

# IN THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER

LOTTA ANTONSSON, MAYA ATTOUN,  
EITAN BEN MOSHE, CHRISTIAN BOLTANSKI,  
ADAM BROOMBERG, JOHN COPLANS,  
PHILIP-LORCA DICORCIA,  
RINEKE DIJKSTRA, TOM FRIEDMAN,  
ANNIKA ELISABETH VON HAUSSWOLFF,  
KYUNG-ME, SANTIAGO SIERRA,  
MIROSLAV TICHÝ, DANH VO

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**ENGLISH**

## Introduction

*In the Eye of the Beholder* assembles works from the Magasin III Collection into a group exhibition of artists who depict themselves or others, taking inspiration from the different approaches those artists chose towards their subject. Based on an initial idea by curator Olga Krzeszowiec Malmsten, we have brought together works that behold both intimately and from a distance; in concurrence and surreptitiously; observantly, intrusively or tenderly.

Since its inception in 1987, Magasin III has built a substantial and continuously growing collection, access to which is a privilege that invites both revisits of the already familiar, as well as unexpected discoveries. The possibilities of delving deep into such material, to present works in novel constellations and contexts, seem beyond limit.

New impressions stipulate novel ways of perceiving and conceiving the collection, ranging from impulses as disparate as current developments in the world surrounding us, to a newly acquired work. When curating exhibitions we behold and reflect on the works through the lens of each artist's practice, method, and intention (to the extent that we can grasp them), based on a broader context of contemporary art, and guided by our own highly subjective seeing. *In the Eye of the Beholder* is a reminder that even our own practice rests on beholding.

I would like to take the opportunity to express my warm thanks to the entire team at Magasin III, who have worked intensively and committedly for several parallel collection presentations. Chief Technician

Thomas Nordin, and Technician & Conservator Erik Rask have installed the artwork in the halls with great care. I would especially like to thank Olga Krzeszowiec Malmsten for conceiving this group exhibition shortly before her parental leave, as well as Sofia Ringstedt who swiftly stepped in as acting curator amid the preparations.

Tessa Praun  
Museum Director & Chief Curator

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### In the Eye of the Beholder

*At one end of the spectrum, photographs are objective data; at the other end, they are items of psychological science fiction.* – Susan Sontag

This quote addresses the two-fold properties of a photograph: as a document of what is depicted, and equally an expression of the creator's innermost being. The collection presentation *In the Eye of the Beholder* consists for the main part of photographic portraits, but also drawings, sculptures, and moving images of depictions—portraits if you will—based on different ways of beholding. We see examples of introspective and psychologically probing self-portraits; depictions that disclose an intimacy and mutual trust between artist and subject; and even inquisi-

tive and voyeuristic observations of individuals and their contexts from a critical distance.

The act of beholding can be expressed in various ways and can involve conflicting emotions and perspectives. To regard someone in actuality is to confirm their existence; therefore, the intention behind this act is presumably sprung from some sense of curiosity or interest in the person regarded. Nonetheless, an observant gaze can be experienced as exposing and intrusive if it steps over a (sometimes indeterminate) boundary.

How we observe ourselves and others is therefore a complex question that in our times daily compels us to take a stand on. The works in this exhibition have arisen out of countless driving forces and divergent contexts. What they all share is the exploration of oneself and others. The act of beholding, initially a tool of the artist, is now delegated to the eye of the museum visitor—the beholder next down the line.

