist Jack Pierson (1960) puts an unconventional twist on the conventional notion of a self-portrait in his **Self Portrait** (2003) photo series. He is not, as the title suggests, the model for this series himself, but rather a different person of the male gender in each case, each representing the artist at a certain age. This concept inherently means that the “self-portraits” arranged in this way are deliberately staged or stylized and show what the artist wishes to present as his alter ego. The desire that the artist feels or once felt for his models is thus always an element of the images Jack Pierson creates of himself in this way. By projecting himself onto the bodies of others, the element of self-love that accompanies to some degree each form of self-portrayal turns into a yearning for the other man. However, these “embodiments” of Jack Pierson also relate to past stages in the life of the artist, and together they sketch, through the changing settings in which the individuals pose and the very different moods conveyed in each case, a form of visual autobiography. In a more general sense, they represent – nostalgic – images of an irrevocable past; an aspect of Pierson’s photos that is particularly accentuated by the melancholy mood of most of the models.

At the age of 24, German experimental filmmaker Jan Peters (1966, Hannover) began standing in front of his own camera once a year to take stock of the previous year of his life. This autobiographical work-in-progress with the ironic title **...but I still haven't figured out the meaning of life** now comprises 19 short films. The surprisingly short duration stems from the fact that Peters initially worked with a Super-8 camera that could only record three minutes at a time. The time limit and abrupt termination of recording at the end of each roll of film were accepted by the filmmaker as technical limits that he continued to observe long after he had switched to digital film. In **Ich bin 24** (I am 24), the essential features of the coming **Ich bin...** film series are already there. Apart from the limited recording time, these include the stationary camera, the frontal recording position and the concentration of the filmmaker, who recounts in an unedited take whatever occurs to him at the time.

By way of an aside, Peters deals with the problem of autobiographical filming itself, in making observations about self-perception in film (**Ich bin 32**), about the relationship between recording and real time (**Ich bin 34**), plus the fact that his own life story is constantly changing. Peters realizes this when he attempts to retrospectively add a soundtrack to one of the short films for which he has lost the original soundtrack, but then cannot remember what he actually said at the time (**Ich bin 39**).

18 | Xiaoyuan Hu

Given the incredible upheaval affecting all walks of life in China, Xiaoyuan Hu (1977, Haerbin), like so many artists of her generation, addresses the past through the medium of private memories, used everyday objects, and handed-down family photos. **The Times** (2006) is an installation comprising three silk panels, into which the artist has sewn things that once belonged to her deceased grandmother, mother or herself. These everyday utilitarian objects stand for seemingly long-forgotten memories and shed light on the time that has since elapsed. What emerges is a vivid personal archive that traces the lives of three generations of Chinese women and allows one last insight into the past via the memory of the artist.

Mine (2004) was designed as a visual diary. The artist painted small watercolors on the empty pages of Braille Bibles. In total there are three books of the Gospels written in Braille, which Hu found by chance at a flea market and then presented – as a person with no particular connection to the Christian religion – open at these pages in a display cabinet. Colors, drawings, and the tactile quality of raised Braille lettering make for an evocative combination. This form of “haptic visuality” brings to mind the other sensual qualities of everyday life that are inevitably omitted from the depiction. Furthermore, the unusual medium of these images symbolizes the spiritual dimension that may be inherent in everyday life.

Laura Lancaster's (1979, Hartlepool) small-scale drawings and watercolors, which she sometimes assembles into larger wall installations, feature motifs like the ones seen in private photo albums, such as scenes from a first day at school, celebrations and parties, or visual mementos of vacations. The appropriation of a spread-open photo album might lead to the interpretation that this artist works with autobiographical material. In reality, Lancaster creates her paintings based on the found photographs of strangers. She follows this practice of replicating existing images in many of her works, it relieves her of the task of finding her own images and allows her to focus her artistic attention on the act of painting and drawing itself.

These works, however, also reveal how just closely the seemingly unique personal events in the life of any person, and in particular the way in which special occasions are observed by very different people, resemble each other. On the other hand, the viewer can only really speculate on the histories and life stories of the people involved, based on the evidence of these "documents". But the conventionality of the situations depicted allows us to use the images as a starting point for imagining the stories that go with each painting, based on our own life experience.

