

JOHN COPLANS

September 12 - October 17, 2020

The British artist, curator and co-founder of the art magazine Artforum John Coplans (*1920 in London; † 2003 in New York) would have been 100 years old on June 20, 2020. In memory of Coplan's artistic work, we are pleased to present a selection of 14 original vintage prints from the years 1992-1999. This will be the fifth solo exhibition of the artist in the gallery, three of which were held during his lifetime. The exhibition will be shown parallel to the presentation of the American artist Paul Mpagi Sepuya and will form an interesting juxtaposition of two strong positions from different eras.

The selected works are from Coplan's well-known self-portrait series in black and white, which he had been developing since the early 1980s. At an age when others have already retired, Coplans revived once again and not only discovered the medium of photography for himself, but also embarked on a journey into the awareness of his own body, the multifaceted nature of his own identity. These are works of vulnerable intimacy that directly move the theme of aging and the transience of the youthful body out of its marginal position within society. The detailed studies show naked body fragments in different poses, removed from their context. In the work groups *Legs Horizontal* and *Selfportrait (Upside Down)*, the artist concentrates on movement studies of legs and the lower torso. Physical flaws, such as wrinkles or excessive hair are shown unadorned and get something very poetic out of their anonymity. A humorous approach to the subject is found in *Self Portraits - Crossed Fingers*, which shows a game with different finger signs. Coplans himself described the examination of self-studies as a journey into the past, or into the role of another person in another life, whose process gave him vitality. In a provocative and humorous way, he breaks with classical norms of an archetype without focusing on a specific identity.

Coplan's works have been exhibited worldwide since the 1980s and are in collections of renowned institutions such as MoMA, New York; Tate Gallery, London; Art Gallery New South Wales, Sydney; Whitney Museum of Art, New York; Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco; Musée d'Art Contemporain Montréal, Montréal; Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki and the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, and many more.

An extensive solo exhibition by Coplans will be presented at the Henri Cartier Bresson Foundation in Paris in October 2021. The exhibition will travel on to the art center Point du Jour in Cherbourg in February 2022. A monographic catalogue will be published on this occasion.

The New York based art writer Joe Fyfe is currently working on a biography of Coplans that will be published in the near future.

The exhibition in the gallery will open simultaneously with Zurich Art Weekend.

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