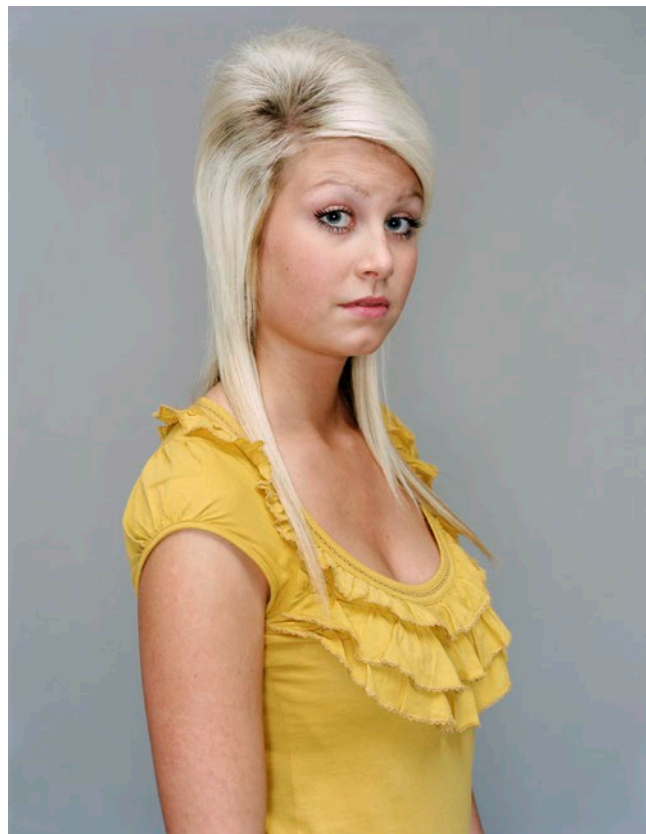
Olga Krzeszowiec Malmsten  
Curator

## Rineke Dijkstra

Born 1959 in Sittard, the Netherlands. Lives and works in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

Rineke Dijkstra has worked with photographic portraits since the early 1990s. A constant throughout her career is the depiction of individuals in various stages of transition, particularly of young people in the borderland between childhood and adulthood. Dijkstra's large-scale portraits explore her subjects' states of vulnerability and self-awareness—states that are often brought to a head during a portrait session.

The photographic portrait *Amy, The Krazyhouse, Liverpool, England, December 23, 2008* comes from the series *The Krazyhouse*. Containing both photography and moving images, the project is an extension of Dijkstra's involvement in Liverpool's youth scene and grew out of an interest in the nightclub as a venue for young people's social lives. Dijkstra photographed the regulars at the club in a studio built on the premises that could be used during the day. The project resulted in a series of portraits and video works in which youths pose and dance for the camera to their chosen music. Although not directly visible in stills, music and dance became the means through which Dijkstra could tap into her subjects' stages of transition. During the course of the work, their body language fluctuated between cautious self-awareness and intense engagement with the music.



*Amy, The Krazyhouse, Liverpool, England, December 23, 2008, 2008.*  
Archival inkjet print, 96.5 x 75 cm.

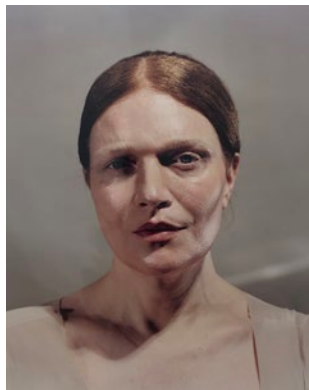
## Adam Broomberg

Born 1970 in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Lives and works in London, UK.

Adam Broomberg is an artist who focuses on the properties of photographic portraiture. From 1998 to 2021, Broomberg and Oliver Chanarin collaborated under the name Broomberg & Chanarin to explore the role of photography in the depiction of war and human suffering. After 23 years, the artist duo went their separate ways to a noticeable death knell of their partnership.

The project *Glitter in My Wounds*, a series of portraits with befitting poetic texts, is the joint effort of Broomberg, trans activist Gersande Spelsberg, and poet CAConrad. Together they have investigated issues of transformation, identity, and depiction. Broomberg's portraits have been influenced by Helmar Lerski and August Sander, two photographers active in the early 20th century with widely different notions of photography's potential for depiction. Broomberg was inspired by the project *Metamorphosis Through Light*—Lerski's comprehensive series of portraits of a man, shot in a single day using only mirrors and sunlight as a light source. During one nine-hour session, Broomberg photographed Spelsberg using the same technique that Lerski had used in 1936. In this series of 100 photographs, the point of repeatedly beholding the subject becomes clear: could any one of these portraits capture the character of the subject more truthfully than another, or do the limitations of photography preclude a deeper psychological portrayal?



