

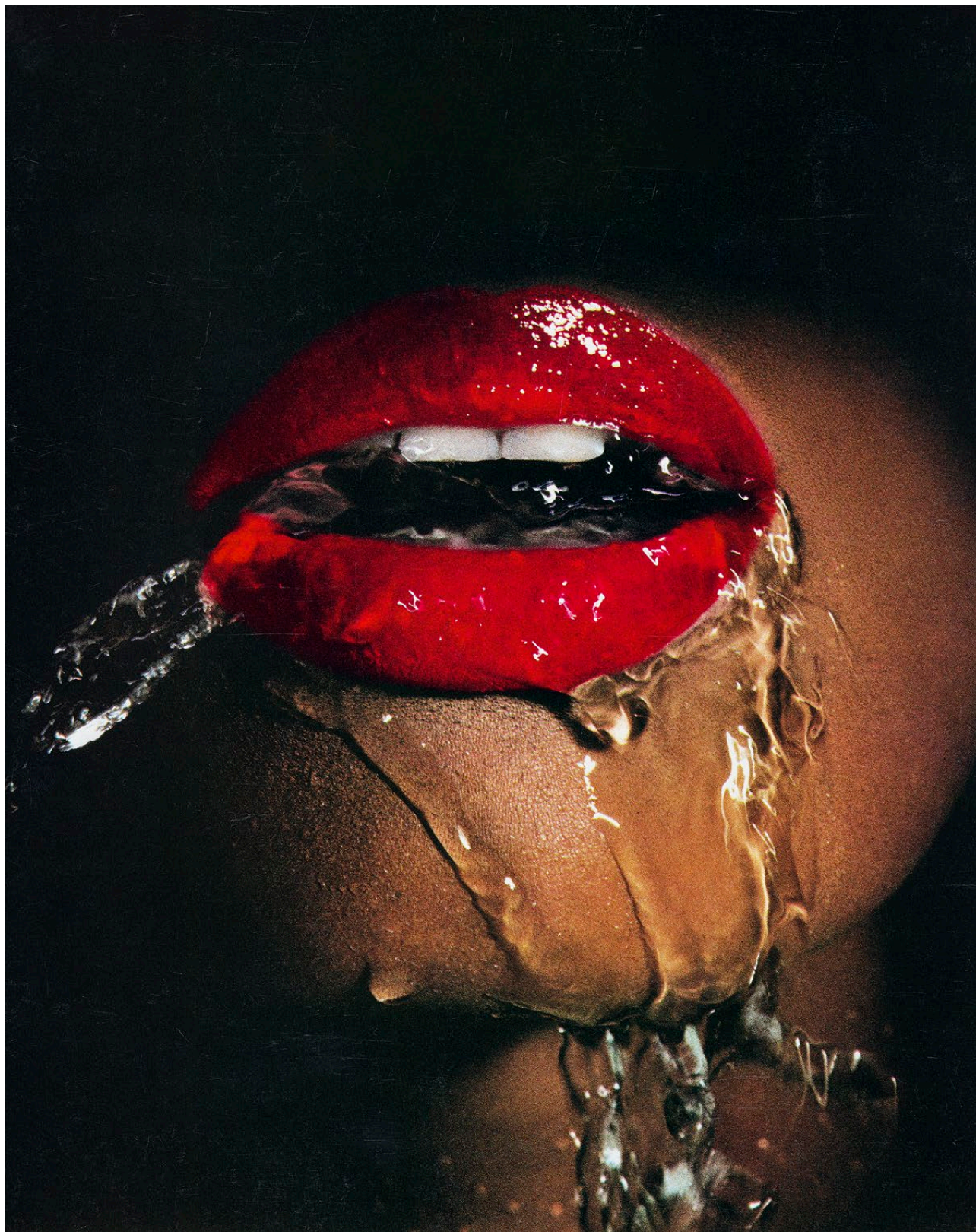
Press release
Biel, January 2018


PASQUART
PHOTOFORUM

DOROTHÉE ELISA BAUMANN

28.01 – 15.04.2018

Parallel exhibition: **Adrian Sauer**



Dorothee Elisa Baumann, *Untitled*, from the series *Take a Better Picture*, 2018

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The Photoforum Pasquart is happy to present the solo exhibition of Swiss photographer Dorothée Elisa Baumann, curated by Nadine Wietlisbach. Articulated around her recent visual and anthropological research on the camera and the gestures and gaze that this device induces, the exhibition presents mainly new works by the artist.

In her artistic practice, **Dorothée Elisa Baumann** (*1972, lives and works in Biel and Geneva) provokes shifts and creates visual obstacles for the viewer. Her “visual collisions” or riddles invite us to reconsider the represented objects in their social, political and cultural context.

The Centre de la photographie Genève produced jointly with publisher Les Presses du Réel her monograph *Pleasure Arousal Dominance* (2017). This artistic project addresses the discourses and iconographic apparatuses of neurosciences. The study of emotions and of the brain is one of the areas of fundamental research that receives the highest funding, as it plays a central role in the geopolitical competition of a technocratic neoliberal society. With a series of photographs, videos and installations, *Pleasure Arousal Dominance* questions the technical instruments and devices, as well as the spaces, of a research laboratory in Geneva, and provokes through its aesthetics a chronological displacement. The spectators are thus sensitised to how these image apparatuses act as ideological constructions and as a new form of cognitive capitalism.

