

## F COMME PHOTOGRAPHIE

SARAH JONES (GB) - ELKE KRYSTUFEK (A) - NATACHA LESUEUR (F)  
MARIANNE MÜLLER (CH) - FRANCESCA WOODMAN (USA)

November 1 through December 20 1998

www.fri-art.ch

The body as communication carrier is perhaps the common denominator of this show that brings together artists whose preferred medium is photography.

The body as subject and object, an object of representation that makes apparent the boundaries between the private and the public, between life and art, infused with desire and/or pain. The body, which is the major '*subject*' of our image and the way in which we identify with the world, is there to remind us of the laws of the material world. The body which enables us to identify with others and yet separates and isolates us by making us aware of our '*envelope*'. How difficult to step outside the body to communicate with other human entities that are yet so akin to our own.

This exhibition also illustrates the different forms of expression that may arise around one subject. At the planning stage it became apparent that the artists we contacted were all women; later this statement of fact became a principle. Why not ? On the other hand it seems that women are freer to express themselves through their bodies than men are – though this is by no means a certainty.

The choices that guided the exhibition were not exhaustive; yet the numerous variations on a very common subject show just how complex it is. Here we may observe a varied range of systems of communication – they spring from each artist's specific sensibility and touch upon feelings that vary from case to case, although all refer to the same subject.

**Sarah Jones**, 1959, lives and works in London.

In the 'Girls' series, "*adolescence is not the subject of Sarah Jones' photographs. She has chosen to show adolescent girls precisely because they personify the age at which identity is still indeterminate but also – and above all for women - the age of representation, when one often builds one's image through self-representation. When speaking of her work Jones makes reference to Balthus, Piero della Francesca but also to Hitchcock and Truffaut : the same positioning of figures in space, the same suspenseful presentation in which an interior inspires feelings of both safety and disquiet. Sarah Jones equally weights the objects, the furniture and the girls – a certain form of 'democracy'. Things seem suspended, expectant.*" Annie Claustres, Omnibus N° 24, 1998

**Elke Krystufek**, 1970, lives and works in Berlin.

*Elke Krystufek is an exceptional incarnation of the unexceptional. No typical product of the art industry, she represents democracy through impertinence, a position she not only does not repudiate but fully assumes. Her critical sense leads her to exclaim: «Me too !» Shamelessly, she takes advantage of the rules of the art system and uses them to the hilt: if that's what you want, that's what you'll get. Of course Elke Krystufek exists thanks to the art market; but she not only exists, she expresses herself, even if the «I» no longer really exists. In any case she constantly requires new scenarios and settings. According to the implacable laws of the culture industry she should have been a reject a long time ago; yet she always lands on her feet. «At breakfast they think they have understood me perfectly; by dinnertime I've changed completely», she says, and «They thought that one day I would just disappear from the face of the earth. But I'm still around. And there are people infuriated by that.»* Die Presse, Spectrum 2/14/98, Franz Schandl



**Natacha Lesueur**, 1971, lives and works in Nice.

Natacha Lesueur's exclusively photographic oeuvre is devoted to the theme of 'decorating' the female body, consciously avoiding 'jewellery' as a contemporary fashion item – in favour of a visual linking of archetypal or primitive ideas and practices for decorating the body with more recent trends like tattooing, piercing, etc. Natacha Lesueur's work articulates a probing and critical attitude to emergent forms of de-individualizing and degrading the female body into an object of male voyeurism, but the artist counters this in the implementation of her photographic series with an attitude of apparently naïve registering. Criticism of an identification with the practice and playful demonstration of the status quo that is deeply anchored in the female self-image enter into a kind of complicity in the work of Natacha Lesueur. *Photography as Concept*, 4. Internationale FotoTriennale Esslingen, 1998

**Marianne Müller**, 1966, lives and works Zurich.

*"I take pictures at home, on the way to work, while taking walks or traveling. I take pictures of myself, of my dirty dress lying in the bathtub, of the sky, flowers, animals, mountains. I take pictures when I feel insecure or very sure of myself, when something important is happening, or simply when I think something is very beautiful. I also try to take pictures when I'm not necessarily thinking out photography. —My photographs are about my life. The pictures are like a diary. I'm interested in the transition from private to erotic, to things that are public and of general validity. Shooting pictures influences and changes everyday rituals through the act of observing them. Conversely, rituals suddenly seem to develop a life of their own and start wondering what it would be like to be photographed... They are fragments documenting and investigating my body as a narrative and as a sculpture, subtle shifts in atmosphere and emotions. They explore what it means to be a woman taking pictures at the end of the century; what it means to become part of a long, yet very short tradition by taking these pictures. The real challenge, however, lies in ordering these glimpses and scraps of everyday life, in observing the gradual unfolding of a panoramic vision of memory and an artistic statement."* Marianne Müller, «A part of My Life»

**Francesca Woodman** was born in 1958 in Denver (Colorado) into a family of artists. She began taking pictures at age thirteen or fourteen and by the age of twenty-two had succeeded in creating a body of work of remarkable coherence and emotional density. She studied at the Rhode Island School of Design in Providence from 1975 to 1979, and won a scholarship for a one-year stay in Rome. Subsequently settling in New York, she worked on several projects: diazotypes (large formats on blue or sepia-coloured paper), and several dummy volumes of her photography. Only one of these was published: *Some Disordered Interior Geometries*, in 1981, the year of her suicide.

"Francesca Woodman establishes herself in the counter-image... You need a special kind of production to destabilize the theater, to give it back its innocence, its wildness, its explosive comedy. She's not afraid, Woodman, she lets it all hang out. She has decided to disturb human sleepwalking... What is this woman doing in a bathtub? We see only her blond hair, she's lying in an open coffin. I'm showing you what you can't see, Woodman says, a strength inside the body... When one doesn't exist except through the impossible wager of being an angel (angel of good or of evil, it doesn't matter, that's not the question), one has a tendency to float, to levitate; gravity and the void invent different laws. Woodman is an angel of ill-being, of course, but an ironic, not a destructive one (she will be destroyed by it)". *Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain*, 1998, Philippe Sollers.

The work of Francesca Woodman was first presented in Switzerland in 1992, in the Shedhalle in Zürich.

**This exhibition would not have been possible without the sponsorship of CREDIT SUISSE PRIVATE BANKING**

**Thursday, 10 December at 8 pm.** : Guided visit with Michel Ritter, FRI-ART director

**Sunday, 22 November at 8 pm.** : Musiques Frizème Siècle / Musik des Jahrtausendendes presents : Erik M., platines & Günter Müller, drums, electronics : Experimental Music

**Coming exhibition** : Nevin Aladag & Daniel Knorr, 31.1999 – 21.3.1999, Opening Saturday, 30 January at 17 pm. 