

Conflict, Time, Photography

Museum Folwang

April 10 – July 5, 2015

Conflict, Time, Photography brings together photographic reportages and artistic works that focus on war events and their settings, their visible effects and social consequences. The arrangement of the works in the exhibition is somewhat surprising, for it is informed solely by the temporal distance to the event the photographers and artists make reference to, from “moments, weeks, months later” at the beginning of the exhibition to “years and decades later” to “100 years later” in the last of the total of 12 rooms. This gives rise to neighbourhoods of documentary-photographic, photo-artistic and conceptual works that leave it open as to how observers are to view and understand their content – even if it is unmistakably clear that they address the historical and contemporary fact of war and our ideas concerning it. The exhibition title forgoes putting the terms war, time and photography in a clear relationship. *Conflict, Time, Photography* is not a photographic or media history of war, neither is it a history of war photography or photography in times of war. Instead the exhibition inquires as to the possibilities and strategies of using photography and art to cope with war and violence: eye-witnessing – searching for clues – stocktaking – remembering – artistic ways of reading archives – return to locations – suggesting the invisible.

As an exhibition within the exhibition, the London-based Archive of Modern Conflict has conceived a presentation from its extensive collections of historical photographs, objects, print material and manuscripts. It brings together private shots, official photos, historical equipment and other objects from the years of the First and Second World Wars, fusing them into a multimedia installation.

For Essen, a further chapter was added to *Conflict, Time, Photography* exploring reports on the Ruhr region and Rhineland immediately after the end of the Second World War. At that time local and regional photographers including Albert Renger-Patzsch, Willy van Heekern and Ruth Hallensleben, as well as foreign photojournalists such as René Burri and Margaret Bourke-White, cast their gaze on the destroyed cities and their inhabitants. Their pictures not only present highly diverse perspectives, but also reveal the different aims pursued with the photo reportages. On the one hand we see the suffering of the civilian population among the piles of rubble, on the other a critical evaluation of German society, which found itself confronted with the consequences of Nazi war policy.

Artists:

Jules Andrieu, Pierre Antony-Thouret, Nobuyoshi Araki, Archive of Modern Conflict, George N. Barnard, Margaret Bourke-White, Frank Breuer, Adam Broomberg, Oliver Chanarin, René Burri, Hermann Claasen, Luc Delahaye, Chloe Dewe Mathews, Ken Domon, Matsumoto Eiichi, Hugo Friedrich Engel, Roger Fenton, Toshio Fukada, Jim Goldberg, Ruth Hallensleben, Rudolf Herz, Dieter Hinrichs, Kenji Ishiguro, Kikuji Kawada, János Kender, Peter Kleu, An-My Lê, Jerzy Lewczyński, Emeric Lhuisset, Agata Madejska, Diana Matar, Don McCullin, Susan Meiselas, Angela Milden, Simon Norfolk, João Penalva, Richard Peter, Walid Raad, Jo Ractliffe, Albert Renger-Patzsch, Sophie Ristelhueber, George Rodger, Julian Rosefeldt, August Sander, Hrair Sarkissian, Michael Schmidt, Karl Hugo Schmölz, Ursula Schulz-Dornburg, Indrė Šerpytytė, Stephen Shore, Harry Shunk, Taryn Simon, Josef Stoffels, Wolf Strache, Shomei Tomatsu, Hiromi Tsuchida, Willy van Heekern, Nick Waplinton, Franz Wiese, Jane Wilson, Louise Wilson, Sasaki Yuichiro