

Still

In an age of the general availability of images, it becomes necessary to give a place to the photograph, to look at it, and to ask: What is a photograph, actually?

A photograph requires a photographer and something that is photographed, it is the result of a relationship between the two, and the question of who or what is the subject and who or what is the object goes unanswered. It is always just a moment, a time span chosen from many moments before and after the photo. Why do we ascribe more objectivity to a photograph than to a painted picture? Is it not an illusion to assume that a photo shows how it really was? It merely shows how it was in that moment for the photographer's eye, and maybe the motif fascinated him so much that he didn't see many things that were also there. The photographer chooses the motif, or the motif calls out to be photographed. How do we know which it is?

All these questions interest the photographer Olivier Richon. He, too, initially used the camera for documentation. He started taking photographs at age 14. In an interview, he talks about arriving in London from Lausanne in 1976 and with a friend, the photographer Karen Knorr, taking photographs of punk clubs, thinking themselves quite cool. This changed when he met the conceptual artist Victor Burgin during his studies at the Polytechnic of Central London. He started to think about the medium and the reality of the picture.

His photographs are staged and mysterious. They do not want to capture a moment for eternity and document it; rather, they are fictional from the outset, constantly in motion. In these pictures, something can happen any moment, but the beholder does not know what that may be. Everything seems familiar, all kinds of images come to mind that one has seen already, and yet the mystery cannot be solved, the possibilities of interpretation remain too numerous and varied. There is and will be no solution.

Olivier Richon undermines the claim of the photograph to arrest a moment that would otherwise be lost. Instead, he creates a still moment, but one that will never come to rest.

Olivier Richon was born in Lausanne in 1956; he studied at the Polytechnic of Central London, where he received a BA (Hons) in Film and Photographic Arts in 1980. Since 1980, his photographs have been exhibited internationally at institutions such as London's Victoria and Albert Museum, Musée d'art moderne des la Ville de Paris, Essen's Folkwang Museum, the National Museum of Modern Art in Kyoto, Brooklyn Museum, the National Gallery of New South Wales, and at Tate Britain. He is professor of photography at the London's Royal College of Art.

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Poster A Mound of Butter (Edition 2/5), 2016, C Type analogue, 60 x 42 cm Reverse Portrait of a Monkey (Edition 3/5), 2008, C-type analogue, 93 cm x 70 cm

OLIVIER RICHON

Still

March 16 - May 5, 2018

Opening March 16, 7pm



