

## Press release

# Museum Folkwang

## ***Timm Rautert and the Lives of Photography*: Museum Folkwang Dedicates a Major Retrospective to the Essen Photographer**

Essen, 9 March 2021. Till 16 May 2021, Museum Folkwang presents a comprehensive retrospective of photographer Timm Rautert's oeuvre. The exhibition *Timm Rautert and the Lives of Photography* spans five decades of his artistic production: beginning with Rautert's experimental early work as a student of Otto Steinert, it shows his famous portrait series such as *Deutsche in Uniform* (Germans in Uniform) or *Eigenes Leben* (Own Life), as well as his artwork collages and his 2015 photographic installation work *L'Ultimo Programma*. The nearly 350 works illustrate not only the thematic and methodological versatility of Rautert's oeuvre, but can also be read as documents of photography's long journey into the museum and the art canon.

Timm Rautert (born in 1941 in Tuchola, then West Prussia) is considered one of Germany's preeminent contemporary photographers. Over the decades he has succeeded not only in anticipating the most important trends in photography, but has also played a major role in shaping them: as a studio photographer for galleries, as a photojournalist, as a chronicler of changing work environments and, finally, as a university lecturer, he has influenced ensuing generations.

As a student under Otto Steinert at what was then the Folkwangschule in Essen-Werden, Rautert quickly developed solid foundations for a committed, social-documentary photography. Alongside this, he explored the fundamentals of photography and developed his "image-analysis photography", which has methodically permeated his artistic work to this day. For Rautert, alternating between applied and artistic elements is not a contradiction, but an expression of resolute photographic authorship.

In 1970, Rautert travelled to the USA and photographed figures such as Franz Erhard Walther, Andy Warhol and Walter de Maria. In Osaka, he documented the World's Fair and the deeply traditional Japanese society of the time. From the mid-1970s, Rautert worked together with the journalist Michael Holzach on joint reportages for *ZEITMagazin*. For over a decade he produced social documentary reportages on migrant workers, the homeless, or previously inaccessible communities like *The Hutterites* (1978) and *The Amish* (1974).

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In the 1980s, Rautert turned to documenting working environments in the automobile and computer industries, creating a long-term chronicle of the transformation of the workplace in the wake of industrial automation. Around 70 photographs from the series *Gehäuse des Unsichtbaren* (Houses of the Invisible) with photographs of research and manufacturing sites such as the *Max Planck Institute* (1988) or *Siemens AG* (1989) are being presented for the first time in a digital double projection, which Rautert developed specially for the exhibition at Museum Folkwang.

Artist portraits have been a recurring theme in Rautert's work; his first was that of the Czech photographer Josef Sudek made for an exhibition of work by Otto Steinert and his students. It was followed by portraits of Otl Aicher, Pina Bausch, André Heller, Jasper Morrison and Éric Rohmer. Rautert focused not only on the subject, but also on their surroundings and actions; capturing their sphere of influence as part of their identity.

After being appointed professor of photography at the Hochschule für Grafik und Buchkunst Leipzig (1993–2008), Rautert dedicated himself to his own work. His focus is on re-examining, restructuring and reshooting past projects. His students include Viktoria Binschtok, Falk Haberkorn, Harry (Grit) Hachmeister, Margret Hoppe, Sven Johné, Ricarda Roggan, Adrian Sauer, Sebastian Stumpf and Tobias Zielony.

In 2008, Timm Rautert was the first photographer to receive the Lovis Corinth Prize for his life's work.

## Information

### **TIMM RAUTERT AND THE LIVES OF PHOTOGRAPHY**

19 February 2021 – 16 May 2021

Sponsored by Stiftung Presse-Haus NRZ and Kulturstiftung Essen

Supported by Folkwang-Museumsverein e.V. and Förderer der Fotografischen Sammlung im Museum Folkwang e.V.

In 2023, the exhibition will be shown at Bombas Gens Centre d'Art in Valencia.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a comprehensive catalog published by Steidl Verlag.