

## PRESS RELEASE

Leipzig, May 19, 2021

**f/stop is delighted to announce the artists of TRUST/vertrauen, the main exhibition of this year's 9<sup>th</sup> festival edition curated by Susan Bright and Nina Strand. *Hoda Afshar, Viktoria Binschtok, Ingrid Eggen, Laure Prouvost, Paul Mpagi Sepuya, Carmen Winant and Guanyu Xu* will present selected works at f/stop. The festival will be held in Leipzig from June 25 to July 4, 2021.**

The theme for this year's 9th edition of f/stop – Festival für Fotografie Leipzig is TRUST/vertrauen. It responds to our new future. We are in the middle of a pandemic and we don't know what the art scene - or the photography scene - will look like after vaccinations are complete, variants confined and lockdowns ended. Thinking of our current environment the curators believe that trust is the currency of the 21st Century. It's at the centre of the COVID 19 crisis, the Black Lives Matter revolution, the #metoo movement, fake news, national elections, relationships with technology as well as personal lives. Trust, more than ever, is crucial to the way we conduct ourselves on both a personal and a societal level.

The work shown in Werkschau on the grounds of the Baumwollspinnerei Leipzig is an exhibition of 7 contemporary artists dealing with trust in different ways. The invited artists respond directly to our theme, with work that specifically challenges and questions the medium and what images we can trust. There is work commissioned especially for the f/stop festival and new work showcased for the first time. This sits along older work, all of which invites the audience to consider trust in regard to issues of consent, artistic agency, computational relationships, faith, the body and personal space.

The exhibition considers photography in its expanded form and allows each artist to show a large body of work. In this way it can be understood as seven smaller solo shows allowing a deeper dive into the artist's practice.

Alongside this exhibition runs the online programme Digital Wonderings. The curatorial idea is to create a festival as 'work in progress' due to the pandemic, with a programme that isn't only happening for the ten days in June and July, but one that started the moment Bright and Strand were announced as curators. Beginning last November, the Digital Wondering programme is a series of online speculations and can take any form. Invited contributors come from a wide range of disciplines and can respond and react to the theme of trust as they wish. Contributors include: Susanne Ø. Sæther, Onora O'Neill, Nigel Warburton, Lebohang Kganye, Salma Abedin Prithi, Dannielle Bowman, Clara Hausmann, Anthony Luvera, Fred Hüning, Delpire & Co, Whitney Hubbs, Katrina Sluis and Jonas Lund. Also presented are the exhibition artists: Carmen Winant, Paul Mpagi Sepuya, Viktoria Binschtok, Ingrid Eggen, Laure Prouvost and Hoda Afshar.

**9. Festival für  
Fotografie Leipzig  
25.6. – 4.7.2021**



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**TRUST/vertrauen curators**

**Susan Bright (UK)** is a curator based in London. She has a specialization in lens-based arts and contemporary visual culture with an emphasis on cross-disciplinary and international programming. **Nina Strand (NO)** works as an artist, writer and is the founder and editor in chief of the art journal *Objektiv*, living in Oslo.

**TRUST/vertrauen artists****Hoda Afshar (IR/AUS)**

This is the first showing of Hoda Afshar's new work *Speak the Wind* (2021). A book of this work will be published by MACK in June. The project questions the representation of faith and belief. In the islands of the Strait of Hormuz, near the southern coast of Iran, there is a conviction that the winds, generally believed to be malevolent, can possess a person, causing them to experience illness or disease. The inhabitants practice a ceremony to placate the winds and exorcize the spirits from the body. Afshar spent time with the people and their customs, the winds and the landscape. The almost alien appearance of the vast rocks resembles organic sculptures, as they have been shaped by the winds over millennia. The curators chose an immerse slide-show projection to show the many parts of this project. Afshar subtly and intelligently questions and responds to traditional modes of documentary.

