

Press release **Rudi Weissenstein – Exile and Photography**

An exhibition featuring photographs by Rudi Weissenstein, Ellen Auerbach, and Christian Boltanski, curated by Dr. Sarah Hadda

Grisebach and guest curator Dr. Sarah Hadda are proud to present the exhibition "Rudi Weissenstein – Exile and Photography," which opens on July 25th, 2019.

Rudi Weissenstein (1910 Iglau, Bohemia – 1992 Tel Aviv) was one of Israel's greatest photographers. In documenting daily life in the early days of the emerging Jewish State, his key theme was the dream of a homeland.

His images are optimistic, yet upon closer inspection, they reveal the complex psyches and ambivalent emotions of the men and women in exile. The topics of hope, of developing and building up, and identity are recurring motifs in Weissenstein's oeuvre. Haunted by the loss of his old homeland and driven by this experience, his images highlight the role that identity has for the creation of a new society. In this process, the experiences of individuals as well as the collective memory are key. His life in Palestine is an example of how diverse the conditions could be for photographers from Germany. Like many other émigrés, Rudi Weissenstein was forced to rebuild his livelihood from nothing with his Pri Or studio (Hebrew for "photo house"), in which he sold portraits of tourists or Israeli soldiers or snapshots taken on the beach.

The photographic artist Ellen Auerbach (1906 Karlsruhe – 2004 New York City), who emigrated three years earlier in 1933, followed a similar path. In Tel Aviv, she opened a small studio specialized on children's portraits called Ishon (Hebrew for "eyeball" or "pupil") together with her friend Liselotte Grschebina. Her life's journey would eventually take her farther afield to London and New York. We are grateful to the Berlin Academy of Arts for lending us the works by Ellen Auerbach included in the exhibition, which allow the topic of exile and photography to be addressed in greater depth.

The exhibition also presents works by the artist Christian Boltanski (*1944 – currently living in Paris). Boltanski's photo-wall montage entitled Die Jüdische Schule (The Jewish School), from his "Frozen Leopard II" portfolio, (1992), pays homage to some of the Holocaust's forgotten victims who, in the words of Siegfried Kracauer, appear to have been "buried under a blanket of snow."

The exhibition of works by Weissenstein that have never been shown before, in synergy with works by his contemporary Ellen Auerbach, investigates the art-historical

aspects of Weissenstein's photographic art. At the same time, it highlights and palpably drives home the overarching theme of remembrance via the connection formed with the works by Christian Boltanski – remembrance both at the individual as well as at the collective level.

The exhibition will be opened on July 25th, 2019, at 6p.m. at Fasanenstrasse 27 in Berlin. Professor Dr. Liliane Weissberg (University of Pennsylvania) will give the introductory lecture.

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Opening

25 July 2019, 6 to 9p.m.
Grisebach, Fasanenstrasse 27, 10719 Berlin

Exhibition

26 July to 21 September 2019
Mon to Fri 10a.m. to 6p.m., Sat 11a.m. to 4p.m.

Berlin, 4 July 2019

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Rudi Weissenstein, Ben Yehuda School Tel Aviv. 1939.
© The PhotoHouse



Rudi Weissenstein, Reception at Polish Consul's Home, Tel Aviv. 1948. © The PhotoHouse



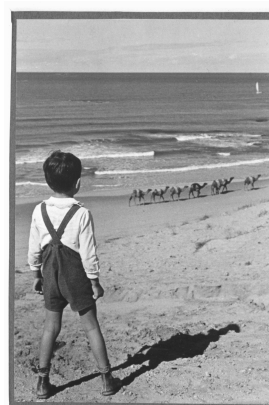
Rudi Weissenstein, Rare snow, Dizengoff Square, Tel Aviv. 1950. © The PhotoHouse



Rudi Weissenstein, Ben Zion Boulevard, Tel Aviv. 1962. © The PhotoHouse



Christian Boltanski. Die jüdische Schule (from the portfolio «The Frozen Leopard» II), 1992.
© Christian Boltanski, Galerie Klüser



Ellen Auerbach, Strand in der Nähe von Tel Aviv. 1934.
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