*Glitter in My Wounds* #8, 2021. C-type handprint, 50 x 40 cm.

*Glitter in My Wounds* #10, 2021. C-type handprint, 50 x 40 cm.

*Glitter in My Wounds* #1, 2021. C-type handprint, 50 x 40 cm.

## Tom Friedman

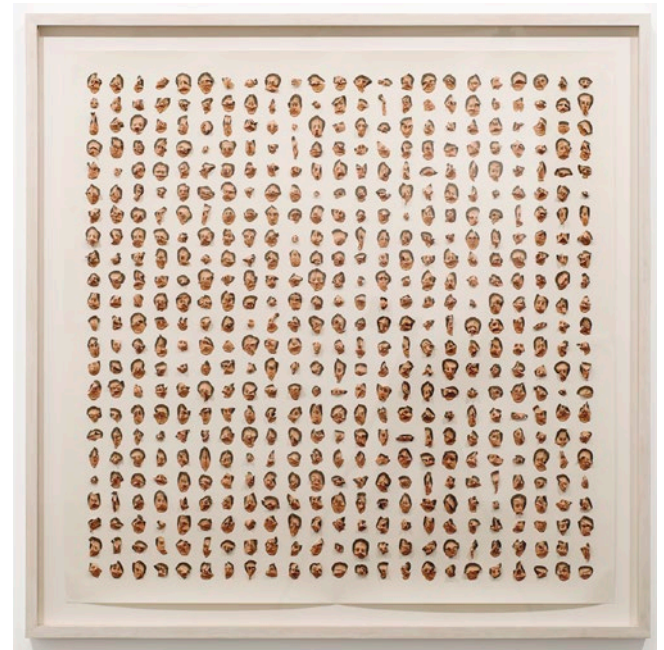
Born 1965 in St. Louis, USA. Lives and works in Massachusetts, USA.

*Art, for me, is a context to slow the viewer's experience from their everyday life in order to think about things they haven't thought about. Or to think in a new way.*

– Tom Friedman

Tom Friedman is an American conceptual artist who works mostly with installation and sculpture. Using everyday objects as material and with meticulous, yet playful, methods, Friedman turns our eye to view our surroundings in new ways. Through art, he aims to create a space for slowing down, for reflecting on, and re-evaluating the world around us.

*I'm Not Myself* (2009) is Friedman's photographic collage of 250 self-portraits. Aiming to have us reconsider the things we see as self-evident, he redefines self-portraiture by experimenting with his own image. Miniature cut-out faces have been wrinkled and distorted into shifting facial features. Each repetitive reworking sparks a small shift in his self-portrait and, in a wider sense, in the person they represent. The myriad variations of the one photograph in conjunction with the work's title playfully raise the question of whether one can ever be someone other than oneself.



*I'm Not Myself*, 2009. Inkjet prints on paper, 125 x 125.5 cm.

## John Coplans

Born 1920 in London, UK. Lived and worked in New York, USA, until his death in 2003.

*The natural aging of body and mind plays a role in my work. The body's response to age is personally felt and can be observed by all. The mind, however, is another story.*

– John Coplans

Initially trained as a painter, John Coplans worked as an art writer and reviewer for many years before adopting photography as his primary medium. At the age of 58, he began an exploration of body and psyche by photographing his own naked body—a comprehensive project that occupied his focus for the remaining 35 years of his life. John Coplan's self-portraits depict an aged body whose large-scale format and detailed studies make beholding an intrusive and exposing act. The choice to never include his face renders the artist's photographed body generic, just as his nudity ousts any time-specific markers. Without these markers, according to Coplans, the body becomes timeless.

