A person’s hair may be likened to the top of a mountain. But while mountaintops are often shrouded from our eyes by clouds around them, a person’s top is almost always visible—especially in latitudes that have given up the daily use of bonnets, hats and headscarves. Hence the understandably heavy pressure on people’s heads—to get the hair just right. Over the course of several decades, photographer Peter Gaechter shot a wide array of hairdos for Zürich hairdresser Elsässer Pour Dames, tracking the changes in—and revivals of—hairstyles in late 20th-century Switzerland. The present publication brings together a selection of his photographs from the catalogues on display at these upmarket salons, showing the latest hairstyle trends from the 1970s to the 1990s. These sculpturesque cuts and coiffures, which were to be reproduced à l’identique on the customers’ heads, were also telltale signs of the times. Whether a punk or “Cold War Kids” cut, a “five-finger” blow-dry, feathery “Charlie’s Angels” wings or “Old Hollywood” coiffure—the multifarious hairstyles of local beauties, “It girls” and actresses featured in this book reflect the “why not?” whateverism of liberal consumer culture as well as concrete changes in society, e.g. in the sudden apparition of a clunky cell phone included in the picture frame as a pixie cut accessory.

Gaechter’s photographs also hark back to an age in which photography was still infused with a spirit of professionalism. There are no snapshots here, no affectations of an amateur aesthetic, no strategically trashy elements—Gaechter’s pictures target a clientele aspiring to distinction, as could once be said of the photographer’s craft as well.
Edition Patrick Frey

Press Release

Gaechter+Clahsen
_Fünf Finger Föhn Frisur_

Nº 283
Edited and designed by Büro 146
With a text by Jörg Scheller
in English and German
Softcover
224 pages
160 images
22.5 × 28.5 cm
EUR 60 / CHF 60

For further information on picture usage or if you wish to receive a review copy, please contact: Gloria Wismer, Edition Patrick Frey.

T +41 (0)44 381 51 02 E wismer@editionpatrickfrey.ch