

**Invitation to the Exhibition Opening:  
ON THE ETCH – Etchings and Photo Etchings by Annegret Soltau  
Curated by Francesco Colli**

**Opening: May 16, 2025, from 6:30 PM  
Exhibition: May 17 – June 21, 2025**

After nearly 30 years of collaboration with Annegret Soltau, we are delighted that her radical pioneering work on sensitive themes surrounding womanhood is finally receiving the attention that the art world often denied it at the time of its creation. The exhibition *ON THE ETCH* is dedicated to the etchings and photo etchings Annegret Soltau created between 1973 and 1982.

Since her studies, Soltau worked with etching and often chose aquatint — a technique that allows for fine gradation of surfaces and is particularly well-suited to the representation of corporeality. The artist first etched her plates and then reworked them to achieve tonal values and plasticity.

Themes such as identity, the body, femininity, and pain have preoccupied the artist to this day and find their origins in her early etchings, some of which are being shown for the first time in this exhibition. It was the artist's intention to make representation as physically perceptible as possible. Sometimes distant, sometimes strikingly direct, these early prints are reminiscent of the work of Berlin artist Käthe Kollwitz. Kollwitz's unflinching depictions of bodies marked by war and poverty, and faces shaped by personal life experiences, deeply moved Soltau and became a powerful artistic impulse for her own practice.

From 1975 onward, Soltau took a step further with photography. Her images were no longer anonymous allegories of inwardness but centered her own body as the material for exploration. The documentary and performative character of the medium evokes an immediate physical resonance in viewers. In 1977, Soltau developed the technique of photo etching by scratching into the negatives of her photographs with a needle, repeatedly printing them and gradually transforming the original image — sometimes to the point of complete dissolution. The selected photo etchings express her inner emotional states during pregnancy with particular poignancy — a time when being a mother and being an artist were still considered mutually exclusive.

A special focus is currently also being placed on Annegret Soltau's work by the Städel Museum in Frankfurt, which, parallel to the *ON THE ETCH* exhibition, is presenting key works from various series. There, alongside etchings and photo etchings, photo performances and sewn and stitched photography works are also being shown — works that gained international attention in the late 1970s. As the

first German museum to do so, the Städel Museum honors the artist with the extensive retrospective *ANNEGRET SOLTAU. UNCENSORED*, thereby highlighting her pioneering role within the feminist avant-garde and underscoring the art-historical relevance of her multifaceted oeuvre.

Annegret Soltau's works mark a turning point in how images of the body and self-representation are treated in contemporary art. Starting from the classical printmaking technique of etching, she developed experimental, distinctive methods such as photo etching, photo sewing, and photo over-sewing, combining them with a profound and often painful gaze into identity, gender, and transformation. From early on, she placed the female body at the center of her artistic inquiry — not as an object, but as a vessel of experience, memory, and resistance.

Her work is considered one of the most significant positions in Body Art and conceptual photography in the German-speaking world. Her pieces are represented in numerous international museum and private collections and are regularly exhibited worldwide.

**Join us and the artist in discovering the origins of her extensive body of work at the opening of *ON THE ETCH* on May 16, 2025, at 6.30 PM at Galerie Anita Beckers.**

**You are also warmly invited to the book signing with Annegret Soltau for the exhibition catalog published on the occasion of the retrospective, on June 17, 2025, at 6.30 PM at the gallery.**