John Coplans was influenced by feminist theory and the notion of the male gaze. Exploring his own body in his work, he claimed that his maleness was attributed to him by chance, not choice. Through his intimate and self-exposing portraits, Coplans manifests an existential, rather than a sexual, expression. His work is as much an exploration of the interior of the psyche as a study of transience and the impact of time on the physical body.



*Self Portrait (Frieze No.2, Four panels), 1994. Silver prints, 190.5 x 315 cm.*



## Lotta Antonsson

Born 1963 in Varberg, Sweden. Lives and works in Berlin, Germany.

Lotta Antonsson belongs to a generation of artists, schooled in the 1990s, whose work is influenced by postmodernist and feminist theories. Having studied photography at the University of Arts, Crafts and Design in Stockholm, she relocated to the US, where she would address topics such as victimisation, objectification and vulnerability from the perspective of young women.

Antonsson's later works repurpose collected photographic material from the 1960s and 1970s, which are processed, cut into pieces, and reassembled as collage. The female body, a motif that Antonsson constantly returns to, is often presented as fragmented and organically inter-linked with natural materials, such as shells, stones and driftwood.

In her work *Monika* (2021), Lotta Antonsson uses be-holding as both method and form by overlaying 1960s icon Monica Vitti's eyes and teeth with fluorite stones. The subject's gaze is obscured, and the previously perfect smile is now akin to a grimace.



*Monika*, 2021. Collage with fluorite stones, 33 x 52 cm.

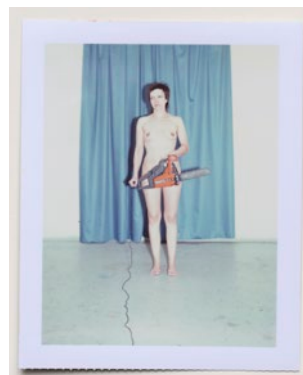


## Annika Elisabeth von Hausswolff

Born 1965 in Gothenburg, Sweden, where she lives and works.

Since the early 1990s, Annika Elisabeth von Hausswolff's photography has played a key role on the Swedish art scene. In an extensive body of work, she has doggedly explored issues of violence, criminology, patriarchal structures, and psychoanalysis. Her photographs often depict situations staged with an inkling of the subconscious present. Her later work also involves found photographic material, which she substantially reworks and composes into novel worlds of motifs. von Hausswolff's artistic expression is properly described as suggestive and multifaceted, in which what has been withheld from the gaze of the beholder says as much as what is depicted.

*The Last Self-Portrait* is the title of three Polaroid images from a photographic series created in 2007 for Sweden's Association for Art. von Hausswolff was invited to produce one photograph that would stand as model for a multiple, but she instead chose to create 400 unique images of her subject: herself. She described this act as a compulsive replay of a motif retrieved from her visual world. The result was an interplay between an introspective examination of the self and its displacements.



All: *The Last Self-Portrait*, 2007. Polaroid photograph, 13 x 10.5 cm.

## Philip-Lorca diCorcia

Born 1951 in Hartford, USA. Lives and works in New York, USA.

Since the 1980s, Philip-Lorca diCorcia has challenged the medium of photography with his charitable compositions on the borderline between documentary and staged situations.

In *Heads* (2000–2001), one of his more celebrated series, diCorcia's subjects are anonymous individuals amid the bustle of Times Square in New York City. diCorcia affixed to a scaffolding a strobe light that was activated by a radio signal to release the camera shutter, capturing individuals or small groups of passers-by without letting on to his presence. We see these subjects in private moments, lost in thought, and filtered out from the pulse and sounds of the city. The tranquil, intimate close-ups, which appear to have been taken at night or indoors on a theater stage, were actually shot in broad daylight. During the course of the project, over 3,000 photographs were taken, of which only 17 were selected for the series. The results are true-to-life, yet carefully prepared, snapshots. Using this method, diCorcia explores the prospects of capturing both what is the characteristically individual and what makes human beings more similar than dissimilar, without the knowledge or consent of the subjects.



