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Balthasar Burkhard

Main description

This book presents the many facets of photographer Balthasar Burkhard (1944–2010), showing his self-invention as an artist and tracing the trajectory of the medium of photography in the later half of the twentieth century. Burkhard's work combines a sensitive understanding of the body as sculpture and the photographic image as a canvas, making him one of the pioneers in translating photography as a monumental "tableau" into contemporary art.

This comprehensive book coalesces Burkhard's early role as a chronicler of the contemporary art of his time, especially as the main photographer for Swiss curator Harald Szeemann, his conceptual redefinition of photography together with other artists, and finally his emancipation as a photo artist. It accompanies a major retrospective organized by Museum Folkwang in Essen, Fotomuseum Winterthur and Fotostiftung Schweiz, the Museo d'arte della Svizzera italiana in Lugano and the Balthasar Burkhard Estate in Bern.

Biography

Born in Bern in 1944, Balthasar Burkhard worked in the early 1960s with Kurt Blum, then exhibition photographer at the Kunsthalle Bern. Burkhard succeeded Blum in this position and through the Kunsthalle's director Harald Szeeman came to photograph much contemporary art of the time, including the Venice Biennale and the famed documenta 5 of 1972. In the late 1960s Burkhard developed with artist Markus Raetz a series of photos on canvas of interiors, and in 1976 he moved to the USA, lecturing at the University of Illinois where he also held his first solo exhibition. He returned to Switzerland in the early 1980s where further solo shows followed, most notably at the Kunsthalle Basel in 1983. Burkhard later collaborated with the architectural company Atelier 5, taught at the École des Beaux-Arts in Nîmes, and in 1998 released his film *La Ciudad*. Burkhard died in 2010.

Bibliography

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English

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340 photographs

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