

**M 7 MUSÉE DES
B A BEAUX-ARTS
L A LE LOCLE**

Press release



SUMMER OF PHOTOGRAPHY

UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS

June 18-October 15, 2017

A Word from the Director

The Museum of Fine Arts Le Locle was born shortly after the invention of photography, but it only very recently began to include this medium in its exhibitions. It may be worth recalling that when it originated in the 19th century, photography was regarded with distrust – « humble servant of the sciences and arts », wrote Baudelaire. Before making its entrance into museums, photography found its way in magazines. A good number of them owe their success to their photographers. What would *LIFE*, *Vogue*, or *Vanity Fair* be without photography? The numerous screens that characterise the 21st century have taken on the mantle. Without the images that they diffuse and produce by billions, we would be a little less attracted by these « extensions of body and mind »

Our new exhibitions thereby celebrate photography. One of them brings together the greatest photographers of the 20th century around Carla Sozzani, an eminent figure in the world of fashion. Her private collection, the fruit of 40 years of acquisitions which will be unveiled here to the public, is fascinating in what it reveals about her photographic tastes – tastes that would compel her to place images of the past and of the present side by side, each one as remarkable as the other. Henry Leutwyler's collection of objects is no less iconic! Through his still lifes, we enter into a kind of intimacy with the celebrities of the 20th century – those who made us fantasize about glossy paper. Ina Jang, an artist from the younger generation, had likewise found her inspiration in the pages of magazines. Here she reappropriates the female nude to better query this popular genre. Finally, the exhibition dedicated to the photobook offers an overview on this object coveted by all photographers. None of them will contradict Mallarmé – « The world exists to end up in a book » - or Borges – « this incessant book is the only thing that exists in the world: more exactly, is the world ».

Nathalie Herschdorfer
Director

Opening: June 17, 6pm

Press day: June 15 (by appointment)
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© Henry Leutwyler, *Elvis Presley's glasses with Dymo tape label*, from the series *Document*, 2004-2016

Cover image: Lillian Bassman, *Dorian Leigh*, for *Harper's Bazaar*, April 1948 © The Estate of Lillian Bassman
Courtesy Staley-Wise Gallery, New York

BETWEEN ART AND FASHION

PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE COLLECTION OF CARLA SOZZANI

It is rare for a museum to dedicate an exhibition to a private collection. Generally, it is a matter of borrowing a work of art here or there, and discretely indicating the name of the generous lender if the latter does not wish to remain anonymous. With this exhibition, Carla Sozzani, a legendary figure of contemporary elegance, welcomes us into her intimate space. Her collection of photographs, which covers the 20th and 21st centuries, is remarkable in all respects. More than 70 photographs are represented among the 200 prints selected by Fabrice Hergott, director of the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris. We find in the show some of the greatest names – Richard Avedon, Horst P. Horst, William Klein, Man Ray, László Moholy-Nagy, Don McCullin, Daido Moriyama, Helmut Newton, Irving Penn, Paolo Roversi, Alfred Stieglitz – and numerous female photographers such as Berenice Abbott, Lillian Bassman, Louise Dahl-Wolfe, Dominique Issermann, Sheila Metzner, Sarah Moon, Leni Riefenstahl and Francesca Woodman.

Photography nourished Carla Sozzani from the very beginning of her career, and her collection was enriched over the course of many encounters and several years. Playing a fundamental role in fashion since the early 1970s, Carla Sozzani collaborated with numerous photographers while she was editor in chief of special editions of *Vogue Italia*, and continued to do so after she founded Italian *ELLE*. Known for her sharp eye and her aesthetic sense, she participates in the journeys of numerous creators. In 1990, she founded the Galleria Carla Sozzani in Milan, where she mainly exhibits photography. Then, the following year, she founded 10 Corso Como, the very first concept store, which has since then been deployed in Seoul, Shanghai, Peking, and will soon open in New York. The richness of this collection unveils an intelligent, sensitive, cultivated, persevering, and beauty-loving personality. We find in it many icons but also images that are unknown, unusual, and that awe us. This exceptional exhibition was born of the will of couturier Azzedine Alaïa, who belongs to Carla Sozzani's intimate circle, and who presented this collection in her Parisian gallery last winter.

