



Fotografiska

*Time and Again:
Photography from The Walther Collection*

Fotografiska 12 February – 15 May

Collecting photography is a growing phenomenon these days, whether the motive is self-expression or investment. Fotografiska is proud to present an exhibition drawn from one of the world's leading collections of photography and video art, The Walther Collection. This exhibition, titled Time and Again: Photography from The Walther Collection, opens February 12 and comprises more than 800 photographs from the last century to the present, including vibrant contemporary works made in Europe, Asia, Africa and the United States.

Fotografiska is pleased to present *Time and Again: Photography from The Walther Collection*, a comprehensive exhibition documenting photography's exciting history and current status. The Walther Collection is one of the world's largest private collections of photography and video art. Formed over the past twenty years by Artur Walther, a German-American businessman based in New York, the collection is housed in a museum open to the public in his hometown of Neu-Ulm in Germany.

» For me photography is about incessantly searching and exploring. Photography provides the opportunity to discover and learn from each other; to create dialogue, regardless of ethnicity, gender, age, class or culture «, says Artur Walther.

Walther has focused on collecting photography and video art since the 1990s. His collection takes as its starting point the German school, represented by, among others, August Sander, Karl Blossfeldt, Bernd and Hilla Becher and Thomas Ruff. With time, the collection has evolved to include historical and contemporary photographers and artists from Europe, the United States, Africa and Asia. With its breadth, The Walther Collection displays the power of photography from its first tentative steps to today's explosive scene. While many of the photographers are the most prominent of their time, the collection also includes historical images by unknown artists.

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The Walther Collection is remarkable for its broad global reach, and it makes the point that photography relates us to people and places that we will perhaps never encounter and to events we have never witnessed. For the exhibition *Time and Again*, Fotografiska has focused on photographs made in series or sequences, and has selected more than 800 photographs by 34 photographers from 10 countries.

» I want to explore what distinguishes and unites people, regardless of their origin and cultural identity. It is incredibly exciting with the help of photography to attempt to obtain an idea of the currents that define cultures and eras, to take a closer look at what is unique and what is universal «, Walther explains.

Photography enables us to capture time, and *Time and Again* is a celebration of this extraordinary fact. A single photograph can freeze time, and, as part of a series, multiple photographs can reveal the constantly changing flow that we call life, where one thing leads to another. Whether from the nineteenth century, when Eadweard Muybridge famously took his first photographs of people and horses in motion, or more recently, when the controversial artist Ai Weiwei, in three shots, held, dropped and smashed a priceless vase from a long-extinct Chinese dynasty, photographs in sequence show that time is never still. Photography has the power to capture time so that we might see ourselves, and each other.

» Ever since I met Bernd and Hilla Becher twenty years ago and discovered the German New Objectivity movement, I have been fascinated by photography as documentation and a mode of expression. By photographing many similar objects they demonstrated the uniqueness of each object, which, at the time, was not only a philosophical but also a political act. It was a fascination that first resulted in the accumulation of vast amounts of books on photography and later developed into a devotion to the actual photographs «, recalls Walther.

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Traversing decades and crossing national borders, the exhibition *Time and Again* demonstrates how photography has developed from being a tool for documentation to being an instrument with which to reflect social and political processes and personal stories. Richard Avedon's iconic portraits of the 1970s American political elite in *The Family* are contrasted with Accra Shepp's 2011–2012 images of Occupy Wall Street activists. Nobuyoshi Araki's series *101 Works for Robert Frank (Private Diary)* depicts the contrasts of the controversial photographer's everyday life, while he is dealing with his sadness after the death of his wife. That the development of photography has occurred in parallel across borders is clearly demonstrated in the exhibition by artist Ed Ruscha's series *Every Building on the Sunset Strip*, a document of all the buildings along the famous street in Los Angeles, which is displayed next to an identical series from Ginza, Tokyo, taken by Yoshikazu Suzuki and Shohachi Kimura – twelve years earlier.

Illustrating the age in which we live and simultaneously attempting to decode it to obtain clues about our future is an ancient human need and an important feature of the aspiration of all cultures to define themselves. A collection says something meaningful about the culture and historical moment from which it derives. But it also says something about the individual collector. Collecting has become a popular way of expressing oneself, whether it occurs on a small or a large scale. What does this exhibition tell us about Artur Walther?

- » Perhaps that I am a person who usually takes a step back and observes rather than making myself the centre of attention «, Walther says.
- » A person who, like so many others, is curious about broader contexts and where we are headed. Individually and together «. •

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