

# On the Human Being

International Photography

8 June - 14 September 08

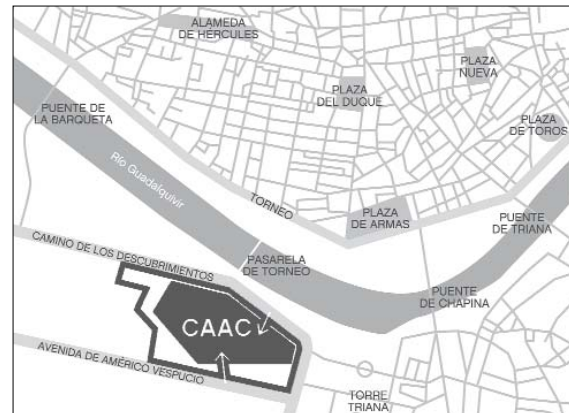
PHILIP KWAME APAGYA • NOBUYOSHI ARAKI • DIANE ARBUS • RICHARD AVEDON • TINA BARNEY • HERBERT BAYER • AENNE BIERMANN • KOOS BREUKEL • JO ANN CALLIS • LARRY CLARK • JOHN COPLANS • GABRIEL CUALLADÓ • PHILIP-LORCA DICORCIA • RINEKE DIJKSTRA • WILLIAM EGGLESTON • WALKER EVANS • HANS-PETER FELDMANN • THOMAS FLORSCHUETZ • ROBERT FRANK • LEE FRIEDLANDER • BERNHARD FUCHS • CRISTINA GARCÍA RODERO • ANDRÉ GELPKE • NAN GOLDIN • PIERRE GONNORD • AXEL GRÜNEWALD • JITKA HANZLOVÁ • CRISTÓBAL HARA • FLORENCE HENRI • CRAIGIE HORSFIELD • VALÉRIE JOUVE • JUDITH JOY ROSS • WILLIAM KLEIN • ASTRID KLEIN • BARBARA KLEMM • JOSEF KOUDELKA • HEINRICH KÜHN • VLADIMIR KUPRIYANOV • HELMAR LERSKI • DANNY LYON • ESKO MÄNNIKKÖ • ANGUS MCBEAN • SUSAN MEISEL • DUANE MICHALS • BORIS MIKHAILOV • LÁSZLÓ MOHOLY-NAGY • HELMUT NEWTON • KEN OHARA • MARTIN PARR • IRVING PENN • ANDERS PETERSEN • BERNHARD PRINZ • ARNULF RAINER • TIMM RAUTERT • EUGENE RICHARDS • HEINRICH RIEBESEHL • HUMBERTO RIVAS • THOMAS RUFF • INTA RUKA • AUGUST SANDER • MICHAEL SCHMIDT • THOMAS SCHÜTTE • ANDRES SERRANO • CINDY SHERMAN • OTTO STEINERT • JOEL STERNFELD • PAUL STRAND • BEAT STREULI • THOMAS STRUTH • JUERGEN TELLER • MIGUEL TRILLO • HELLEN VAN MEENE • WEEGEE • EDWARD WESTON • GARRY WINOGRAND • STANISLAW IGNACY WITKIEWICZ

This exhibition is organised by the CAAC in collaboration with the Folkwang Museum of Essen, Picasso Museum Málaga and curated by Ute Eskildsen. An extensive catalogue of the exhibition has been published including articles by renowned specialists.

## Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo

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### Access

Avda. Américo Vespucio nº 2  
Camino de los Descubrimientos s/n

### Transport

C1 and C2 buses

### Timetable

**1 abril - 30 septiembre**  
Tuesday to Friday: 10 - 21 h.  
Saturday: 11 - 21 h.

**Night: July - August (Nocturama)**  
Wednesday to Saturday: 20 - 24 h.

Sunday: 10 - 15 h.  
Closed on Monday  
Holidays: Consult with Centre

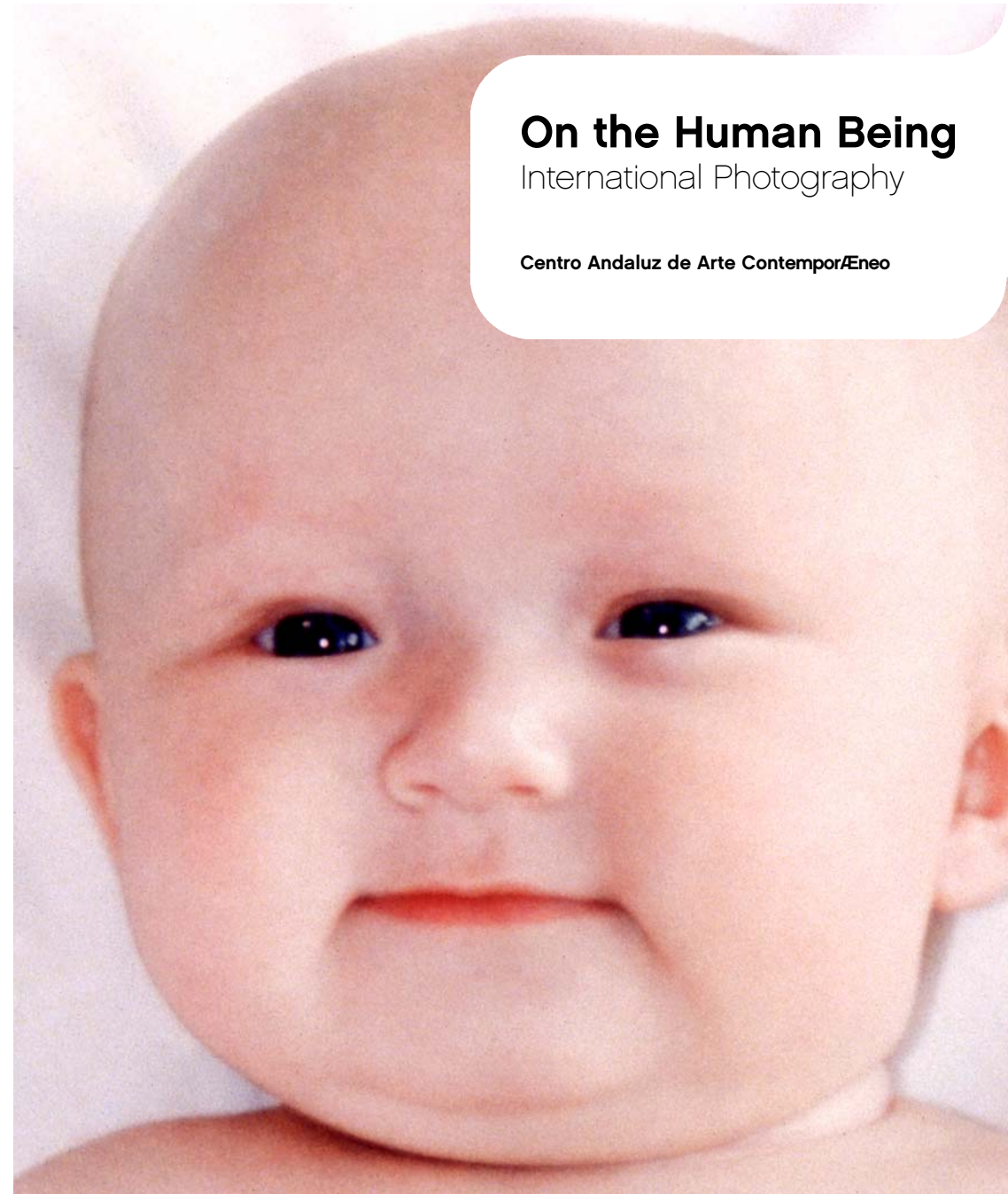
### Library

Monday to Friday (except holidays):  
9 - 14 h.

Tickets sales until 30 minutes before closing.



cover: Jo Ann Callis, untitled, 2001



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Portraits can be considered as the quintessential expression of human nature. It is a photographic genre which functions on the basis of a multiple dialogue between photographer / model, photographer / spectator and model / spectator. The implications and consequences of these complex relationships have been explored since the very beginnings of photography, giving rise to a set of practices and uses, faces and bodies, which have gradually shaped the genealogy of this genre. This exhibition includes a selection of images representing the history of portraiture in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Thus, the first half of last century saw the creation of the main reference models, such as August Sander and Walker Evans, and the first experiments with avant-garde works. Then, from the 1950s onwards, the former *tradition* underwent a continuous and unstoppable process of exploration, review and reconsideration. During the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which is the main scope of this exhibition, the portrait genre experienced profound changes. The human presence, both as an individual and as part of a group, became the crux of creative strategies which attempted to reflect on identity, individuality, social groups, the public and the private, the body and gender. During these years, the practice of photography fused with the rest of artistic disciplines and this led to a review of both the historical and functional models of photography and the contributions of the avant-garde.

