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Cora Pongracz
8 erweiterte portraits
30.08.25-25.01.26

EN

In dialogue with:
Seiichi Furuya
Deva Schubert
Marietta Mavrokordatou
DAVRA
Paul Niedermayer
Claudia de la Torre

Kunstverein **un** **und Vorpommern**
für Mecklenburg **ni** **in Schwerin**

Cora Pongracz

8 erweiterte portraits

with: Seiichi Furuya

21.09.25–26.10.25

The first dialogical exhibition expands Cora Pongracz's 56-part series and exhibition of the same name, *8 erweiterte portraits*, with two serial cycles of works by Seiichi Furuya. Since the 1970s, the Japanese photographer, who lives in Graz, has been using the medium of photography to process personal experiences and processes of remembering and (non-)forgetting in a multi-layered visual project. In numerous exhibitions and artist books, he combines portraits, especially of family members, with photographs of living spaces, travels and everyday situations.

The series *Portrait*, 1978–1985, shows Furuya's wife Christine Furuya-Gössler, whom he photographed for the first time in 1978 – and thereafter almost daily over a period of seven years. In 1985, after a prolonged period of mental distress, Christine Furuya-Gössler took her own life. Similar to Cora Pongracz, Christine Furuya-Gössler had been diagnosed with a mental disorder in the early 1980s. After her death, the more than a thousand portrait photographs became a testimony of her presence and her agency – as a person, woman, actress, mother, partner, and more – and the time they spent together, but also a process of self-assurance for the photographer and a reflection on the social and political realities that shaped their shared life.

Memories of the early years of their relationship and the birth of their son intertwine with Furuya's experience of a European lifestyle initially unfamiliar to him – first in Austria, later in the GDR – as well as the confrontation with mental illness and loss through suicide. The cycle of works does not mark a closing, but rather the beginning of an open, never-ending processing of complex relational networks. The freedom of associative arrangement and referentiality that Furuya grants his series implies a constant (re-)balancing of the roles that are inscribed in both the medium of photography and traditional gender allocations.

The second cycle of works, *Berlin-Ost/West-Berlin 1985–87*, 2025, also deals with the conditions of a divided reality – in this case, in particular, with changing external circumstances characterised by repeated relocations. From 1984 to 1987, Seiichi Furuya worked as an interpreter for a Japanese construction company. During this time, the family first lived in Dresden and later in East Berlin. The resulting photographs interweave private moments with scenes from public life in the GDR. The projection on view shows 690 of these photographs – mostly in black and white, some in colour. Instead of adhering to a linear order, the sequence of the images follows an open, associative structure.

In addition to photographs of family – like the portraits of Christine Furuya-Gössler – architectural motifs are a central theme throughout the series. Here, a further parallel unfolds with the series *8 erweiterte portraits*, 1974, in which the portrayed women are often shown in relation to their (built) environment. Many of the photographs were taken during the celebrations marking the 750th anniversary of the city of Berlin. The SED had over 300 episodes of the city's history enacted in theatrical scenes and linked these with the portrayal of the supposed achievements of socialism. In its cultural policy competition with the West, the GDR focused on rebuilding the historic city centre. In addition to these architectural reconstructions, the series' imagery also features industrialized apartment blocks, the Palace of the Republic, the Volksbühne theatre, the Kino International cinema and the Berlin Wall, photographed from both East and West Berlin.

Like the series *Portrait*, 1978–1985, this cycle of works also follows the overarching project of remembrance that fundamentally defines Seiichi Furuya's photographic practice. Similar to Cora Pongracz, both cycles of work reveal lived realities and relationship structures as dynamic, constantly changing relational constellations, which are moulded by intimacy, migration, political framing, subjective experiences, as well as – non-pathologized – psychological states. Both artists thus elude an authoritarian view of the subjected individual. Instead, they create spaces that allow for ambivalence, intermediate states, and a vulnerable understanding of identity that is always in the process of being negotiated – both in images and in life.

