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THE  
WALTHER COLLECTION

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**Then and Now**  
Life and Dreams Revisited

May 5 – October 27, 2019

Press Kit



Lin Zhipeng (aka.223), *Single Lily*, 2010, und *Explosive Closet*, 2018. © The Artist. Courtesy the artist.

## Then and Now Life and Dreams Revisited

### Dates

May 5 – October 27, 2019

### Press Conference

May 3, 2019 at 2pm

### Curator

Christopher Phillips, Simon Baker

**Photography and Media Art** by Ai Weiwei, Cang Xin, Chen Lingyang, Chi Peng, Hai Bo, Hong Hao, Huang Yan, Sze Tsung Nicolás Leong, Lin Tianmiao, Lin Zhipeng, Lu Yang, Luo Yongjin, Ma Liuming, Miao Xiaochun, Mo Yi, RongRong, Sheng Qi, Song Dong, Wang Gongxin, Wang Jinsong, Wang Qingsong, Xiang Liqing, Xu Yong, Yang Fudong, Zhang Dali, Zhang Hai'er, Zhang Huan, Zhang Peili, Zheng Guogu, Zhou Tao, Zhuang Hui, and an unidentified photographer

### Opening Hours

Thursday–Sunday, 2–5pm

### Guided Tours

Public guided tours every Friday, 5pm and first Sunday of every month, 3pm.  
Private guided tours by appointment. Contact: [info@walthercollection.com](mailto:info@walthercollection.com)

### Address

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## Then and Now Life and Dreams Revisited

May 5 – October 27, 2019

The Walther Collection is pleased to present *Then and Now: Life and Dreams Revisited*, an exhibition that extends the Collection's ongoing survey of Chinese photography since 2017. Curated by Christopher Philips in 2018, *Life and Dreams: Contemporary Chinese Photography and Media Art* was the first extensive exhibition of works by Chinese artists represented in the collection.

The second iteration combines early 20th century travel photography of China with groundbreaking works by 31 internationally renowned artists such as Ai Weiwei, Song Dong, Rong Rong, Yang Fudong, and Zhang Huan, as well as a presentation of works by a younger generation of artists, such as Lu Yang and Lin Zhipeng. Juxtaposing historical and contemporary Chinese photography, *Then and Now* illustrates the epochal changes that have not only transformed China's rural and urban habitats in recent decades, but also essential aspects of social relationships and everyday life.

In the Green House, a selection of stereoviews conveys impressions from the final years of Qing Dynasty (1644–1912), documenting one of the most momentous upheavals in the country's modern history. Defeat in the First Opium War (1839–1842) between China and the United Kingdom forcefully ended China's self-imposed isolation from European nations. After China's renewed defeat in the Second Opium War (1856–1860), the Western powers began to occupy numerous harbors and districts across the nation in order to exert further influence and establish trade networks. The drastic economic consequences of the two Opium Wars gave rise to widespread anti-imperial sentiment that would eventually topple China's 4000-year old feudalistic system, and accelerate the urge to build a modern nation. The Xinhai revolution of 1911 led to the resignation of the last emperor, marking the end of the Chinese empire and the founding of the Republic of China in 1912.

The featured stereoviews reflect the seismic changes that took place in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, particularly through infrastructure—showing Western embassy buildings on the Shanghai waterfront, the railway built by the colonial powers, or the Chinese people's first encounters with Western inventions such as the Edison phonograph. Little is known about the origins of these photographs. The depicted hairstyles, clothing, and utensils, as well as the landscapes and varied locations, indicate that the series was probably made between 1910 and 1920 by a traveling Western photographer. Its richness of detail, sharpness, and quality are exceptional for images from that period. In addition, the choice of motif goes beyond the "exotic and bizarre" views typical of images coming from the West. In addition to classical attractions such as the Great Wall or the Yunyan Temple in Suzhou, the preserved 138 images also show the everyday life of urban and rural China in detail, and recorded scenes at the hairdresser, in the market, or working in the rice fields.

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A radical departure in both time and subject matter, Lin Zhipeng's works are dedicated to illuminating contemporary Chinese youth culture and are displayed in a special exhibition on the upper floor of the White Cube, curated by Simon Baker. Born in 1979 in Guangdong province, Lin has become a representative figure in contemporary Chinese photography for works that explore urban youth culture, queer love, gender and sexuality. After graduating with a degree in Financial English, he worked as an editor and author for numerous creative and fashion magazines such as VICE and iLOOK. Today he lives and works as a photographer and freelance author in Beijing.