*Afshar was born in Tehran, Iran and is now based in Melbourne, Australia. She completed a Bachelor degree in Fine Art and Photography in Tehran, and her PhD thesis in Creative Arts at Curtin University. She is represented by Milani Gallery in Brisbane, Australia. Her work is also part of numerous private and public collections including the National Gallery of Victoria, UQ Art Museum, MUMA Collection, Murdoch University Art Collection, Art Gallery of Western Australia and Monash Gallery of Art.*

**Viktorija Binshtok (RU/GER)**

For the exhibition TRUST work from Binshtok's *Networked Images* (2017 – present) will be shown. Working with the algorithm 'google image search' Binshtok selects one image to be matched with others visually. She then exhibits the work in clusters demonstrating the random associations that are made. The individual image becomes irrelevant and it's the association and visual similarities that come into play - often with comic or melancholic effect. Removing any linear narrative Binshtok points to the seemingly haphazard computational decisions presented where, with every 'refresh', there is a new arrangement of information available. The images presented to the artist change daily depending on her location, past searches or spending patterns making her (and all of us) passively reliant on the institution of Google for information.

*Binschtok has had solo exhibitions at Kunstverein Göttingen, C/O Berlin, KLEMM'S in Berlin, and AMERIKA in Berlin. Her work has been included in group exhibitions at institutions such as Centre Pompidou-Metz, Museum Folkwang Essen, Museum der Bildenden Künste Leipzig, Bergen Kunsthall, Kunstverein Bregenz, MODEM Centre for Modern and Contemporary Arts, Debrecen.*

### **Ingrid Eggen (NO)**

Norwegian artist Ingrid Eggen examines the body's non-verbal communication and symbolism often dismantling and distorting body language. In a world where emojis that have come to stand in for complex emotions and feelings, these photographs touch on our involuntary gestures, reflexes and instinct and the unspoken messages these portray. These actions cannot be reduced, so the photographs are no longer a representation, but rather an action or gesture and its associated reaction. These gestures offer another perspective, a potential fracture or opening. They are a world away from the language of social media that favours the quick thumbs up. Ever more pertinent these days these photographs show us how important involuntary gestures are and how much is lost on screen communication. It is the silent moments between people - a glance, a touch, a flinch that builds human trust and is at the core of relationships. For Leipzig eight new works in the series will be presented.

**With thanks to Office for Contemporary Art Norway (OCA) for their support.**

*Eggen studied Visual Arts at Oslo Academy of Arts. She has shown extensively in Scandinavia, most recent show 'Tranquilshiver' at noplace in Oslo. Her work is held at The Bibliotheque nationale de France and the The National Museum, Oslo amongst others.*

### **Paul Mpagi Sepuya (USA)**

Sepuya works with creating a new representation for people of color with a black queer gaze. He works collaboratively, creating photographs that emphasize the relationship and trust between artist, camera, audience and image. By photographing friends and himself, he is interested in deconstructing the making of images, the moving of subjectivity and identifying how those images are made and seen. In recent work he invites friends to bring their cameras and make photographs with and alongside him in the studio. Curious at how an image taken by him depicting his reflection alongside a separate person also aiming their camera (two depicted) could be collapsed into one photographer and one camera. For TRUST we will see his early work, his portraits of friends that led up to his more known mirror studies. A private collector from Berlin will show Sepuya's early portraits, polaroids, zines and magazines, giving a thorough insight into his practice.

*Paul Mpagi Sepuya is a Los Angeles-based artist working in photography. He holds a BFA in Photography & Imaging, from Tisch School of the Art and a MFA in Photography, University of California, Los Angeles. He is being exhibited widely, most recently at Peter Kilchmann in Zürich, Switzerland.*

