

MICHEL CAMPEAU

THE DONKEY THAT BECAME A ZEBRA: DARKROOM STORIES

Exhibition duration: **July 13 – September 22, 2019**

Opening: **Friday, July 12, 2019, 7 pm**

Press tour: **Friday, July 12, 2019, 11 am**

His passion applies to the analogue photography: Michel Campeau re-constructs photographic history and the stories behind photographs, he tells of the image production before the digital era – and of the living-on of the analogue. From July 13 – September 22, 2019, the FFF presents Campeau's multi-faceted play with photography.

Frankfurt am Main, 12.07.2019 – Michel Campeau has been obsessed with photography for more than 40 years. Throughout his career, the Canadian artist and collector (*1948, Montreal) has explored the medium of photography, examining the subjective and narrative aspects of the work in front of and with the camera. Campeau revolves around photography with great passion and always new questions: How and why do we photograph? How has photography influenced our view of ourselves? What is still relevant and effective about the analogue in the digital age?

THE DONKEY THAT BECAME A ZEBRA: DARKROOM STORIES presents different bodies of work by Michel Campeau that demonstrate his passion and lively play with photography. The exhibition, curated by Celina Lunsford, focuses on Campeau's often tongue-in-cheek approach: he re-constructs photographic history and stories behind photographs, with his own images and with those of others.

An example of this is the series **RUDOLPH EDSE. AN UNINTENTIONAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY**. During one of his online searches for amateur photographs, Michel Campeau was able to acquire the entire photographic estate of the rocket scientist Rudolph Edse, who was born in Germany and emigrated to the USA in 1945. Edse captured his private family life with a camera in the American suburbs, in skillfully composed pictures suggesting the perfect idyllic life. Campeau reassembled 70 of these photographs into a book – quasi to an alternative family biography, as it could have been, shaped by his own imagination.

With heart and soul for analogue photography Michel Campeau deals with the darkroom in his own works on the subject. Since 2003, the artist has been photographing these last “transitional places of photographic creation”, as he calls them, all over the world; places where the special technical equipment has become nearly obsolete with digitalization. In his series **GESTURES AND RITUALS OF THE DARKROOM**, Campeau recreates the magic and intoxication of the analogue production chambers where icons of picture making were once crafted through chemicals on silver gelatin paper.

In the manner of a sociologist and yet as an artist, Michel Campeau brings us closer to the analogue days of photography. From ever new perspectives, he tells of the technical possibilities, of the magic, but also of the arbitrariness of image production before digital intoxication. In times of fake news and Photoshop he gives us reason to consider that it could always have been

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different than the pictures claim. So for a snapshot a donkey may become a zebra. But Campeau opens our eyes to this eternal illusion of photography: "Nevertheless, an image is not reality, and a donkey is not a zebra. "

Project partners:



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The Fotografie Forum Frankfurt (FFF) is one of the leading centres of photography in Europe. As an exhibition space, institution and event forum the FFF deals with all aspects of photography. Since its founding in 1984 it has presented more than 250 exhibitions with historic and contemporary artists. Additionally, the program of the FFF comprises of regular workshops, talks and discussions with internationally renowned photographers, artists and experts. Further information available at www.fff Frankfurt.org

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