

SHUNK - KENDER

**ART THROUGH THE EYE OF THE CAMERA
(1958-1973)**

Curated by Chloé Goualch', Julie Jones and Stéphanie Rivoire

Opening: 23 October 2020, 5 to 10 pm

Exhibition duration: October 24, 2020 until February 14, 2021

In cooperation with the Centre Pompidou in Paris and its documentation centre, the Kandinsky Library, the Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst Leipzig presents thanks to the support of Ostdeutsche Sparkassenstiftung, Sparkasse Leipzig and the Cultural Foundation of the Free State of Saxony the first retrospective of the photographers **Harry Shunk** (1924-2006) and **János Kender** (1937-2009) in Germany.

Between 1958 und 1973, Shunk and Kender worked together on behalf of artists, galleries, publishers and museums, first in Paris, and later in New York. Their photographs depict illustrious personalities from the international art scene, including the artists Marta Minujín, Andy Warhol, Christo, the gallery owners Iris Clert and Ileana Sonnabend or critics such as Pierre Restany. They show various phases of artistic work, both in the studio and in galleries, exhibitions and public spaces, including iconic moments such as Yves Klein's *Leap into the void*, Niki de Saint Phalle and Yayoi Kusama's actions in public space or the project series *Pier 18*, initiated by Willoughby Sharp.

Shunk and Kender moved in the same circles as the personalities they photographed, which numbered more than 500, and were friends with many of them. However, they are still largely unknown to the general public today.

The photographs of Shunk-Kender place the works, processes, places, private and public moments of the art world alongside one another in a non-hierarchical context. They are unique testimonies of the post-war avant-garde, and at the same time they give birth to a special photographic genre. While Charles Baudelaire still referred to photography as the "humble servant" of the arts, Umberto Eco's description of the genre as a "critical observer of the arts", and thus a "vital component" of it, is far more appropriate here. In this exhibition, the multifaceted meaning of SHUNK-KENDER's pictures becomes clearly evident: they are documents, pictorial art critique and artistic works all in one.

This special feature is precisely what sparks curatorial interest. In contrast to the so-called re-enactments, i.e. the revivals of performances, spatial concepts and exhibitions that have enjoyed great popularity in recent years, the focus here is not on reconstruction, but on the process of creating artistic works. Starting out from the idea of co-production, in this case between two photographers and diverse artists, we are concerned with the question of how the concept of a work of art changed in Western art history after 1945.

In cooperation with the Centre Pompidou Paris and the Museo d'arte della Svizzera Italiana Lugano.

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