In the art world, Lin Zhipeng is best known under the pseudonym "No.223," which is based on the character of a love-sick policeman, played by Takeshi Kaneshiro in Hong Kong director Wong Kar-Wai's *Chungking Express* in 1994. His cinematic sensibility is reflected in his photographic portfolios, which embody a poetic and dreamy atmosphere as well as the loneliness, melancholy and mysticism of many film characters.

His blog "North Latitude 23," founded in 2003, brought "No.223" worldwide attention and provided him with the perfect platform to share and communicate his artistic vision. To this day, he documents both his and his friends' everyday lives in an imaginative and exceptionally intimate way. Supplemented by personal notes, he creates a private diary of a young generation trying to escape the pressure of Chinese society and fathom its boundaries.

Drawing aesthetic inspiration from the works of Guy Bourdin, Wolfgang Tillmans and Jürgen Teller, "No.223"'s images offer a personal view of a youth subculture in contrast to imposed conservative cultural values and standards. "No.223" relies strongly on intuition to create spontaneous works that reveal exuberance and angst, guided by a simple human need to be loved in an otherwise indifferent and constantly changing society. Nonchalance and playfulness characterize his visual language, often projecting a sense of grief and vulnerability. In combination with his talent for improvisation and a sharp aesthetic sensibility for his subjects, "No.223" succeeds in showing a diversity of interior lives and dreams.

Throughout the White Cube and Black House, key selections from the acclaimed *Life and Dreams* exhibition remain on view, showcasing visually inventive and emotionally compelling artworks in diverse mediums, and responding to sweeping social and economic changes that have fundamentally transformed the fabric of everyday life. Organized in several subthemes, images in the exhibition represent complex, often challenging individual perspectives: from referencing classical artifacts and surveying the built environment, to evoking technological dystopia and critiquing political authoritarianism.

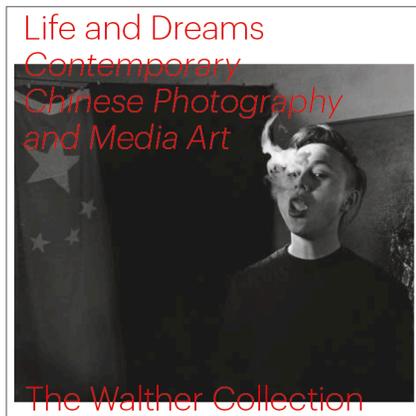
Juxtaposing early photographic works with recent examples of Chinese media art allows for surprising echoes, affinities, and continuities to be revealed. *Life and Dreams* demonstrates the remarkable speed with which photography and media art have occupied important positions within the field of experimental Chinese art since the early 1990s—providing an up-to-date account of the main directions and key achievements during the past three decades.

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## Catalogue



*Life and Dreams: Contemporary Chinese Photography and Media Art*  
Edited by Christopher Phillips and Wu Hung

Since the early 1990s, photography and media art have rapidly come to occupy significant positions in Chinese contemporary art. *Life and Dreams: Contemporary Chinese Photography and Media Art* shows the widespread adoption of photography, video, and digital imaging by successive generations of Chinese artists, as seen in a range of visually inventive and emotionally charged works. Many of them reflect the artists' immediate responses to the unprecedented changes that have swept through China in recent decades, transforming not just the urban landscape, but also key aspects of social relations and everyday life. Some of the most recent media works employ elaborately imaginative and fantasy-driven means to suggest where those changes may ultimately lead the country and its inhabitants. *Life and Dreams* features contributions by Christopher Phillips and Wu Hung (eds.), Lu Yang, James D. Poborsa, Stephanie H. Tung, and Xin Wang; a conversation between Christopher Phillips, Artur Walther, and Wu Hung; and a selection of seminal early writings and conversations on Chinese photography and media art by Sze Tsung Nicolás Leong, RongRong, Karen Smith, Wu Hung, and Yang Fudong.