*Head #13*, 2000. Fujicolor Crystal Archive print mounted on plexi,  
120 x 151 cm.

## Santiago Sierra

Born 1966 in Madrid, Spain, where he lives and works.

*The interesting thing is also that when you have somebody... when you don't see the face of somebody, their position becomes more active, you know, you have to think why doesn't she show me the face, you know. And in a world full of images, this image, which is an anti-image in a way, becomes full of meaning, because the person has to create what the person doesn't see.*

– Santiago Sierra

Santiago Sierra works with performances and installations that deal with social inequality, structural violence, and racism. In simple but radical strokes, his art spotlights society's discriminatory power relations, unfair working conditions, and the processes that empower and exploit them.

With its subjects' backs turned to the camera, *89 HUICHOL'S* depicts the Huichol, a North American indigenous people, who today inhabit areas adjacent to the Mexico-United States border. Like other indigenous peoples who are subjected to forced displacement, they fight for the right to maintain their culture. Many Huichol work for low pay and under deplorable, risky working conditions, as often as not on tobacco plantations. In his work, Sierra draws attention to an otherwise invisible group, who maintain their identity, and thereby their integrity, by turning their backs to the beholder.



*89 HUICHOL'S*, 2006. Black and white photographs, dimensions variable.

## Danh Vo

Born 1975 in Bà Rịa, Vietnam. Lives and works in Berlin, Germany, and Mexico City, Mexico.

Danh Vo's conceptual artistic practice bridges autobiographical storytelling and collective historiography. He uses his private archive as material to reconstruct larger historical events. Vo often starts from ready-mades and found or manufactured objects, whose many layers of meaning embody an historical context, a past affiliation or a role as universal icon. Providing new contexts for these objects, he investigates their imputed historical and political meanings and their symbolic values.

In *Portrait of a Hand*, we see the artist's grandmother posing on a chair. With this portrait, Vo demonstrates that the great political events of history and the present moment converge with the people who are manifestly, *visibly* present.

Vo's family history, which is marked by both war and exile, plays a formative part in his artistic material. Objects taken out of a private context become artworks charged with reflections on migration, displacement, and (in)security.



*Portrait of a Hand*, 2010. Photogravure, 93 x 69 cm.

## Miroslav Tichý

Born 1926 in Nětčice, former Czechoslovakia. Lived and worked in Kyjov, Czech Republic, until his death in 2011.

Miroslav Tichý is chiefly known for his distinctive photographic depictions of women in his hometown of Kyjov. Initially training in classical painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague, he broke off his studies due to the Communist takeover of Czechoslovakia in 1948. The political crisis facing the country coincided with Tichý's own personal crisis. Now standing on the periphery of society, he nevertheless continued his artistic work on his own.

During the 1960s, Tichý took up photography, usually shooting with a cheap bakelite camera that he rebuilt using found objects. Eventually he would work with completely homemade cameras built from cardboard, plywood, and coils of wire, and sealed with asphalt. The found glass camera lenses were reconditioned with toothpaste to get the right dullness, and the images were developed by Tichý at night in his courtyard.

The photographic works have many parallels to his earlier paintings. In focus is the fascination for the anatomy of the female body, but also the context in which Tichý's unsuspecting models find themselves. Tichý's self-elected role, as someone standing on the outside and beholding society from afar, was echoed in his photography.



All: *Undated* (1960–1995). Silver gelatin print.

*Untitled* (MT inv. no. 2-105), 17.8 x 12.7 cm.

*Untitled* (MT inv. no. 5-10-49), 17.8 x 10.9 cm.

*Untitled* (MT inv. no. 5-6-180), 11.9 x 13 cm.

*Untitled* (MT inv. no. 5-7-68), 23.2 x 17.8 cm.

Worked on:

*Untitled* (MT inv. no. 5-10-92), 22.2 x 17.7 cm.