Her exhibition at the Photoforum Pasquart, and the new works it features, are articulated around the referents of western photographic culture. People play here a central role, unlike in *Pleasure Arousal Dominance*, a project during the realisation of which she became aware of the limits of her tool, the camera. She has been ever since scrutinising her own practice and examining constantly the negotiations of power, control and trust between herself and those she photographs.

PHOTO is a French monthly magazine dedicated to photography, which has in its 50 years of existence imposed itself as an international cultural reference. It features renowned photographers and addresses technical issues related to photography. PHOTO distinguishes itself in its longevity, and use of the baseline “The reference in photography since 1967.” Almost each cover features a scantily-clad woman, with the exception of issues dedicated to topics such as the moon landing, the Vietnam and Gulf wars, or political icons such as Jacques Chirac and Barack Obama. The Musée suisse de l'appareil photographique in Vevey made their magazine collection available to Dorothée Elisa Baumann. She reproduced some of their covers and advertisements and presents them in the exhibition as posters, alongside an artist's book. Their sexist visual language is reinforced by their cropping and the enlargement of the images to poster size (100 x 126 cm). The materiality of the covers, their wear and scratches, as well as the offset printing process, become visible and indicate their cultural context: western photography from the 1970s to 1990s.

The video work **Take a Better Picture** offers a one-to-one experience of the arguments of a criticism of capitalism. A hammer repeatedly strikes a camera, faster and faster until it is entirely shattered. The technical capacities of the cameras are constantly increasing – from autofocus and zooms to burst mode shooting – which accelerates shooting but without necessarily facilitating the act of looking. The production of imaging moves at increasing pace but without an in-depth debate – a trend that is notably discussed in the circles of news reporting photographers.

A second video work addresses a seminal text in photography theory: a television presenter from the local station TeleBilingue reads in 150 minutes the 1997 essay by Susan Sontag, *On Photography*. What effect does that text have, when it is read in a style designed for short factual news? This experimental approach illustrates how a change of context impacts the effect and the key elements of the text.

In **Typologie Operator**, a woman performs in 25 poses a typology of the postures adopted by photographers. Finally, with the placard **Manifest**, Dorothée Elisa Baumann completes the circle: while the artist's interventions in some works are rather subtle, their critical stance is clearly discernible. In this work, she describes the power imbalance between the photographer and the photographed, how the camera as a technical device shifts power in favour of the photographer, and concludes with a call for the creation of new spaces where power can be renegotiated.

Biography

Dorothee Elisa Baumann (*1972) lives and works in Biel and Geneva. After attending the photography school in Vevey (CEPV), she pursued her studies with a bachelor and a master in contemporary art at Geneva University of Art and Design (HEAD) while simultaneously working as a photography editor for the City of Geneva and a lecturer in photography at HEAD. She is currently writing her PhD dissertation in media anthropology at the Institute of Social Anthropology at the University of Bern. She is examining the discourse held by camera user's manuals from the 20th century and the way the scripts and instructions produced by the manufacturers influenced the use of cameras by the photographers.



Dorothee Elisa Baumann, *Blow-Up-Job*, 2017



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Dorothee Elisa Baumann, *Take a Better Picture*, Video HD, 4'23", 2018



Dorothee Elisa Baumann, *2h 19min 19sec 19frames*, video, 2018

Meine Spiegelreflexkamera mit eingebauter Videofunktion erlaubt keine Empathie. Meine Beziehung zum Anderen wird technologisch durch die Kamera verhindert.

Sie ist schwarz, phallisch oder pistolenförmig und ist seit 150 Jahren in ihrer Beziehung zum Anderen nicht neutral. Die technischen Möglichkeiten in Bezug auf Effizienz, Design, Qualität und Bildproduktion sind die wesentlichen Motivationen für den Benutzer.

Keine ihrer technischen Eigenschaften erlaubt mir oder ermutigt mich zur Ko-Kreation zwischen Benutzer und dem Anderen und fördert die Zusammenarbeit. In diesem Sinne führt mein Werkzeug zu einem moralischen und ethischen Konflikt, da es sich einer Machtverteilung widersetzt.

Ein Austausch von Blickpunkten zwischen Benutzer und dem Anderen während des technischen Aktes des Fotografierens muss neu überdacht werden.

Es ist an der Zeit, das Werkzeug der Bildproduktion aus seinem Status zwischen Phallus und Waffe herauszulösen und die Black Box in einen Verhandlungsraum zu verändern, in dem sich alle Akteure und Blicke gleichberechtigt begegnen.

Useful information

Exhibitions	Dorothee Elisa Baumann Adrian Sauer
Public opening	Saturday 27 January 2018 from 17.00
Dates	28.01 – 15.04.2018
Hours	Wednesday 12.00–18.00 Thursday 12.00 – 20.00 Friday 12.00–18.00 Saturday/Sunday 11.00–18.00 Monday/Tuesday closed
Address	Seevorstadt 71 2502 Biel
Contact	info@photoforumpasquart.ch +41 22 322 44 82 www.photoforumpasquart.ch

Media information

Press conference	Friday 26 January 2018 at 10.30
Media contact	Danaé Panchaud Director dpanchaud@photoforumpasquart.ch +41 32 322 82 44 / +41 78 723 61 07
Visuals HD	www.photoforumpasquart.ch/presse Password: Presse2018