



**Heidi Specker – IN FRONT OF
Photographs 2005/2015
11.03.–11.07.2016**

PRESSKIT



Heidi Specker, H.B.,
from the series IN FRONT OF, 2015
© Heidi Specker / VG BILD-KUNST Bonn, 2016

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BERLINISCHE GALERIE

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Berlin, 10 March 2016



Heidi Specker, H.B.,
from the series IN FRONT OF, 2015
© Heidi Specker / VG BILD-KUNST Bonn, 2016

The exhibition IN FRONT OF shows two very different groups of work by the Berlin photographer Heidi Specker: her latest project IN FRONT OF, and probably her most significant work to date IM GARTEN (IN THE GARDEN), which won her a bursary at the Villa Massimo in Rome and has never yet been exhibited in its entirety.

IN FRONT OF is a series of 70 pictures where Heidi Specker explores the framework and detailed circumstances in which portrait photographs are created. The series was made specifically for this exhibition at the Berlinische Galerie, and it is her first venture into portraits. For this purpose, she withdrew from the urban environment where she usually goes about her work and brought the world inside her studio. It became a kind of laboratory, where she tested the options for taking a person's picture. This procedure is quite unlike conventional practice, shaped ever since photography was born by the sitter's desire to project an image and a status. Instead, these pictures convey the mutual dependence and balance of power which evolve between the photographer and the sitter during a session. Above all, they show people of the artist's own generation aged between forty and fifty, friends and acquaintances from her personal sphere.

Like all portrait photography, IN FRONT OF tells us things about the person behind the camera. In this new series, Heidi Specker is not only exploring the role she sees herself playing and her own attitudes to life, but the enigma of life in general. The people here are so uninhibited and natural as they move around that we cannot help feeling we are being offered a glimpse of their everyday world. That includes imperfections and vulnerabilities, but also longings and a lack of illusion. IN FRONT OF consists not only of portraits but of other types of image too; the artist has photographed body fragments, art postcards and symbolic items standing around her studio. With these seemingly casual and awkward shots, she also prompts us to ask how close we can ever get to another person and to what extent we can capture their personality.



The second section of the exhibition displays her series IM GARTEN, produced in Berlin in 2003/04. It resembles a walk through the city, reflecting on the city as landscape and on the remnants of natural landscape that survive there. Architecture and urban living are threads that weave their way through all Heidi Specker's work, right down to her latest series IN FRONT OF. IM GARTEN consists of images of trees and bushes, very different shapes, which look strangely alien, neglected and even artificial within an urban structure. At the same time, there are ubiquitous clues that the forms found in nature are also being used for aesthetic purposes, and that urban designers themselves make frequent reference to the natural landscape. Her visual idiom, with its technical precision, fondness for extracted detail and tendency to systematise, recalls photographers of Neue Sachlichkeit such as Albert Renger-Patzsch and Karl Blossfeldt. Her pictures suggest that the architecture and vestiges of nature around us establish parallel structures. To present those connections in strong imagery, Heidi Specker makes use of abstraction, just like in her earlier works. In this respect, her photographs are like collage, composed in our brains in an act of imagination that draws on fragmented pieces of information.

Heidi Specker is a leading protagonist of contemporary photography. The exhibition at the Berlinische Galerie is her biggest solo show in a museum to date.

The exhibition and catalogue were funded by the Hauptstadtkulturfonds (Capital Cultural Fund).



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**BIOGRAPHY
HEIDI SPECKER**

- 1962 in Damme, lives and works in Berlin and Leipzig
- 1984-1990 Studied at Bielefeld University of Applied Sciences
- 1993-1995 Studied at the Academy of Fine Arts Leipzig
- 1995 Speckergruppen at Kunstverein Elsterpark, Leipzig
- 1997 Awarded the ars viva prize for young media artists
- 1998 Teilchentheorie at the Künstlerhaus Stuttgart
- 1999 Stipend from Kunstfonds Bonn e.V.
- 2000 Haus der Fotografin at Kunstverein Hagen
- 2005 IM GARTEN at the Sprengel Museum, Hanover
German Photobook Prize for the catalogue IM GARTEN/Concrete published by Steidl
Bangkok Heidi Specker Germaine Krull at the Sprengel Museum, Hannover
An artist's edition with the same name was published by Ann und Jürgen Wilde
- 2008 Landhaus Lemke at Mies van der Rohe Haus, Berlin
- 2010 Residency at Villa Massimo, Rome, Italy
Help me I am blind at RMIT Gallery, Melbourne, Australia
A book with the same name published by jrp | Ringier, Edition Christoph Keller
- seit 2011 Artistic professor, photography class, Academy of Fine Arts, Leipzig
- 2012 MG Road at ATMA, Le Corbusier Building, Ahmedabad, India
An art folder with the same name published by Spector Books
TERMINI at the Leopold Hoesch Museum, Düren
The accompanying publication was Sankt Anna, Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König
- 2015 Re-prise at the Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich
An artist's edition with the same name was published by Ann and Jürgen Wilde



