



Hans Danuser TORSO, image_III 10 of Serie MEDIZIN I, 11-teilig, part of IN VIVO, 1980-1989
all rights by studio Hans Danuser

Press release, 22nd of May 2024

Fotostiftung Schweiz takes charge of Hans Danuser's photographic archives

fss. The renowned Swiss artist and photographer Hans Danuser, who has a studio in Zurich, is donating his archives to Fotostiftung Schweiz. Danuser is among those who paved the way for a new conceptual approach, combining aesthetics, science and urgent contemporary issues. Like Balthasar Burkhard's archives, which were acquired in 2022, Hans Danuser's oeuvre is essentially devoted to photography, but is also firmly established in the broader context of contemporary art. In close collaboration with the artist, Fotostiftung Schweiz has now developed a concept for the gradual transfer and long-term maintenance of his archives.

Hans Danuser, born in 1953 in Chur, attracted international attention in the art world with his cycle *IN VIVO*, which he completed in 1989. This cycle addressed socially and politically controversial topics, using an innovative visual language that focused not only on multi-layered information, but also on visual and aesthetic sensitisation. Danuser's *IN VIVO* photographs from well-shielded zones, centres of power and value-creation hubs, such as the gold market and facilities for nuclear energy, biotechnology or genetic research, shift from the representational to the abstract and give the observer the feeling of a loss of control. To a significant extent, with his serial and processual conceptualisation of *IN VIVO*, Hans Danuser also anticipated (and helped to fuel) the present-day discourse between the natural sciences and the arts.

In his works from the 1990s onwards, featuring images from internationally recognised research laboratories, such as his large-format *Frozen Embryo Series*, the artist also found vivid metaphors for the ominous developments in nascent globalisation and in a society whose institutions and fundamental values were increasingly eroding. He then explicitly highlighted this latter aspect with his *Erosion* cycles in the 2000s, based on long-term observation. In the context of the emerging awareness of climate change at that time, Hans Danuser strikingly visualised the power of erosion as a global phenomenon that, alongside the geological aspect, takes on a social dimension in the current global and economic context: The seemingly solid and established is being dissolved, rocks are eroding, power is being redistributed.

Here, the artist incorporated geological material such as slate, as well as mineral elements and even language, thus going beyond the boundaries of the medium of photography. His artistic repertoire also includes algorithmic letter-painting installations, material research, art in architecture (with the involvement of relevant parties) and unusual forms of presentation: In the



Image: excerpt from layout views of the work groups ALPHABETH CYTY IV 2024 / WILDWECHSEL, 1996 / ALPHABETH CITY III, 1984, part of STANCEL FICTION, work under construction since 1980, picture taken in New York and Europe
all rights by Hans Danuser

2001 exhibition *Frost* at Fotomuseum Winterthur, for example, he laid out his large-format tableaux on the floor – a first in photography.

His collaborations with other artists and researchers have also been well received internationally, for instance in the projects *PARTITUREN UND BILDER* (SCORES AND IMAGES) with architect Peter Zumthor, *Wildwechsel – HELL DUNKEL* (Animal Crossing – LIGHT DARK) with writer Reto Hännly, and *THE LAST ANALOG PHOTOGRAPH* with Reinhard Nesper from the Laboratory of Inorganic Chemistry (LAC) at ETH Zurich, as well as in the project development for *NEUERFINDUNG DER FOTOGRAFIE: Hans Danuser – Gespräche, Materialien, Analysen* (REINVENTION OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Hans Danuser – Interviews, Materials, Analysis) with Bettina Gockel from the Institute of Art History at the University of Zurich.

Alongside a great many large-format pictures, his oeuvre also encompasses well-documented work processes at the interfaces between research, teaching and artistic practice. These processes are particularly clearly reflected in Hans Danuser's archives, which the artist has now donated to Fotostiftung Schweiz. These contain not only numerous documents and exhibition-quality enlargements, but also project-development records – extracts of which, Fotostiftung Schweiz is to make publicly accessible.

Hans Danuser's works are present in the following public and private collections, among others: Kunsthaus Zurich, George Reinhart Collection, Walter A. Bechtler Collection, Fotomuseum Winterthur, Metropolitan Museum of Art New York, Howard Stein Collection New York, MoMA (Museum of Modern Art New York), Aargauer Kunsthaus, and Kunstmuseum Graubünden. His work has been honoured many times over, with federal, cantonal and municipal art grants and prizes.

Contact

Peter Pfrunder, Director of Fotostiftung Schweiz
+41 52 234 10 31, pfrunder@fotostiftung.ch

Lars Willumeit, Director of Fotostiftung Schweiz (from 01/06/2024)
+41 52 234 10 30, info@fotostiftung.ch

Madleina Deplazes, Head of Archives & Collections
+41 52 234 10 38, deplazes@fotostiftung.ch

More information

www.hansdanuser.ch



Hans Danuser, EROSION III - Floor installation, 2000-2006, 9 parts (III 1- III 9)
Silver gelatine print, 59 x 55" each, mounted on 2 mm aluminium sheet behind 4 mm denglas pane
Collection Walter A. Bechtler/Museum of Fine Art Zurich

image

installation view in the Arnold Boecklin Room at the Kunsthau Zurich 2008 by Christian Schwager



Exhibition view of DARKROOMS OF PHOTOGRAPHY 2019, Hans Danuser EROSION - FLOOR INSTALLATION 2000 - 2018 Analog photography, Silver gelatin print on aluminium,
Several work groups, each 150 x 140 cm (image size)

in the background of the image STRANGLED BODY 1995 Analog photography, Silver gelatine print in iron frames behind glass
8 parts, I-VIII, each 141 x 222 cm or 222 x 141 cm (image size) Collection George Reinhart, Winterthur George Reinhart

Image, Filmstill-Setfoto out of film „HANS DANUSER - moving dessert“ directed by Barbara Seiler for Sternstunden srf-swisstelevision