During the 1950s, portraiture tended to be situated within the social liberal model of documentary making. However, this model started to enter a crisis in the United States during the 1950s. Figures such as Robert Frank, Garry Winogrand or Lee Friedlander began to show that changes in the social landscape, especially in urban areas, were

radically modifying the parameters of construction and perception of the subject. Meanwhile, Diane Arbus portrayed a gallery of *peculiar anti-heroes* who were a long way from the profuse *exemplary and universal* characters featured in the documentaries made during the previous decade. However, parallel to this approach, several outstanding photographers, such as Nan Goldin, Larry Clark, Danny Lyon and Eugene Richards, proposed a return to testimonial photography, to specific contexts and, in a way, to the marginal side. In a sense, there was a reaction to the dissolution of the subject.

This interest in the specificity of contexts which explain and determine the subject or in well-defined and delimited human, social and professional groups has become a widely-disseminated model since the 1980s. The works of Boris Mijailov, Tina Barney, André Gelpke, Susan Meiselas, Martin Parr, Esko Männikkö, Judith Joy-Ross, Miguel Trillo or Cristina García Rodero, among others, are good examples of this perception. In these artists' work, the subject is defined through his or her belonging to a community or a group or due to sharing some kind of common experience.

The approach which has persisted in going further into the dissolution of the subject, and into the loss of its unity and singularity, occupies a very different and contrasting position. Artist photographers such as Beat Streuli, Valérie Jouve or Philip Lorca diCorcia show, in this sense, the immersion and dissolution of the individual in an ever more denaturalised urban setting.

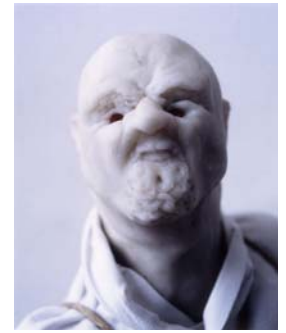
Works dealing with gestures, attire or references to a preferably pictorial classical iconography become frequent from the 1980s onwards. These are works of a very aesthetic appearance, both elegant and beautiful, which use a historical reference as the vehicle for a critical discourse. This is the



Pierre Gonnord, *Maria*, 2006



Martin Parr, *United Kingdom*, from the series *Phone Book*, 2002



Thomas Scütte, *Paul*, from the series *Old Friends*, 1993

case of Andrés Serrano, Bernhard Prinz and Craigie Horsfield.

A more literal use of pictorial references appears in the Dutch school, which has tended to lean towards registering unstable identities, with photographers such as Hellen van Meene or Koos Breukel. Reference to historical iconographic models also appears in the work of Rineke Dijkstra. Her proposal, which has successfully updated August Sander's model, reinstates the portrait as a genre capable of transmitting the individual's subjectivity and even helping it to emerge.

The dialogue between identity and human condition, between individual specificity and universal values of existence, makes up part of the genealogy of portraits. From Paul Strand to Richard Avedon or, more recently, Pierre Gonnord, there is an inevitable urge which constantly reappears in portraiture: an urge to achieve a corporal emancipation capable of bringing to light what lies under the skin.

But not all artists attribute the same possibilities to the photographic portrait. Thomas Ruff reduces and practically does away with expressive profundity. In his extensive *Portraits* series Ruff does not restrict himself to raising the question of identity, which he does by means of the development of an anonymous individuality turning out to be inaccessible due to its incapacity to communicate, but he also touches upon identification mechanisms with the information contained in the pictures. Meanwhile Thomas Struth, with his "family

portraits", constructs evidence about people living in our time. Both Ruff and Struth offer a diluted image of the subject or the family model which is on the verge of disappearing.

The work of Cindy Sherman occupies an important place in the process of deconstruction and reconsideration of the portrait as a valid model for representing subjectivity and identity. This is especially true of her series *Untitled Film Stills*, where she suggests that the very condition of identity is based on representation, on tales, images, conventions and social types. Sherman converts her body into the object of multiple transformations, turning simulacrum and allegory into tools of unquestionable efficacy.

The work of photographers such as John Coplans, Thomas Florschuetz, Astrid Klein, Michael Schmidt and Hans-Peter Feldmann continues to reflect on the loss of unity, the absorption of the individual by the social media scene, the fragmentation of the body or the process of dispersion and multiplication of images. Their work deals with the current nature and economy of the images, demonstrating the conventions and systems which govern our visual world.

In a way, this exhibition shows the generalised dialectic between those works which seek singularity or a sensation of social and territorial context, and those others which move within abstract universalisation and criticism of the system of symbols and representation.