**Laure Prouvost (FR)**

For TRUST the French artist will show the two films *I need to take care of my conceptual Granddad* from 2010, and *Taking Care (Love Letters to Fellow Art Work)* from 2019, both part of Prouvost's monitor video series. In these she anonymously, without showing her face, speaks to the viewer about the object or relic placed in front of her. She makes her hands the main character of the films. *I Need To Take Care Of My Conceptual Granddad* refers to her conceptual Granddad, who is said to be a good friend of Kurt Schwitters. However, the book in the video could be a reference to the British artist John Latham as she is smothering moisturizer over a catalogue of his work. Latham was an influential artist for Prouvost early in her career. The 2019 *Taking Care (Love Letter to Fellow Art Work)* relates to the previous. In the spring of the first lockdown last year, Prouvost screened this film on her website, offering comfort in these trying times. The camera is focused on her torso and gesturing hands, which appear to be attempting to caress the camera, as she whispers: 'I will take care of you ... kiss you ... If you feel old, if you feel out of time, or not in fashion anymore ... I will be there for you.' Prouvost and Lisson Gallery have kindly lent the festival these two films that directly refer to the times we live in.

*Laure Prouvost was born in Lille, France and is currently based in Antwerp. She received her BFA from Central St Martins, London in 2002 and studied towards her MFA at Goldsmiths College, London. She also took part in the LUX Associate Programme. Current solo exhibitions include 'Deep See Blue Surrounding You / Vois Ce Bleu Profond Te Fondre' at LAM - Lille métropole, Villeneuve d'Ascq, France, and 'MOTHER' at Louisiana Museum, Humlebæk, Denmark.*

**Carmen Winant (USA)**

Winant has made new posters especially for TRUST to be shown all around Leipzig at City Light Boards, and to open the exhibition in Werkschau. Another element of the festival is the outside commission, to make the festival go wider than just in the Spinnerei grounds. She has used the collaged hands of the German born actress Marlene Dietrich as a motif. Winant's work utilizes installation and collage strategies to examine feminist modes of survival and revolt. Her work is experimental and sits at the cross section between an artist's project and historical document. She asks who made these images, why and for whom. Winant often describes herself as a photographer who doesn't make her own pictures. She has always been attracted to photography that rejects photography, explaining that she moved into working in collage, installation and found images because she is distrustful of how seductive photography can be. She started to use other people's pictures, often from books, because she wants to test the limits of photography.

*Carmen Winant is an artist and writer based in Columbus, USA. She is the Roy Lichtenstein Endowed Chair of Studio Art at the Ohio State University. She is a 2019 Guggenheim Fellow in photography, and her work has been featured in numerous exhibitions at key galleries and museums, including MoMA and the Kunsthal Charlottenborg. Winant has published several photobooks such as *My Birth*, *Notes on Fundamental Joy* and the recent *Body Index* with TBW Books.*

**Guanyu Xu (CH)**

Pictures from Xu's series *Resident Aliens* (2021) will be shown alongside *Temporarily Censored Home* (2018-2019), and the video *Complex Formation* (2018). These works all consider the outsider in a complex investigation of personal and political history and identity. Xu highlights the disparities and connections between the USA where he lives, and China where he was brought up. In *Temporarily Censored Home* Xu made an intervention into his parent's home in Beijing and intricately layered photographic images all over the space, queering the heterosexual space. *Resident Aliens* adopts a similar visual strategy and turns to the conditions of immigrants in the U.S. For immigrants, home is never private and secure, but a perpetually temporary state. The project examines privilege and power and the precarious nature of trust in terms of legality and civic acceptance for those without it.

*Xu was born in Beijing and is currently based in Chicago. He lectures at the University of Illinois. He was the winner of the Hyères International Festival (2020). His works have been exhibited and screened internationally including the Aperture Foundation, New York; ICP Museum, New York; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; New Orleans Museum of Art, New Orleans and Fotomuseum Winterthur, Switzerland. He is represented by Yancy Richardson (USA) and Gaotai Gallery (China).*

**f/stop**

Founded in 2007, the f/stop Festival für Fotografie Leipzig is dedicated to contemporary art photography. Since 2020, it is organized in conjunction with the D21 art association in Leipzig. f/stop is committed to presenting international and national photographers and expanding its programme with rigour and curiosity.

**Press contact**

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