*Untitled* (MT inv. no. 5-7-94), 27.8 x 13.8 cm.

Mounted on white paper:

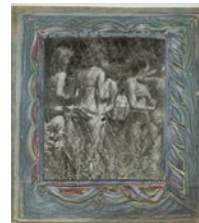
*Untitled* (MT inv. no 5-12-145), 20.5 x 10.8 cm.

Mounted on cardboard and worked on paper:

*Untitled* (MT inv. no. 5-2-7), 23.9 x 21.5 cm.

Mounted on cardboard and textile:

*Untitled* (MT inv. no. 5-2-20), 30.6 x 27.2 cm.



## Maya Attoun

Born 1974 in Jerusalem, Israel. Lived and worked in Tel Aviv, Israel, until her death in 2022.

Maya Attoun's artistry was multidisciplinary. Most recently, she worked with large-scale installations that brought together murals, prints, sculptures, ready-mades, and sound art. But regardless of medium, drawing was customarily the underlying component of her work. In Attoun's visual world, which brings the body's discord into focus, we find both beauty and malady, people and animals.

In the drawing *Inner Beauty*, a figure holds up a skull. The motif is framed by a dark mass that descends in tentacle-like threads that work their way into the figure's head of hair and the skull in its hand. Where we expect a face, we instead get foreboding darkness. The work contains allusions to Shakespeare's Hamlet, who detected his own mortality in a skull, and to Medusa of Greek mythology, who petrified those who met her gaze. The work's title suggests introspective probing, in an exchange that does not require the beholder to participate. What manifests is the impossibility of a faceless figure meeting the gaze of a lifeless skull.



*Inner Beauty*, 2007. Ink drawing on paper, 39 x 64 cm.



## Kyung-Me

Born 1991 in Georgia, USA. Lives and works in New York, USA.

Kyung-Me is an artist working with drawings and illustrations. With meticulous methods inspired by both French draftsman Gustave Doré and Japanese woodcuts, she creates detailed and dreamlike spatialities. A stringent process grants her access to a focused place within herself where she can find peace.

The drawing *Half Mourning IV* depicts objects, fragments, and patterns that appear to be at once harmoniously composed and at times in competition. A drawing room is decorated with conflicting time markers. Using a linear perspective, she offers a view of a familiar world of motifs that can feel foreign to the beholding eye. The absence of a central perspective opens a door onto each detail separately taken in before the whole is discerned. The beholding eye is permitted to roam freely between objects with no apparent guidance. The black garment on the bed recalls both the absence of human presence in the room, and the work's title, which suggests a place of mourning.

Bedrooms set the stage in *Ghost 1* and *Ghost 4*, but now a man appears in the center. Witnessing his bare back and averted gaze in the intimacy of a bedroom, our own gaze confronts his vulnerability.



*Half Mourning IV*, 2018. Ink drawing on Arches paper, 45.7 x 61 cm.

*Ghost 1*, 2018. Ink drawing on Arches paper, 20.6 x 29.9 cm.

*Ghost 4*, 2018. Ink drawing on Arches paper, 25.4 x 35.6 cm.



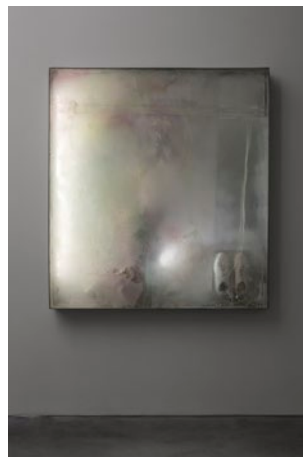
## Eitan Ben Moshe

Born 1971 in Haifa, Israel. Lives and works in Tel Aviv, Israel.