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EXHIBITION TEXTS

In the early 1990s, Heidi Specker was one of the first people to draw on the new technical potential of digital photography to develop a new visual idiom. She made her name outside Germany with images of architectural façades built in the 1960s/1970s – her “Speckergruppen”. For the next twenty years, all her projects revolved around depictions of architecture and the urban environment. One of her best-known works from the period is IM GARTEN, which dates from 2003/04. These pictures, with their interweave of urban environment and natural landscape, have an abstract feel to them. This body of work has never been exhibited in such detail before. In the summer of 2013 she turned to portrait photography for the first time. The series IN FRONT OF was created over a period of two and a half years. Here Specker addresses the conventional practice of status-conscious self-projection that has dominated the genre since the invention of photography.

IN FRONT OF

The group of 70 works entitled IN FRONT OF are Heidi Specker’s first venture into portrait photography. The project was entirely implemented in her Berlin studio. Here, the artist devised an experiment with people from her personal sphere of acquaintance. The aim was to test how close an observer can get to another person and how accurately a personality can be depicted. The series challenges conventional ideas about the purpose of portrait photography and the circumstances in which it is produced. She focuses instead on the mutual dependence and balance of power that develop between a photographer and a sitter during the session. The resulting pictures are unpretentious and a little awkward. Apart from these unconventional portraits, there are photographs showing body parts, art postcards and symbolic items from her studio. These categories of image draw attention to the conditions in which portraits have been created ever since the birth of photography.

IM GARTEN

Ever since the 1990s, architecture and the urban environment have been defining themes in the work of Heidi Specker. Her group IM GARTEN was made in Berlin in 2003/04. Here the artist presents the city as a landscape along with the vestiges of nature it still contains. The images in this series show trees and shrubs that appear alien, wild and artificial amid the urban structures. The cropping, the close ups and even the surface structures of IM GARTEN are reminiscent of Neue Sachlichkeit photographers such as Albert Renger-Patzsch and Karl Blossfeldt. These pictures are full of references to the use of natural forms as design features in architecture and urban planning. Architecture and nature thus reveal parallel structures. Rather than a narrative impulse, Heidi Specker’s tool is abstraction.



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PRESS IMAGES

IN FRONT OF



Heidi Specker, H.B., from the series IN FRONT OF, 2015,
© Heidi Specker / VG BILD-KUNST Bonn, 2016



Heidi Specker, Katze, from the series IN FRONT OF, 2015,
© Heidi Specker / VG BILD-KUNST Bonn, 2016



Heidi Specker, Taube, from the series IN FRONT OF, 2015,
© Heidi Specker / VG BILD-KUNST Bonn, 2016



Heidi Specker, Bart, aus der Serie IN FRONT OF, 2015, © Heidi
Specker / VG BILD-KUNST Bonn, 2016



Doppelbilder:
Heidi Specker, S.B. and T.T., from the series IN FRONT OF,
2015, © Heidi Specker / VG BILD-KUNST Bonn, 2016



Doppelbilder:
Heidi Specker, H.B. und Türke, from the series IN FRONT OF,
2015, © Heidi Specker / VG BILD-KUNST Bonn, 2016



Heidi Specker, R.R.R., from the series IN FRONT OF, 2015,
© Heidi Specker / VG BILD-KUNST Bonn, 2016



IM GARTEN



Heidi Specker, Eiermann, from the series: IM GARTEN, 2003,
© Heidi Specker / VG BILD-KUNST Bonn, 2016



Heidi Specker, Schulhof, from the series: IM GARTEN, 2003,
© Heidi Specker / VG BILD-KUNST Bonn, 2016



Heidi Specker, Tiergarten, from the series: IM GARTEN, 2003,
© Heidi Specker / VG BILD-KUNST Bonn, 2016



Heidi Specker, Zehlendorf, from the series: IM GARTEN, 2003,
© Heidi Specker / VG BILD-KUNST Bonn, 2016

HEIDI SPECKER

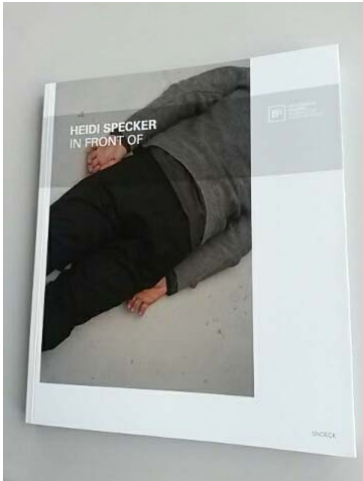


Heidi Specker
Photo: Arun Sarin



**Heidi Specker – IN FRONT OF
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CATALOGUE



On the occasion of the exhibition in the Berlinische Galerie (11.03.–11.07.2016), the Snoeck Verlag will publish the exhibition catalogue "Heidi Specker – IN FRONT OF".

