
This volume distills the thousands of photographs of well-known and lesser-known international artists Angelika Platen took from the 1960s to the 2000s, including Charlotte Moorman, Hanne Darboven, Gilbert and George, Christian Boltanski, Marcel Broodthaers, and James Rosenquist. Platen's photographs have been primarily exhibited within Germany, though her hundreds of artist subjects are members of international modern and contemporary art scenes. The photos' widest exposure has been through various publications around the world in which they have appeared, from Artforum to Der Spiegel.

Born in Heidelberg in 1942, Platen studied art history, languages, and photography. She was a journalist, gallery manager, and advertising executive as well as a photographer, living in Berlin and Paris. While working in advertising and communications from the 1970s through the 1990s, Platen took no portrait photographs. Since the late 1990s, she has both returned to some of the artists she knew and added others, documenting how the art world has changed in the interval. Gilbert and George, for example, are pictured in 1972 and 2000.

This book will be of interest to researchers working on the artists featured, because Platen's view of her subjects is irreverent and informal, not hagiographic. In the 1960s and 1970s, Platen was the same age as many of her subjects, and the portraits convey a sense of being part of the group. Her 1971 photograph of Sigmar Polke in midair, seen on the book's dust jacket, captures the familiar tone of her work. The viewer senses that Platen's presence allowed artists to be themselves.

All of the portrait subjects are identified, but not every photograph has accompanying text, and the book thus assumes that readers already possess background knowledge of the artists' work and their biographical details. Therefore, this volume is perhaps best suited to university and museum library audiences. The physical book is well-constructed with sewn signatures, printed on heavy, bright paper whose low sheen displays the black and white photographs particularly well. Artists is 100 pages longer than her 1998 book of portraits, Angelika Platen: No Photographs Please, also edited by journalist and photographer Günter Engelhard. There are three critical essays with parallel texts in German and English, a chronology, and an index of the artists depicted. In the second essay, Thomas Hettche interviews the reserved photographer: "Did you see yourself as a mediator? You were part of a new movement. Did you want to help make your artists famous?" Platen replies, "No, not at all. I was just the one who wanted to look into their eyes and souls" (p. 105).

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