

IMPORT PROJECTS

KEITHSTRASSE 10 / 10787 BERLIN

PRESS RELEASE

LIQUID ARCHIVE

ARTISTS:

Johannes Förster

CURATOR:

Anja Henckel & Nadim Samman

VENUE:

IMPORT PROJECTS

Keithstrasse 10

10787 Berlin

<http://www.import-projects.org>

info@import-projects.org

A unique photographic archive.

At a moment when the visual clarity made possible by digital photography is being viewed by amateurs an impediment to authenticity and feeling, this exhibition throws the current trend for syntheses of analogue imperfection into relief. Showcasing an extensive personal collection of images by the young German photographer Johannes Förster, produced during his formative years, Liquid Archive displays the sublime visual results and intellectual questions that have resulted from what might be described as an 'act of god'. Förster documented his world with great enthusiasm during his youth. Candid vignettes from childhood and teenage life, from reading porno magazines in scout camp to his friend Walter's first marijuana crop, were captured with all the intimate spontaneity of an young man. The outcome was an extensive biographical archive in photos. So far, so normal. A lot of people have private photo collections in their attics, for instance. Förster kept his in the basement of his Neukölln home, to protect them from renovation work, eventually forgetting about them. That is, until a couple of weeks ago when heavy rainfall flooded the whole room, enveloping and forever changing the material store of memory he so treasured – not just the prints but the negatives too.

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09.11. – 07.12.2012

IMPORT PROJECTS
OPENING TIMES
THURSDAY-SATURDAY
12 – 18 H

x

**VERNISSAGE
08TH NOV**

**FINISSAGE
07TH DEC**

18 – 22 H

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A whole life document destroyed. Well, nearly. What first looked like a disaster proved to be something more ambiguous. Some of the prints survived, changed – the water making their colours run and bleed in places, sometimes obliterating all pictorial image but more often than not leaving some piece of figure behind – framing a face, a hand, in expressive scratchy hues; recomposing the whole photograph. The resulting images – and there are hundreds – are painfully beautiful.

As we see it, exhibiting these prints allows us to think about mortality and the fragility of the analogue photographic print as a store of memory. Perhaps, also, to speak about chance and the importance imperfection plays in life. With Liquid Archive viewers are invited to dive into the ebb and flow of memory, and the transience of its material and immaterial forms.

“A couple of weeks before all this happened I was talking to one of my close friends who asked me to imagine the worst thing that I could lose. I mentioned health, family and friends. Then he asked what I would think if I lost my photos. I said that this would indeed make me sad, but that they aren’t an essential part of me. The images were assigned to a physical medium and they brought me to where I am today as a photographer and as a human being. But the past is only a construction upon which to build the future. It’s a means to an end, and perhaps something like this can bring me closer to the world. Everything disappears, what remains is random – even in photography. People want to be engaged, and my interest in light, perspective and subject matter remains. Loss can be an exemption, a new challenge.”

Johannes Förster was born in Münster in 1985. He studied at the Annette v. Droste-Hülshoff Gymnasium before apprenticing in various photo studios in his home town. Between 2005 and 2010 he was assistant to Anatol Kotte, before embarking on his independent professional career. In 2010 he moved to Cape Town (South Africa) and, in 2011, to Berlin where he is currently based. Beyond still photography, he is active as a filmmaker and is currently collaborating on a music video with the electronic music producer Acid Pauli, Nu and the Adana Twins.

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ABOUT IMPORT PROJECTS:

IMPORT projects is a nonprofit curatorial initiative founded in 2012 by Anja Henckel and Nadim Samman. Hosting exhibitions, performances and symposia, IMPORT provides an experimental platform for contemporary cultural production and debate, primarily exploring the intersection of technology, personal identity and community. While physically operating out of Berlin, IMPORT engages global concerns.

CO-DIRECTORS – ANJA MARINA HENCKEL & NADIM JULIEN SAMMAN

Anja Henckel is an artist and photographer based in Berlin and London. Prior to completing her Fine Art studies at the University of the Arts London she studied history and geography in Berlin. Committed to cultural exchange, since 2006 Anja has also worked as an Educational Study Tour Director throughout Europe.

Nadim Samman read Philosophy at University College London before completing a doctorate at the Courtauld Institute of Art. He has written for publications including Third Text, The Art Newspaper, Art Review, Contemporary, Asian Affairs, Art India, Artchronika, Erotic Review, Naked Punch, Under/current and WestEast. In 2011 he was Co-curator of One of a Thousand Ways to Defeat Entropy – an Official Collateral Project of the 54th Venice Biennale, and in 2012 he curated the 4th Marrakech Biennale with Carson Chan. He is a member of the International Association of Art Critics (AICA). www.nadimsamman.com

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