

Gundula Schulze Eldoway . The Early Years

Photographs from 1977 to 1990

C/O Berlin, International Forum For Visual Dialogues will present the exhibition **The Early Years . Photographs from 1977 to 1990** by the German photographer **Gundula Schulze Eldoway** from **December 10, 2011 to February 26, 2012**. The **opening** will be held on Friday, 9th December 2011 at 7pm in the Postfuhramt in the Oranienburger Straße 35/36 in Berlin-Mitte.

“Berlin made me a photographer”. Gundula Schulze Eldoway

Berlin mercilessly swallows its residents. Layer by layer, the city covers them with a blanket of oblivion. Time passes and sweeps everything along with it. With her camera Gundula Schulze Eldoway resists the flow of time. Year after year she wanders, seemingly without intent but with a clear, alert gaze through the Scheunenviertel in Mitte, a district in the centre of Berlin, documenting loneliness, sadness, misery and moments of happiness. Whether artists, workers, refugees or dreamers—she is both fascinated and repelled by the social mix and the harshness of the city. In her ruthless photographs, Berlin resembles a lost city, an archaeological site that is sometimes unexpectedly enchanting. At the same time, these urban forays are nothing more than excursions into the inner, unfamiliar world of the artist. A closer look reveals them to be metaphors of social criticism that not only have the former GDR in mind but also the entire civilization.

The severe images, critical of civilisation, which Gundula Schulze Eldoway took between 1977 and 1990 predominantly in East Berlin and later also in Dresden und Leipzig, push the limits of what can be endured. They show affection yet no shame whatsoever. The photographer has lived right next door to the people she has portrayed, has listened to them night after night and has an emphatic insight into their world. Which blows of fate have they suffered? In search of answers she re-experiences their stories and in this way becomes part of them. With her directness and the depth of her understanding that transcends all moral judgement, Gundula Schulze Eldoway probes little by little into the bowels of our civilization. The way in which she enters into a dialogue with different forms of living is also reflected in the deliberate composition of her photographic series. In this way, additional levels of meaning are revealed and new fields of tension created.

Her photographs, which employ a compositional technique that is almost reminiscent of the Old Masters arise from relationships rather than observations and as a result they are comparable to works by Nan Goldin, Boris Mikhailov or Nobuyoshi Araki. She developed her concept of immediacy at the end of the 1970s, entirely by herself, following on from the work of photographers such as Diane Arbus, Paul Strand and Henri Cartier-Bresson. Her photographs, which are free of taboos, are foreign bodies in the regimented world of images of the GDR and have been met with scepticism not only from officials but also from the majority of her colleagues. In 1991 she left Germany, invited by Robert Franks, who she got to know back in 1985. At the same time she broke free of the photographic realism that characterised her early years and took a new photographic approach.

In this retrospective C/O Berlin will present approximately 120 photographs. In addition to classic images from work series such as “Berlin in einer Hundenacht” (Berlin on a Dog’s Night) and “Tamerlan”, C/O Berlin will present the entire work cycle “Der große und der kleine Schritt” (The Big and the Little Step). Another main focus of the exhibition is on the personal exchange and the friendship with Robert Frank in the series “Keep a stiff upper lip”. On the occasion of the exhibition the Lehmanns Verlag will publish a two-part catalogue. At the same time, the art space of the German Federal Parliament will show works produced by Gundula Schulze Eldoway after 1990, with the exhibition title “Verwandlungen” (Metamorphoses).

Gundula Schulze Eldowy, who was born in 1954 in Erfurt, moved to Berlin at the age of 18 to study at the Fachhochschule für Werbung und Gestaltung (Academy of Advertising and Design). From 1979 to 1984 she studied photography in the class of Horst Thorau at the HGB Leipzig (Academy of Visual Arts Leipzig). She has worked as a freelance photographer from 1985. Since the end of the 1970s she has produced the work series "Tamerlan", "Berlin in einer Hundennacht" (Berlin on a Dog's Night), "Arbeit" (Work), "Aktporträt" (Nude Portrait), "Straßenbild" (Street View) and "Der Wind füllt sich mit Wasser" (The Wind Fills up with Water). Since 1988 she has produced—in addition to her photographic works—poems, narratives, texts, audio-slide collages and videos. In the same year she achieved an international breakthrough at the Rencontres Internationales de la Photographie in Arles. Since then her work has been exhibited internationally—for example in New York, Tokyo, Florence, London, Paris, Moscow, Lima and Los Angeles. Following the German reunification Gundula Schulze Eldowy travelled and also stayed for longer periods in the US, Italy, Russia, Egypt, Japan, Peru and Bolivia. Gundula Schulze Eldowy has received numerous awards and scholarships—including the Higashikawa Prize for photography. She lives and works in Berlin, Peru and on her travels.

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Photographs from 1977 to 1990

Exhibition December 10, 2011 to February 26, 2012

Opening Friday, December 9, 2011 . 7 pm

Press preview Friday, December 9, 2011 . 11 am

Gundula Schulze Eldowy will attend.

Opening hours daily . 11 am to 8 pm

Entrance 10 Euros . Concessions 5 Euros

Organizer C/O Berlin

International Forum For Visual Dialogues

Partners Kunst-Raum Deutscher Bundestag

Lehmstedt Verlag

Location C/O Berlin im Postfuhramt

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