

## e-flux Announcements

### *FAMILY (OF CHOICE). THOSE WHO WE ARE*

Kunstmuseum Ravensburg



Sharon Hayes, *Ricerche: one* (still), 2019. Two-channel HD video, colour, sound. Courtesy of the artist and Tanya Leighton, Berlin and Los Angeles, VG Bild-Kunst, 2023.

#### ***FAMILY (OF CHOICE). THOSE WHO WE ARE***

July 14–November 5, 2023

July 6, 2023

**Artists:** Guy Ben-Ner, Andrea Bowers, Miriam Cahn, Chto Delat, Asta Gröting, Sharon Hayes, Verena Jaekel, Pixy Liao, Joanna Piotrowska, Chantal Regnault, Allen Ruppertsberg, Corinna Schnitt, Thomas Struth, Johan Tahon

Whether arising from blood relationships or elective affinities, family connections are a theme that affects everyone. The group exhibition *FAMILY OF CHOICE. THOSE WHO WE ARE* inquires into how we define affiliation and sketches a complex picture of what a family can be. It combines works by fourteen contemporary artists and issues an invitation to give thought to familial relationships, interpersonal constellations and their connection to society and politics.

The selected works bring to the fore the unconscious dynamic of familial relationships and tell of grand feelings, bizarre habits and special challenges.

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# Tanya Leighton

They thematize familial and social responsibility and present people who undermine conventional role attributions in order to pursue their own individual life-visions as a community. Whether within the mind or in actuality, the families we are born into or subsequently adopt are, in the best cases, the people with whom we identify, who leave a lasting influence on us, and who provide us with support and orientation.

The photographic series of family portraits by Thomas Struth and the sculptural group by Asta Gröting reveal subliminal affections and sensitivities within the family, while Joanna Piotrowska in her meticulously staged, photographic series *Frowst* (2013–2014) focuses on poses of ambivalence. Johan Tahon expresses unconscious and psychologizing interpersonal relationships in sculptures of fragmented bodies.

In a both engaging and oppressive manner, Miriam Cahn shows the cohesion of familial constellations in extreme situations. With *Letters to an Army of Three* (2005), Andrea Bower casts light on the complex motivations for (illegal) abortions. There is also an unmistakable political attitude in the works of the artists' collective Chto Delat who, with *A Border Musical* (2013/2023), conduct an examination of the meaning of individual and collective caregiving in the border areas between Russia and Norway. In their films, Guy Ben-Ner and Corinna Schnitt investigate family values, ownership structures and rituals.

In his monumental wall installation *YOU AND ME PLUS* (2007), Allen Ruppersberg combines the names of deceased artists into a mind map of figures of mental identification. Individually selected affinities outside the biological family are likewise the central focus of Chantal Regnault's photographs which, at the end of the 1980s, documented the inner and outer dynamic of the House Ballroom scene in New York. The challenges faced by LGBTQ\* families that do not conform to socially anchored norms regarding gender, sexuality, procreation and family are illuminated from the perspective of children and young adults by Sharon Hayes in the filmic work *Ricerche:one* (2019). And in their photographs, Verena Jaekel and Pixy Liao likewise focus on a changing conception with regard to familial lifestyles and role models so as to make clear once again that today family constellations are defined not so much by a norm, but through their emotional qualities and their respective self-definitions as a community: "What is of crucial importance is what is lived and how that which is lived is experienced on an emotional level." (Andrea Maihofer)

Curated by Ute Stuffer (Director Kunstmuseum Ravensburg).

