

CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHY/ VIDEO/ PERFORMANCE

MAR 26–SEPT 6

Much of contemporary photography and video seems haunted by the past, by the history of art, by apparitions that are re-animated in reproductive mediums, live performance, and the virtual world. By using dated, passé, or quasi-extinct stylistic devices, subject matter, and technologies, such art embodies a melancholic longing for an otherwise unrecoverable past. *Haunted* documents this obsession, examining myriad ways photographic imagery is incorporated into recent practice, and in the process underscores the unique power of reproductive media. While much of the work exhibited was created after 2001, the show traces the extensive incorporation of photography into contemporary art since the 1960s.

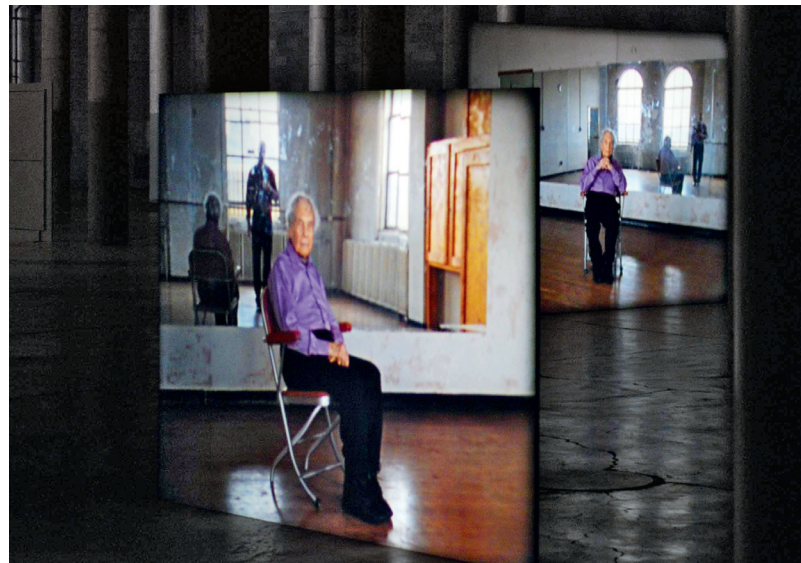
Within this context, *Haunted* is organized around a series of formal and conceptual threads that are woven through the artworks on view:

Appropriation and the Archive: When Robert Rauschenberg and Andy Warhol

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The Leadership Committee for *Haunted: Contemporary Photography/Video/Performance* is gratefully acknowledged.



Tacita Dean, *Merce Cunningham performs STILLNESS (in three movements) to John Cage's composition '4'33'' with Trevor Carlson, New York City, 28 April 2007 (six performances; six films)*, 2008 (detail). Six 16mm color films, installation, with sound, 4 min., 33 sec. each, dimensions variable, edition 2/4. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. Purchased with funds contributed by the International Director's Council and Executive Committee Members 2008.48. © 2010 Tacita Dean. Photo: Ken Goebel © Dia Art Foundation

began screenprinting snapshots and press photographs into their paintings in the early 1960s, they established not only a new mode of visual production but also a new conception of the artwork as a repository for autobiographical, cultural, and historical information. In the ensuing years a number of artists, including Bernd and Hilla Becher, Sarah Charlesworth, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Douglas Gordon, Luis Jacob, Richard Prince, and Cindy Sherman, have pursued this archival impulse, amassing fragments of reality either by creating new photographs or by appropriating existing ones.

Documentation and Reiteration: Since

at least the 1970s, photographic documentation, including film and video, has existed as an important complement to the art of live performance, often setting the conditions by which events are staged and sometimes obviating the need for a live audience altogether. The power of the document to reiterate the past has inspired artists such as Marina Abramović, Christian Boltanski, Tacita Dean, Joan Jonas, Christian Marclay, Ana Mendieta, and Gina Pane to use photography not only to restage performative acts, but often to revisit the bodily experience of historical events. Along the way, many have reconsidered



Andy Warhol, *Orange Disaster #5*, 1963. Acrylic and silkscreen enamel on canvas, 269.2 x 207 cm. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Gift, Harry N. Abrams Family Collection 74.2118. © 2010 The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc./Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

the document itself as an object embedded with history, closely attending to its material specificity in their works.

Landscape, Architecture, and the Passage of Time: In addition to documenting people and events, one of photography's primary historical functions has been to record sites where significant, often traumatic, events have taken place. These images are doubly arresting, for they capture past spaces where something has already occurred. As viewers, we are left with only traces from which we hope to reconstruct the absent occurrences in the fields, forests, homes, and offices we see. With this condition in mind, many artists, among them James Casebere, Spencer Finch, Ori Gersht, Roni Horn, Luisa Lambri, An-My Lê, Sally Mann, and Hiroshi Sugimoto, have turned to empty spaces in landscape and architecture, creating poetic reflections on time's inexorable passing, and insisting on the importance of remembrance and memorialization.

Trauma and the Uncanny: Photography has not only profoundly impacted our understanding of history; it has altered, or as some theorists argue, completely reconfigured, our sense of personal memory. From birth to death, all aspects of our lives are reconstituted as images alongside our own experience of them. This repetition, which is mirrored in the very technology of the photographic medium, effectively produces an alternate reality in representation that, especially when coping with traumatic

events, can take on the force of the uncanny. Artists such as Thomas Demand, Stan Douglas, Anthony Goicolea, Sarah Anne Johnson, Jeff Wall, and Gillian Wearing exploit this effect, constructing fictional scenarios in which the pains and pleasures of personal experience return with eerie and foreboding qualities.

Death, Publicity, and Politics: When Warhol created his silkscreen paintings of Marilyn Monroe in the wake of her death, he touched on the darker side of a burgeoning media culture that, during the Vietnam War, became an integral part of everyday life. Today, with vastly expanded channels for the propagation and reproduction of images, events as varied as the terrorist attacks at the World Trade Center and the deaths of celebrities such as Princess Diana and Michael Jackson have the capability of becoming traumatic on a global scale. As this new cultural condition has taken hold, many artists, including Adam Helms, Nate Lowman, Adam McEwen, Cady Noland, and Anri Sala, have reexamined the strategy of image appropriation Warhol pioneered, attending closely to the ways political conflict can take on global significance.

— Jennifer Blessing, *Curator of Photography*
and Nat Trotman, *Associate Curator*

Visit *Haunted: Contemporary Photography/Video/Performance* online at guggenheim.org/hauntedonline (beginning Mar 26).

CATALOGUE AVAILABLE