20 | Sadie Benning

Sadie Benning (1973, Madison) made her first videos at the tender age of 15 with a Fisher Price Pixelvision camera, which her father, experimental filmmaker James Benning, had given her. She went on to use the primitive toy camera, which only produces black and white images, as a diary medium documenting her pubescent feelings of being different, registering a mix of fear, shame, and curiosity about fluctuating homosexual tendencies and documenting her longings in the form of highly imaginative short stories, all of which she filmed in her own bedroom. The distorted perspective, haziness and graininess of the film material generates an expressive quality consistent with the artist's level of self-awareness. Her intimate revelations are underpinned by carefully selected pop music from the 1950s to 1980s, which seem to form the soundtrack of Benning's actual life and adopt the role of an additional line of commentary.

The young filmmaker uses her limited technical resources skillfully and overcomes the dilemma of autobiographical films – the impossibility of being both in front of and behind the camera at the same time – by doing both alternately, yet still managing to weld together the disparate segments into a convincing inside perspective. She consciously or unconsciously refers to the formal options explored in American underground experimental films of the 1960s in order to arrive at her own, punk-infused form of expression, which documents both her coming out and her coming of age.

Annelies Štrba (1947, Zug) has photographed members of her family for several decades now. Partial fuzziness, over-exposure and graininess characterize the shots taken for **Shades of Time** (1974–1997). The photographs, apart from landscape shots, primarily depict her children Sonja, Linda, and Samuel, as well as her partner and the grandmother of her children. In the later shots, her own grandchildren feature more prominently – a family idyll the artist appears to have captured in passing with her camera.

The images testify to her love of a simple life, a strong relationship with the natural world and great interest in everyday life. Objective documentary photography, however, is certainly not what Štrba has in mind. The quality of the photos lies more in their timeless ambiguity and the mood they convey, which is at times quite magical. The photos outline a utopian togetherness and provide a nostalgic review of past times. Despite the intimacy they convey, the photos are by no means “private” or revealing. In a subtle, effortless way, the photographs document human relationships, childhood and the coming of age between fantasy and a sense of reality, the process of seeing oneself in one’s own offspring, and fleeting memories of the irrevocable past.

In particular, the juxtaposition of three images at a time during the slide show and the way the images fade in and out, overlaid with suggestive melodies, seem to allude to the associative nature of memory.

Events

In English

Public Guided Tour in English: Tuesday, 2009/1/20, 7:00 pm

Film Projection with Carolee Schneemann in English

Sunday, 2008/12/7, noon

Film program at the Kino Kunstmuseum

See separate programm or www.kinokunstmuseum.ch

In German

Performance von Isabelle Krieg: Ich erzähle Ihnen mein Leben!

Dienstag, 18.11.2008, 19h

Künstlergespräche mit Ana Strika: Dienstag, 9.12.2008, 19h

und mit Isabelle Krieg: Dienstag, 20.1.2009, 19h

Kunst über Mittag: Gesprächsveranstaltung vor Originalwerken

Jeweils Mittwoch, 12h30 – 13h

26.11.2008 Jack Pierson | 10.12.2008 Louise Bourgeois

7.1.2009 On Kawara | 21.1.2009 Elke Krystufek

4.2.2009 Annelies Štrba und Laura Lancaster

Lust auf Kunst am Samstagnachmittag:

Die Sprache meiner Kleider

Mit dem Künstlerpaar Pascale Wiedemann und Daniel Mettler, den Modemacherinnen Anja Bojie und Andrea Hostettler (Viento), der Kuratorin Kathleen Bühler und der Kunstvermittlerin Katharina Nyffenegger. Samstag, 14.2.2009, 14h – 15h30

Anmeldung: T +41 31 328 09 11, vermittlung@kunstmuseumbern.ch

Duration	14.11.2008 – 15.2.2009
Opening	Thursday, November 13, 6:30pm
Entrance Fee	CHF 14.– red. CHF 10.–
Opening Hours	Tuesday 10:00 am – 9:00 pm Wednesday to Sunday 10:00 am – 5:00 pm Monday closed
Holidays	2008/12/24: 10:00 am – 5:00 pm 2008/12/25: closed 2008/12/31, 2009/1/1, 2009/1/2: 10:00 am – 5:00 pm
Guided Tours	T +41 31 328 09 11 F +41 31 328 09 10 vermittlung@kunstmuseumbern.ch

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Catalogue (German / English)

EGO DOCUMENTS

Das Autobiografische in der Gegenwartskunst

The Autobiographical in Contemporary Art

Published by Kathleen Bühler, Kunstmuseum

Bern | Kehrer Verlag, Heidelberg

Essays by Kathleen Bühler, Corina Caduff,

Matthias Frehner, Alma-Elisa Kittner,

Peter Schneemann, Judith Welter

192 p. ISBN 978-3-86828-005-0

CHF 50.– / € 30.–

The exhibition is supported by

Stiftung GegenwART, Dr. h.c. Hansjörg Wyss

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