

GALERIE ANDREA CARATSCH

PRESS RELEASE

DAVID McDERMOTT AND PETER McGOUGH THE TEMPLE OF PHOTOGRAPHIC ART

18 JULY – 10 SEPTEMBER 2016

This summer Galerie Andrea Caratsch is presenting several series of photographs and fine prints from the American artist duo David McDermott and Peter McGough. These works were created in the late 1980s and '90s and are being presented under the title *The Temple of Photographic Art* coined by the artists.

The artists' collaboration, which initiated in 1985 in New York, has been marked by a backward-looking anachronism from the beginning. Their work together is all-encompassing: Life becomes art and art becomes life. At the time, McDermott & McGough based their work and their personal lives on the ideal of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. They wore top hats and removable collars and lived in a historical building that was only lit by candlelight.

Without doubt the title *The Temple of Photographic Art* refers to a view that came out of the Aesthetic movement of the 19th century, according to which art and the cult of beauty played an all-encompassing, missionary, and prophetic role. Prominent figures such as Edward Burne-Jones, Dante Gabriele Rossetti, and Oscar Wilde frequented the Grosvenor Gallery on Bond Street in London, which was founded in 1877 and was also called "The Temple of Art."

The photographs in the exhibition were made using historical techniques of photography and development that were used from the mid-19th to the early 20th centuries, including cyanotype, gum bi-chromate, salt and palladium printing. The works are backdated to the eras they portray and feature subjects that occupied artists and intellectuals around the turn of the century. The staged self-portraits that deal with McDermott&McGough's dandyism are surely central to their artistic self-conception, a lifestyle characterized by exclusivity in clothing and living, a witty and cynical tone of conversation, and an indifferent and arrogant attitude in every situation. This group is augmented with photographs of classic monuments in France as well as pictures of antique sculptures. This *carnet de voyage* illustrates the cultural heritage of the past and contrasts with portrayals of pseudo-scientific experiments or the still life including a tin can as a symbol of promising progress. With a pinch of sarcasm the work *What Luck?* Also conveys the artists' unease and claustrophobia in light of the political, economic, and social instability, then as now.

The works of McDermott&McGough present themselves as a harmonious, extremely elegant series and deal with topics that are highly relevant today in a multifaceted and subtle way, such as the belief in progress and tradition as well as self-portrayal and the positioning of the self in relation to society, history, art, and reality. The double anachronism offers a particularly pressing argument for the viewer to reconsider these topics.

The gallery is open from Monday to Saturday from 2 to 7 pm.