

Zurich, Januar 2013

Press release: Fischli & Weiss and Friends

6 February to 28 March 2013
Opening: Tuesday, 5 February 2013

The ETH Collection of Prints and Drawings has been continuously acquiring works by Fischli and Weiss for the past twenty years. That in itself is reason enough to show our holdings by this famous duo of artists. In 1992, we were able to acquire the early series *Siedlungen*, *Agglomeration* from an exhibition at the Walcheturm gallery in Zurich. Though the series consisted at the time of 45 photographs, it was later expanded: 1993 saw the addition of their *Kanalvideo* and their *How to work better* screenprint. In 1995, we purchased the 28-part photographic series *Surrli*. Then, in 2002, we also acquired 32 colour proofs for *Blumendrucke* – prototypes for the printed series of the same title. In 2004, a lithograph printed on both sides was created for the Schweizerische Graphische Gesellschaft (SGG). Though its title is *Schilf* and its underlying theme of “reeds” is evidently a motif of nature, it was not actually taken directly from nature at all, but from photographs of painted funfair signage. This incredibly camp décor undergoes a radical filtering process in the work of Fischli and Weiss: instead of a double exposure, they have used underexposure, resulting in a grey and colourless image. The theme is not one of radiant beauty, but of the optical allure of darkness.

Over the years, we continued to acquire various publications by Fischli and Weiss that possess the quality and character of artists’ books. The prints were almost invariably commissioned works – for a company, for a Kunstverein, for a publisher, or for the SGG. In addition to the dozen or so prints, there are also photographic editions, including prints and copies intended as contributions to their own books and issued as special editions. Together with the books and, in particular, the three photographic series, the collection spans a selection of works that is representative of their oeuvre.

Both Peter Fischli and David Weiss have worked with other artists. The cover of the catalogue for their legendary 1980 *Saus und Braus* [Revel and Riot] exhibition, for instance, was designed in collaboration with Swiss painter and punk musician Klaudia Schifferle. One of the woodcuts was cut by artist and composer Anton Bruhin. Needless to say, works by Schifferle and Bruhin were also included in the exhibition. Another legendary collaborative effort was between David Weiss and Urs Lüthi. In 1970, the photographic series *Sketches* was created together with artist-photographer Willi Spiller. The Collection of Prints and Drawings not only contains the photographs on which this was based, but also has the photographs pertaining to a second series, *The Desert is across the Street* created in 1975 – a “whodunnit” set mainly on Langstrasse in Zurich. Finally, there are four works by David Weiss: the large 1981 gouache *Strasse bei Nacht*, the 1975 artist’s book *up and down town*, the 1976 artist’s book *Wandlungen* and a silkscreen print created in the late 1970s for the *Museum Baviera* portfolio.

If you require further information and/or visual materials, please contact us on 044 632 40 46 or at info@gs.ethz.ch.

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