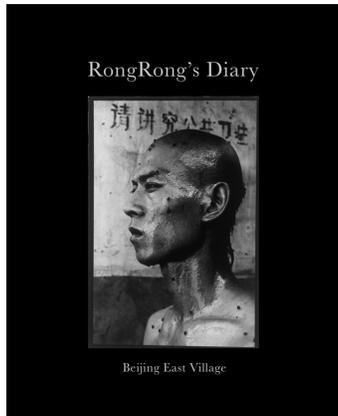
384 pages, 643 images  
25 x 25 cm  
Cloth-bound hardcover with dust jacket  
Published by Steidl / The Walther Collection, May 2018

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## Catalogue



*RongRong's Diary: Beijing East Village*  
RongRong

*RongRong's Diary – Beijing East Village* presents an expansive selection of striking photographs, together with first person accounts from his private diary, which RongRong made between 1993 and 1998 within the artistic community known as Beijing East Village—now poignantly described as “a meteor in the history of contemporary Chinese art.” RongRong’s acutely composed and richly expressive images captured scenes of daily life among fellow young, aspiring artists, and created now definitive documents of iconic performance works by Zhang Huan and Ma Liuming, among others. Often highly challenging works, their performances and photographs would send an instant shockwave throughout the Chinese avant-garde, and later the global art scene. Revisiting these texts and images anew on the occasion of this publication, RongRong has composed an absorbing personal narrative of an artist coming into his own. *RongRong's Diary* also serves as an invaluable, first-hand record of a burgeoning artistic community, its precarious political context, and the real lives behind a pivotal moment in Chinese contemporary art.

150 pages, 124 images

26 x 21 cm

Cloth-bound hardcover

Published by Steidl / The Walther Collection; expected publication date June 2019

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## About The Walther Collection

The Walther Collection is an art foundation dedicated to the critical understanding of historical and contemporary photography and related media. Through a program of international exhibitions, in-depth collecting, original research, and scholarly publications, The Walther Collection aims to highlight the social uses of photography and to expand the history of the medium worldwide. At its three-building campus in Neu-Ulm, Germany, its Project Space in New York City, and with traveling installations worldwide, The Walther Collection presents thematic and monographic exhibitions drawn from its expansive range of photography and media art from the collection's African, Chinese, Japanese, and European holdings of modern and contemporary works, nineteenth-century photography from Europe and Africa, and vernacular lens-based imagery from across the globe. The collection's educational program is complemented by public lectures and screenings, international scholarly symposia, and a critically acclaimed series of catalogues and monographs co-published by Steidl.

## EXHIBITIONS

### Exhibitions: Neu-Ulm, Germany

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| 2010 – 2011 | Events of the Self: Portraiture and Social Identity              |
| 2011 – 2013 | Appropriated Landscapes  |
| 2013 – 2015 | Distance and Desire: Encounters with the African Archive         |
| 2015 – 2016 | The Order of Things  |
| 2017        | Recent Histories: Contemporary African Photography and Video Art |
| 2018        | Life and Dreams: Contemporary Chinese Photography and Media Art  |
| 2019        | Then and Now: Life and Dreams Revisited                          |

### Exhibitions: Project Space, New York

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|-------------------------|---|
| April – Aug. 2011       | Jo Ractliffe: As Terras do Fim do Mundo                                   |
| Sept. 2011 – March 2012 | August Sander and Seydou Keita  |
| April – July 2012       | Rotimi Fani-Kayode: Nothing to Lose                                       |
| Sept. 2012 – May 2013   | Distance and Desire: Encounters with the African Archive (Parts I–III)    |
| Sept. 2013 – Feb. 2014  | Martina Bacigalupo: Gulu Real Art Studio                                  |
| Feb. – May 2014         | Christine Meisner: Disquieting Nature                                     |
| Sept. 2015 – Jan. 2016  | The Lay of the Land: New Photography from Africa                          |
| Feb. – April 2016       | Close to Home: New Photography from Africa                                |
| June – Sept. 2016       | Who I Am: Rediscovered Portraits from Apartheid South Africa              |
| Sept. – Dec. 2016       | Recent Histories: New Photography from Africa                             |
| Jan. – April 2017       | Acts of Intimacy: The Erotic Gaze in Japanese Photography                 |
| April – Sept. 2017      | Body, Self, Society: Chinese Performance Photography of the 1990s         |
| Oct. – Nov. 2017        | East of Que Village: The Ends of Nature                                   |
| Dec. 2017 – Mar. 2018   | The Shadow Archive: An Investigation into Vernacular Portrait Photography |