The exhibition is organized in collaboration with the Fondazione Sozzani, Milan, and is accompanied by a publication, available in French and English.



Erwin Blumenfeld, *Le Décolleté* (The Décolleté), Victoria von Hagen, for *Vogue*, New York, 1952 © The Estate of Erwin Blumenfeld

DOCUMENT

HENRY LEUTWYLER

Celebrity photography is a genre that never runs out of steam. Portraits of movie stars, artists, statesmen, musicians, athletes... glossy magazines know that success is assured when photography prompts us to dream. Henry Leutwyler (b.1961), a New York photographer of Swiss origins, knows something about this – he who has made portraits of celebrities like Julia Roberts, Michelle Obama or Rihanna, and who works for such prestigious magazines as *Vanity Fair*, *New York Times Magazine*, *Esquire*, *Vogue* or *Time*.

A product of 12 years of discoveries, the series *Document* presents itself like a portrait gallery of objects that belonged to celebrities that Leutwyler would have been able to photograph had he been born but a few years earlier! Gandhi's pocket watch, John Lennon's glasses (and the weapon that killed him), Andy Warhol's paintbrush, Mohamed Ali's boxing shoe, Michael Jackson's glove, Jimi Hendrix's guitar, Elvis Presley's wallet, or James Dean's hotel room key... Isolated from their contexts and their owners, these objects – icons of the modern world – capture our attention. Authentic and worn, they are material witnesses of their owners, veritable relics of these celebrities as well as a projection of our own collective memory. These still lifes invite us into intimacy with celebrities in unprecedented ways. Leutwyler prompts us to reread differently, with all the unexpected emotional charge that this collection of singular objects entails.

The exhibition is organized in collaboration with Foley Gallery, New York, and has received support from Laumont Photographics and Zenith Swiss Watches. It is accompanied by a book published by Steidl and a limited edition, signed and numbered, puzzle produced by MBAL.



© Henry Leutwyler, *Marilyn Monroe's (1926 - 1962) stack of Goyard traveling trunks at Universal Studios*, from the series *Document*, 2004-2016

PHOTOBOOK

THE CULT OF THE BOOK

The *Photobook* show inscribes itself in the wake of *L'art se livre*, a 2014 exhibition dedicated to art and artists' books. In the framework of this photographic season, the museum focuses on the cult of the photography book, a phenomenon more current than ever. Since the early 1990s, the number of publishers interested in photography has not stopped growing, while digital technologies have placed editing tools directly in the hands of photographers. As much at the level of its content as of its form, the photobook is now venturing in directions that would have been inconceivable 15 or 20 years ago. As for its distribution, it has found new networks through the internet, new publishing houses, and various specialized exhibitions. For photographers – of all generations – publishing a book is like having a passport for the international scene.

Whether hand made or resulting from the latest technologies, a book is the result of decisions that do not change over time: choice of visual and textual content, cover, format, layout, paper, binding, type of printing, etc. These different elements must articulate themselves coherently. Published by large publishing houses or at the author's own expense, printed by the thousands or in limited edition, the photography book is also a collector's item for photographers, who are themselves assiduous buyers of photobooks. Sixteen photographers have thus agreed to reveal a few glimpses of their personal library. The exhibition, realized in collaboration with Darius Himes, International Head of the Photographs department at Christie's, and co-author of the book « Publish your Photography Book », proposes to pay homage to the photobook.

To celebrate the cult of the photography book, MBAL brings together after Paris, New York, Madrid, Düsseldorf, Moscow, and Palm Springs the books selected in the shortlist of the Paris Photo-Aperture Foundation PhotoBook Awards, a competition organized annually by Aperture and Paris Photo, two important actors of the international photography scene. 35 books, chosen by a jury of specialists out of 952 recent books from 63 countries, were divided into three categories: First Photobook, Photobook of the Year, and Photography Catalogue of the Year. The winners of all three categories are announced in the exhibition.



© Viviane Sassen, Detail of the artist's personal library, 2017

UTOPIA INA JANG

Ina Jang (b.1982), a South Korean artist based in New York, is invited to exhibit her latest project. Through her new series she explores the theme of feminine identity with reference to the fashion image that she also cultivates in her work. Made from images found on Japanese magazine websites, the *Utopia* series features silhouettes of female bodies in suggestive poses. The artist did not modify the poses or the hair, but we find her signature in the technique of collage and the color treatment.

