



1  
*Universal Thoughts (Stars and Stripes)*, 2013/2023  
 Analogue, hand enlarged  
 C-print  
 154 × 103 cm

2  
*Universal Thoughts (Mutter)*, 2004/2023  
 Analogue, hand enlarged  
 C-print  
 Framed with 70% antireflection coated Mirogard glass  
 158 × 195.5 cm

3  
*Universal Thoughts (Petrified)*, 2014/2023  
 C-print from diapositive  
 152.5 × 230 cm

4  
*Whatnot*, 2023  
 Glazed ceramics  
 48 × 80 × 38 cm

5  
*Dieter Petermichl: Sunrise Experience (Universal Thoughts)*, 1993/2022  
 C-print  
 Framed with 70% antireflection coated Mirogard glass  
 158 × 106.5 cm

6  
*Universal Thoughts (After Kühn 3)*, 2009/2023  
 Analogue, hand enlarged  
 C-print  
 154 × 195.5 cm

7  
*Gertraud Petermichl: Ärger über den gefällten Baum (Universal Thoughts)*, 2002/2023  
 C-print  
 Framed with 70% antireflection coated Mirogard glass  
 158 × 106.5 cm

8  
*Universal Thoughts (Vater)*, 2006/2023  
 Analogue, hand enlarged  
 C-print  
 200 × 154 cm

9  
*Universal Thoughts (Akt)*, 2015/2023  
 C-print  
 185 × 123 cm

# WONNERTH DEJACO

*Universal Thoughts  
 (or whatnot)*

Georg Petermichl  
 10 February 2023  
 — 18 March 2023

*The most personal is the most universal.*

Carl. R. Rogers

Rogers is the founder of the world's most influential psychotherapeutic approach. He constantly encouraged people to trust their own perception and inner process, not to be afraid of the most personal things, but rather to reveal them - if possible in the context of empathic and appreciative accompaniment. If one succeeds in articulating the most personal, an emotional connection occurs.

Georg's exhibits are radically personal. Audaciously candid. He zeroes in on the innermost aspects of - his own - life. His works show his equally daring and tender view of parents and siblings. He shows them very close, and in their looks himself. In doing so he is also very close to the viewer.

Art history needs a delimitation between art and the mundane and focuses on the art in the first place. Harold Garfinkel reverses the viewpoint and states that if one meets the mundane with the same attention as one meets the *Kunstwollen*, one recognizes that everyday life in coordination with others only succeeds through artful practices. They usually remain hidden as implicit knowledge in the behavioral practice.<sup>1</sup> Georg directs the gaze to these *artful ways of that accomplishment*. He captures them and exaggerates them so that one becomes aware of them, can see them: The painting in the family photo. The style icon in the

mother. The perfection of light in the snapshot. The petrification of the tenderly protected drum kit.

The present obtrusive inundation of visual stimuli that immediately captures our attention, imprisons it, makes it addicted and restless, bends it and cripples it. - Pause. - Withdrawal. Abstinence. Clarity. Radicality. Discipline. Diligence. Love: that's what these exhibits succeed in doing. How? Certain image practices have spread like wildfire through new technologies. The constant availability of ways to create, edit, store, and disseminate images has made us proficient in what Max Imdahl calls the "seeing view": Everyday practices have differentiated and, in some aspects, come closer to professional ones. Many are able to make images look professional, aesthetic, eye-catching. Ultimately, however, this leads to formal convergence. Georg's pictures set a counterpoint here. They are - to use Imdahl again - iconically more complex, more differentiated, not (always) familiar. Subtle. I am soothed and refreshed by the images. I can look at something without consuming it.

I also learned something: pressing the release button means tipping the emotion, an affect, a discontinuity. Often the result disappoints because we don't find the tipping moment, the thing that we wanted to capture, in it.

Multiple times selected. Multiple times framed. Especially the pictures from the family

album. Chosen by the father for being glued in. He is the depicter and the depicted at the same time and we can see his view of the picture in the picture. The rightness that the moment has for the father in all its hardship for the others. And with it, we also see the look of the artist on his father.

Generally, the gazes are important. In the gaze, the depicting and depicted image producers connect. The pregnant sister poses without posing, is completely with herself, completely intimate, a little bored, devoted. This super-contrariness is reflected in the staging: reminiscent of the foam-born and, at the same time, quite unabashedly domestic, unprofessional. Relaxed familiarity paired with almost bored equanimity also characterize the looks of father, mother and older sister averted from the camera. In this way, the closeness to the producer of the image is not revealed by the attention of the gaze, but by the reflection of the quality of the relationship *in* the gaze.

And: Georg's photographs celebrate the photograph as exposure. All arise from the proximity of the transition between day and night, sunlight and darkness. Many flashed. Anachronistic given the sensitivity of current digital technology. But more so a clue to exposure. The overexposure of father and mother reflects their radical putting-them-into-the-light. Soft in the sunset, at the same time hard in the flash. The super-contrary exposure repeats both their closeness to the image producer and their distance to being photo-

graphed, as well as awkwardness and, simultaneously, a certain ease in the situation.

In the image of the mother as the image producer, everything coincides once again: The tree that should not fall. The light that cannot be intended in such a way. Outside, the sunset. The tree disappears twice, through falling and through the flash. In addition, because of the flash one sees the inside and the image producer. The tipping of the emotion, the flash, which discharges into the world - as it were like her anger. The exposure is thus the carrier of the multilayered simultaneity of the photograph.

Here, personal history is contemporary history. Georg's pictures are documents of the change of time, of family, of technology. Family photo. Family album. Family history. Photographic paper. Glued family. Loss of the family. Preservation of the family. Loss of the paper. Preservation of the photos.

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<sup>1</sup> „[T]he objective reality of social facts as an ongoing accomplishment of concerted activities of daily life, with the ordinary, artful ways of that accomplishment being [...] by members [...] taken for granted, is, for members doing sociology, a fundamental phenomenon.“ (Harold Garfinkel)



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