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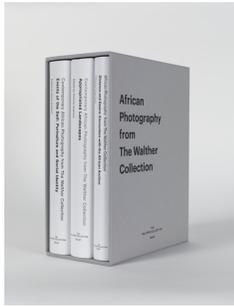
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| April – Aug. 2018            | Mistaken Identities: Images of Gender and Transformation   |
| Sept. 2018 – Jan. 2019       | Scrapbook Love Story: Memory and the Vernacular Photo Album  |
| Feb. – May 2019              | Destruction and Transformation: Vernacular Photography in the Built Environment  |
| <b>Traveling Exhibitions</b> |  |
| Nov. 2011                    | Paris Photo, France<br>Events of the Self: Portraiture and Social Identity   |
| July – Sept. 2014            | Les Rencontres d'Arles, France<br>Typology, Taxonomy and Seriality   |
| April – July 2015            | C/O Berlin, Germany<br>Distance and Desire: Encounters with the African Archive  |
| Oct. 2015 – Jan. 2016        | La Maison Rouge, France<br>After Eden: Photography from The Walther Collection   |
| Feb. – May 2016              | Fotografiska, Sweden<br>Time and Again: Photography from The Walther Collection  |
| Mar. – April 2017            | The Photography Show Presented by AIPAD, USA<br>Structures of Identity: Photography from The Walther Collection                    |
| Oct. – Nov. 2017             | Biennale Foto/Industria, Italy<br>Landscapes of American Power: Photography from The Walther Collection                            |
| Oct. 2017 – Feb. 2018        | Museo Amparo, Mexico<br>Structures of Identity: Photography from The Walther Collection  |
| Dec. 2017 – Jan. 2018        | Les Rencontres de Bamako, Biennale Africaine de la Photographie, Mali<br>Recent Histories: Deconstructed Spaces, Surveyed Memories |
| Feb. – June 2018             | Museo MARCO, Mexico<br>Structures of Identity: Photography from The Walther Collection   |
| June – Sept. 2018            | FOAM, The Netherlands<br>Structures of Identity: Photography from The Walther Collection   |
| Nov. 2018 – Mar. 2019        | Fundación Foto Colectania, Spanien<br>Structures of Identity: Photography from The Walther Collection                              |
| Dez. 2018 – Mar. 2019        | Huis Marseille, Niederlande<br>Recent Histories: Zeitgenössische afrikanische Fotografie und Videokunst aus The Walther Collection |

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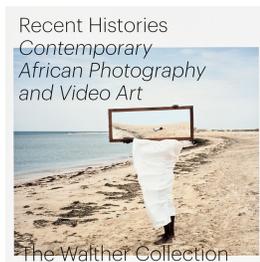
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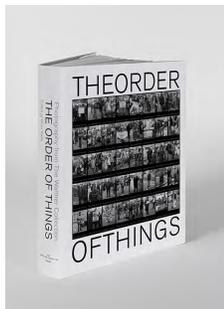
## Publications by Steidl/The Walther Collection



*African Photography from The Walther Collection* (2010–13), a three-volume work representing the collection's multi-year exhibition and publishing program, investigates African photography and video through the themes of portraiture, landscape, and the historic archive. Including *Events of the Self: Portraiture and Social Identity*, *Appropriated Landscapes*, and *Distance and Desire: Encounters with the African Archive*, housed in a slipcase. Edited by Okwui Enwezor, Corinne Diserens, and Tamar Garb.



*Recent Histories: Contemporary African Photography and Video Art* (2017) unites the perspectives of 14 artists of African descent, who investigate social identity, questions of belonging, and an array of sociopolitical concerns. Providing a point of entry to engage critically with current practices and the frameworks of contemporary African photography and video art, *Recent Histories* features contributions by Daniela Baumann, Joshua Chuang, and Oluremi C. Onabanjo (eds.), Antawan I. Byrd, Emmanuel Iduma, M. Neelika Jayawardane, Allison Moore, Moses Serubiri, Mikhael Subotzky, and Drew Thompson.



*The Order of Things: Photography from The Walther Collection* (2015) explores the production and uses of typological sequences, serial imagery, conceptual portraiture, archival imagery, and time-based performance in photography from the 1880s to the present, considering works by artists from Europe, Africa, Asia, and North America. *The Order of Things* features contributions by Geoffrey Batchen, Tina M. Campt, and Christopher Phillips; a conversation between Brian Wallis and Artur Walther; and a selection of seminal writings on photograph and seriality by George Baker, Walter Benjamin, Michel Foucault, Ulrike Schneider, Allan Sekula, and Joel Smith.

Additional monographs and artist books include **Santu Mofokeng, *The Black Photo Album*** (2013), **Martina Bacigalupo, *Gulu Real Art Studio*** (2013), **Zanele Muholi, *Faces and Phases: 2006–14*** (2014), **Mikhael Subotzky & Patrick Waterhouse, *Ponte City*** (2014), and **Guy Tillim, *O Futuro Certo*** (2015).