Instead of following the conventional practice of projecting an image and status, Heidi Specker creates an atmosphere in her studio that lets her convey the mutual dependence and balance of power evolving between photographer and sitter during a portrait session. The random or awkward feel to these shots prompts questions about how close we can ever get to another person and how accurately personality can be depicted.

- Editor: Berlinische Galerie, Museum of Modern Art,
Photography and Architecture
- Publisher: Snoeck
- ISBN: ISBN-10: 3-86442-165-9
ISBN-13: 978-3-86442-165-5
- Format: 27 cm x 23 cm
- Pages: 160
- Authors: Thomas Köhler, Ulrich Domröse, Warzyniec
Tokarski
- Illustrations: 26 coloured pictures / 43 black/white pictures
- Languages: German/English (combined)
- Price: Book Trade Edition: 34,00 €
Museum Edition: 29,80 €



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EDUCATION PROGRAMME

The exhibition is accompanied by a diverse programme of discursive information and education. Guided tours for the general public at the weekend and curator tours on Mondays are included in the price of admission. Tours and workshops for school parties, presenting photography and portraits in a manner appropriate to each age group, are provided in partnership with Kulturprojekte Berlin GmbH and Jugend im Museum e.V.

The Berlinische Galerie is actively committed to the aims of the inclusive museum. To facilitate equal participation in the arts, a broad programme of information and education is offered in German Sign Language (DGS): a video, guided tours and a discussion about the artist's work invite deaf visitors to engage in dialogue with the exhibition.

PUBLIC GUIDED TOURS IN ENGLISH

Monday, 3 pm: 04. April, 06. June 2016
Tour is included in Happy-Monday-admission (4 €)

GUIDED TOURS FOR GROUPS

Guided tours for groups up to 22 people in English, French or Italian:
70 € for a tour of 60 minutes, 90 € for 90 minutes, plus reduced entrance fee
Booking and further information: MuseumsInformation Kulturprojekte Berlin GmbH, +49 (0)30-247 49-888, museumsinformation@kulturprojekte-berlin.de

Further details, including dates for all events in German Sign Language and guided tours for school parties, can be found online at www.berlinischegalerie.de

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**INSTAGRAM PHOTO CONTEST: 06.03.–20.03.2016
Inspired by the exhibition “Heidi Specker – IN FRONT OF” (11.03.–11.07.2016)**



Photo competition on Instagram under the hashtag #minimalassignment
© This Ain't Art School

Prompted by the exhibition “Heidi Specker – IN FRONT OF. Photographs 2005/2015”, the Berlinische Galerie and its partner This Ain't Art School will hold a photo competition on Instagram and an InstaMeet with a photowalk in Kreuzberg.

Pictures inspired by Heidi Specker's portrait photography and her images of wild plants in an urban setting can be uploaded to Instagram using the hashtag #minimalassignment.

On 22 March a jury consisting of photographer Heidi Specker together with Anika Meier and Jorg Senders, founders of the photo project This Ain't Art School, will announce three winners, who will each receive an “IN FRONT OF” exhibition catalogue signed by Heidi Specker. Features of the best entries will be posted on Instagram from 6 to 20 March under @berlinischegalerie and @thisaintartschool.

The Berlinische Galerie worked with This Ain't Art School to launch this invitation. This Ain't Art School / @thisaintartschool is part of the Instagram Social Photography network. The art historian and free-lance author Anika Meier / @gert_pauly and the painter and art teacher Jorg Senders / @jorgsenders regularly set tasks for their followers based on the work of well-known photographers, artists and film makers or phenomena of Social Photography.

INSTAMEET ON 12 MARCH

In addition to the photo contest #minimalassignment on Instagram, the Berlinische Galerie and This Ain't Art School invite Instagrammers to an **InstaMeet** starting at **11 am on 12 March**. The meeting point is the foyer in the Berlinische Galerie. The Meet begins with a guided tour of the exhibition by Heidi Specker. The group will then set out on a photowalk through Kreuzberg.

The hashtags are: #thisaintaninstameetwithBG and #HeidiSpeckerBG

40 places are available. Register with a comment on Instagram:
www.instagram.com/thisaintartschool