With *Utopia*, Ina Jang questions the stereotypes tied to the representation of the female body. Her singular photographic language allows us to divine an oneiric universe, where play on perceptions, textures, and forms is fundamental. Her catalogue of silhouettes offers up the gaze of a young artist of the 21st century who seizes the female nude, a genre with a long tradition dating back to painting that has been valued by photographers since the invention of the medium in the 19th century.

Ina Jang is represented by Christophe Guye Galerie in Zurich. On the occasion of the exhibition, MBAL is publishing an interview with the artist, the fourth issue of the series « Could you talk about... ».



© Ina Jang, *Tangerine*, from the series *Utopia*, 2017. Courtesy Christophe Guye Galerie

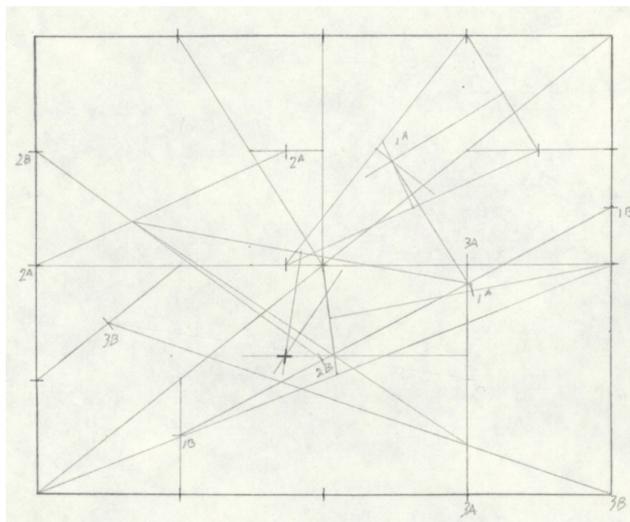
In addition to our new exhibitions:

SOL LEWITT

6 WALL DRAWINGS

“The idea becomes a machine that makes the art.” So wrote American Sol LeWitt (1928-2007) on his approach to artistic creation and his experiments with wall drawing. The first of these murals were created almost 50 years ago on the walls of the Paula Cooper Gallery in New York. The wall drawings are LeWitt’s most iconic work. He created 1200 of them between 1968 and 2007. Ten years after the artist’s death, the Museum of Fine Arts will celebrate this pioneer of conceptual art by setting aside a space in his honour for eight months. Six of his early murals – Wall Drawings #208, #209, #210, #211, #212 and #229 (1973 and 1974) – will be produced on the museum’s walls. Exploring the notions of impermanence and the immateriality of art, LeWitt’s work demystifies the artwork as a physical – and often fetishised – object while merging with the exhibition space that embraces it. Favouring geometric shapes (here, straight lines plotted within a square and drawn on the wall in lead pencil), LeWitt established a system based on the repetition of simple shapes. This approach enabled him to concentrate on the idea that makes up the work, an idea passed on to his assistants by means of a diagram and a set of precise instructions. LeWitt thus defined his practice by separating the concept and the execution. As in music, theatre or architecture, art is designed first and materialised later. The concept prevails over the execution, which is why the wall drawings are ephemeral – they exist for the duration of the exhibition and, once it is over, the walls are repainted. For LeWitt, each installation has its own value, so long as the concept is understood and respected by the draughtsmen and -women, and the execution does not affect the artistic quality of the work. The mural is adapted to fit the scale of each new space, resulting in an interpretation rather than a reproduction of the artist’s idea. The wall drawings are thus not fixed in either space or time. In demonstrating that art is predominantly an idea, LeWitt makes his work almost permanent because the concept lives on during the installations and can be continued in other places, thus rendering it unique and different on every occasion.

The exhibition, on display until October 15, is organized in collaboration with Pace Gallery, New York, and the Estate of Sol LeWitt.



Sol LeWitt, *Wall drawing 229, The location of two points on two walls*, 1974.
Courtesy of The Estate of Sol LeWitt and Pace Gallery © 2017, ProLitteris, Zurich

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