

JOHANNA REICH: RESURFACE PART I & II

We are shaped by the historical past and our view is incomplete referring to the conditions of constructed history. By realizing the project **RESURFACE (Part I - II)** Johanna Reich wants to intervene in this process and expand the limited view of the art history of the 19th/20th century.

Resurface (Part I) lets re-emerge the portraits of forgotten women artists of the 19th and 20th centuries. Based on Linda Nochlin's famous essay „Why Have There Been No Great Woman Artists“ (1971), the project examines whether there really have been no excellent international women artists – except for famous positions such as Frida Kahlo or Kaethe Kollwitz. Women of that time, if they wanted to pursue an artistic career, were exposed to extremely difficult conditions. In the course of Johanna Reich's research in various museums, collections and archives, a collection of 400 female artists of the 19th and 20th centuries was created.

The artists located in various archives are gradually appearing on the Internet due to progressive digitization, or Johanna Reich's team has put them online on Wikipedia or expanded already existing articles. They thus infiltrate the image of 19th and 20th century art history shaped by male artists and pose the question of how historiography has changed in the post-digital age: while it used to be fixed by books, it is now generated by the Internet, which on the one hand can harbor the danger of a filter bubble, and on the other hand makes a great democratization possible – and calls the familiar into question.

In order to make the brief moment of “resurfacing” visible, Johanna Reich makes polaroid portraits of the female artists and films the picture development process with a digital camera.

RESURFACE (Part II) is dedicated successful women artists of the 19th and 20th century who are not adequately recognized for their oeuvre. They have not “completely disappeared”. In many cases you can even find online presence of these artists or individual works in well-known museums. They seem to be aware but in a kind of translucent presence. To show this Johanna Reich developed her own procedure to combine analog and digital processes: she made polaroids of the portraits and scanned the polaroid during the development process, a picture with the artist's beautiful outlines emerges. These images form a cycle between digital and analog – past and future.