*White Shoes has to do with the scenery I see a lot in the neighborhood I live in (Shapira). As someone who likes to peek through the windows of strangers, I have been gazing into the windows of small street level apartments of refugees living in the neighborhood. Often the place is poor and simple, but almost always some bright new pair of shoes is visibly placed. One such pair, white, remained in my memory.* – Eitan Ben Moshe

Eitan Ben Moshe works with sculptures and installations that can be compared to futuristic existences or living organisms. His world of motifs, consisting of a mix of found and created material, is often difficult to place in a specific time or place. Rather, his work is often rooted in science fiction and contexts in which time and space are nebulous.

The works *White Shoes* and *Albino Heart* from 2017 deal with cases of collision—situations frozen in time but giving way to new worlds formed in their wake. These light boxes hold layers of shards of found and 3D-printed objects, carefully laid out by Ben Moshe so that they alternately reflect and obstruct the backlight. Through a partially obscured screen, the beholder can contemplate the fragments of the artist's fictional world—a reminder that vision is often imperfect. The expressive light boxes illustrate an imagined reality belonging to others which Ben Moshe voyeuristically approaches from a critical distance.



*White Shoes*, 2017. Mixed media, 153 x 141 x 16 cm.

*Albino Heart*, 2017. Mixed media, 100 x 110 x 52 cm.

## Christian Boltanski

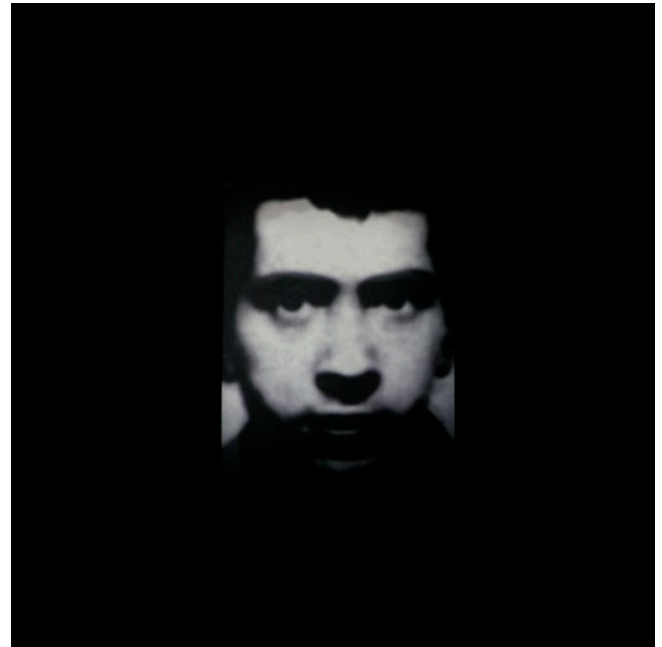
Born 1944 in Paris, France, where he lived and worked until his death in 2021.

*What drives me as an artist is that I think everyone is unique, yet everyone disappears so quickly, [...] We hate to see the dead, yet we love them, we appreciate them.*

– Christian Boltanski

Christian Boltanski was an autodidact artist working primarily with installations. He used personal and found materials in works that spanned individual and collective narratives alike. One recurrent theme in his artistic practice is human mortality, illustrated in its encounters with the beholder as memories of loss and injustice. At the heart of his acknowledgement and affirmation of human suffering is the relentless pursuit and celebration of life itself.

In *Entre temps* (literally “between time”), we see the artist’s face in its various stages of life and in an ever-repeating cycle—a self-portrait in which Boltanski repeatedly beholds himself through the lens of time. Can a photograph capture a person, a soul, a life? Despite repeated attempts, only fragments remain of what once was. In this work, we are reminded that we can never grasp the full sense of life in its entirety. Life is rather what happens in between.



*Entre temps*, 2003. Video installation, 3:00 mins.

Exhibition curator: Olga Krzeszowiec Malmsten  
In collaboration with Tessa Praun and Sofia Ringstedt

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Tessa Praun *Museum Director & Chief Curator*  
Erik Rask *Technician & Conservator*  
Sofia Ringstedt *Curator (maternity cover)*

Thank you to Hangmen for the assistance with the installation.  
All works are from the Magasin III Collection.

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