



Only advertisements direct their gaze to the camera. One image, printed on a black page, shows an ominous, single eye staring out from a watery gutter, as if the veil of reality has been pulled back and corporate gods are peeking through. In the single, full-bleed color photograph that punctuates the book, a lurid, idol-sized face is reflected in the windshield of a taxi, obscuring its driver. The photographs in *ORDER* were taken between 2014 and 2019 in New York, Tokyo, Hong Kong, Berlin, Rome, and Madrid. This is the smooth space of globalized, capitalized urbanism. Place, defined by retail storefronts and marketing campaigns, is anyplace.

ORDER concludes with a series of black-and-white duotones presented on bright, canary-yellow pages, where subjects, no longer blind recipients, broadcast their own messages via their clothing's mantralike slogans—*STAY REAL. BLIND FOR LOVE. OBEY*. One image in this section stands out: A protester is being carried away by two men and a police officer. In her hands is what we might assume to be a protest sign, turned backward, its words obscured. Unlike the subjects on previous pages who docilely move

through cities, blind and acquiescing to the media swirling around them, she alone presents a point of resistance. But then is quickly absorbed back into the crowd.

—Mimi Zeiger

Anna Stüdeli

Anna Stüdeli's work exudes an uneasy tension. Concerned with our basic instincts and how they come into play within social interaction, she evokes the repulsive in the attractive and vice versa in order to explore the ambiguity of our impulses and motivations in relation to our surroundings.

Born in Switzerland and living between Zurich and Hamburg, Stüdeli produces mainly sculptures and installations out of plaster, latex, horsehair, and other materials. ***PRIMAL* (Edition Patrick Frey, 2021; 156 pages, \$50)**, her first photobook, is the result of the artist's ongoing reflection on commercial photography and how it generates demand by seducing and teasing consumers. Stüdeli has assembled an archive of more than 1,200 close-ups she took of billboard ads and advertising posters. In 2017, she used some of these images in her video

installation *Appetite*; *PRIMAL* contains a selection of over 120 of them.

The book presents the close-ups as full bleeds, mostly in pairs on opposite pages, or sometimes individually as full spreads. Stripped of any context and the semiotics that are the prerequisites for advertisement, Stüdeli's often unsettling close-ups are devoid of their original message. Through zooming and radical cropping, Stüdeli dissects and negates the perfectionistic visual language of ad campaigns, which often promote unrealistic body types or sexualize basic commodities. Her photographs draw attention to bizarre, comical, and grotesque details that are at odds with the whitewashed and glossy aesthetic of most advertising. As Urs Stahel writes in his accompanying essay, Stüdeli "operates at the frontiers of obscenity, with disgust, at the switch point between decent and indecent."

This perspective is further amplified through Stüdeli's peculiar juxtapositions: an image of reptile skin is paired with that of wrinkled human skin; a sausage end depicted next to what seems to be the fragment of a woman's leg is followed by a full spread of a cow's udder. Stüdeli focuses on wrinkles, liver spots, scars. Recurring motifs such as

open mouths, tongues, ears, eyes, hands, and fingers become allegories for our senses and the way we relate to the world—consumed with desire to consume. Some of the details Stüdeli captured appear completely abstract. Some highlight the qualities of the original: halftone dots, seams, creases, and scratches.

Stüdeli puts an emphasis on the latency of images and the fact that they might convey something not necessarily intended. With *PRIMAL*, the artist picks up on the Situationists' satirical critique of consumer culture and mass media. Stüdeli's approach is similar to that of the so-called rephotographers and appropriation artists such as Richard Prince, Gretchen Bender, Sherrie Levine, and Vikky Alexander, who began in the late 1970s and early '80s to copy, isolate, enlarge, and juxtapose (fragments of) existing photographs in order to question concepts of authorship as well as the dynamics of media dissemination and the alienating effects of capitalism.

Stüdeli, however, seems more interested in the potential of the image to reveal an elementary truth. She shows that even the idealized and polished contains, and is driven by, something more basic, raw, and primal.

—Daniel Berndt

Samuel Fosso

Before Samuel Fosso—an artist of remarkable talent and wit—achieved international fame, he operated a commercial studio in Bangui, the capital of the Central African Republic. Studio Photo Nationale, which Fosso opened in 1975 at just thirteen years old, subsidized the artist's experiments in self-portraiture. During the day, he tended to his clients, slyly capturing their sensibilities against a spare backdrop. At night, he turned the camera to himself and transformed his studio into what the Nigerian curator Okwui Enwezor termed “a theater of fantasy.” Possibility drives Fosso's practice; his images taunt fixed notions of identity.

Studio Photo Nationale (Sébastien Girard/MEP, 2021; 76 pages, €120), a book of Fosso's commercial studio portraits from the 1980s, reveals the artist applying his philosophy of self-invention beyond himself. These images are not just a paean to Fosso's archive, which was almost destroyed in 2014 after a break-in at his studio in Bangui, they also gesture toward a level of sensitivity that marks his later work. Fosso, it seems, always possessed an enduring belief in African people's abilities to shape-shift.

Published on the occasion of his retrospective touring in Europe, the delicate volume is housed in a slipcase with a black-