Translation:
Emma Roy

Seiichi Furuya
Portrait, 1978–1985

Room 1
(from left to right)

- 1 Seiichi Furuya, Izu 1978, 1978, Type C-Print (1995), 49,5 × 36,8cm
- 2 Seiichi Furuya, Graz 1978, 1978, silver gelatin print (2013), 49,5 × 36,8cm
- 3 Seiichi Furuya, Moscow 1978, 1978, Type C-Print (2013), 49,5 × 36,8cm
- 4 Seiichi Furuya, Graz 1978, 1978, silver gelatin print (2013), 49,5 × 36,8cm
- 5 Seiichi Furuya, Graz 1979, 1979, silver gelatin print, 49,5 × 36,8cm
- 6 Seiichi Furuya, Graz 1979, 1979, silver gelatin print (2013), 49,5 × 36,8cm
- 7 Seiichi Furuya, Graz 1979, 1979, silver gelatin print (2013), 49,5 × 36,8cm
- 8 Seiichi Furuya, London 1979, 1979, silver gelatin print (2013), 49,5 × 36,8cm
- 8 Seiichi Furuya, London 1979, 1979, silver gelatin print (2013), 49,5 × 36,8cm
- 9 Seiichi Furuya, Wien 1980, 1980, silver gelatin print (2013), 49,5 × 36,8cm
- 10 Seiichi Furuya, Graz 1980, 1980, silver gelatin print (2013), 49,5 × 36,8cm
- 11 Seiichi Furuya, Lassnitzhöhe 1980, 1980, silver gelatin print (2013), 49,5 × 36,8cm
- 12 Seiichi Furuya, Graz 1981, 1981, silver gelatin print (2013), 49,5 × 36,8cm
- 13 Seiichi Furuya, Deutschlandsberg 1981, 1981, silver gelatin print (2013), 49,5 × 36,8cm
- 14 Seiichi Furuya, Graz 1981, 1981, silver gelatin print (2013), 49,5 × 36,8cm

- 15 Seiichi Furuya, Wien 1982, 1982, silver gelatin print (2013), 49,5 × 36,8cm
- 16 Seiichi Furuya, Graz 1982, 1982, silver gelatin print (2013), 49,5 × 36,8cm
- 17 Seiichi Furuya, Graz 1982, 1982, silver gelatin print (2000), 49,5 × 36,8cm
- 18 Seiichi Furuya, Wien 1982, 1982, silver gelatin print (1996), 49,5 × 36,8cm

Room 2
(from left to right)

- 19 Seiichi Furuya, Wien 1982, 1982, silver gelatin print (2013), 49,5 × 36,8cm
- 20 Seiichi Furuya, Wien 1983, 1983, silver gelatin print (2013), 49,5 × 36,8cm
- 21 Seiichi Furuya, Graz 1983, 1983, silver gelatin print (2013), 49,5 × 36,8cm
- 22 Seiichi Furuya, Wien 1983, 1983, silver gelatin print (2013), 49,5 × 36,8cm
- 23 Seiichi Furuya, Graz 1983, 1983, silver gelatin print (2013), 49,5 × 36,8cm
- 24 Seiichi Furuya, Wien 1983, 1983, silver gelatin print (2013), 49,5 × 36,8cm
- 25 Seiichi Furuya, Graz 1983, 1983, silver gelatin print (2013), 49,5 × 36,8cm
- 26 Seiichi Furuya, Dresden 1984, 1984, silver gelatin print, 49,5 × 36,8cm
- 27 Seiichi Furuya, Eibiswald 1984, 1984, Type C-Print (2013), 49,5 × 36,8cm
- 28 Seiichi Furuya, Dresden 1984, 1984, silver gelatin print (2013), 49,5 × 36,8cm
- 29 Seiichi Furuya, Wien 1984, 1984, silver gelatin print (2013), 49,5 × 36,8cm
- 30 Seiichi Furuya, Dresden 1984, 1984, silver gelatin print (2013), 49,5 × 36,8cm

- 31 Seiichi Furuya, Ost-Berlin 1985, 1985, Type C-Print (2014), 49,5 × 36,8cm
- 32 Seiichi Furuya, Potsdam 1985, 1985, Type C-Print (2013), 49,5 × 36,8cm
- 33 Seiichi Furuya, Venedig 1985, 1985, Type C-Print (2013), 49,5 × 36,8cm
- 34 Seiichi Furuya, Rostock 1985, 1985, Type C-Print (2013), 49,5 × 36,8cm
- 35 Seiichi Furuya, Venedig 1985, 1985, Type C-Print (2013), 49,5 × 36,8cm

Courtesy: Galerie Thomas Fischer, Berlin.