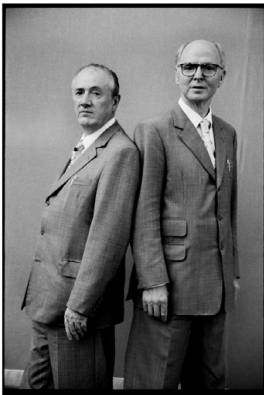


PRESS RELEASE

Basel, January 2012

Vera Isler – Face to Face II

Museum Tinguely, Basel: 1 February – 6 May 2012



The most notable characteristics of the portraits in Vera Isler's "Face to Face" series are their intensity and their naturalness. Described by the artist as "portraits for me alone", they were created without assistance, without artificial light and thus without distraction. As documents of Vera Isler's encounters with various artists, they capture very personal feelings and states of mind with "heartfelt and wordless discretion". They compel not only their subjects but also their beholders into a state of repose, attention and sincerity. On display at the Museum Tinguely are the largescale photographs of the second "Face to Face" series.

The Swiss artist Vera Isler (b. 1931) first published her photographic portraits of artists in 1992 under the title "Face to Face". The fact that since 1992 she has done many more portraits of major figures of the international art scene has prompted the Museum Tinguely in Basel and the Museum der Moderne Salzburg to produce this second group of photographs as "Face to Face II", to be presented in an exhibition and also published in book form. Vera Isler's portraits differ from other photographs of artists in their directness. She neither photographs in the studio nor uses sophisticated equipment, flash or assistants – rather than the artists coming to her, she goes to the artists, meeting them in their ateliers or even making her first contact with them at exhibitions. This gives her a special capacity for capturing unrepeatable moments or personal encounters without any hint of pose or artificial attitudinizing. Her portraits are realized exclusively in black-and-white in the form of (approximately) life-size prints: the photographer and the artist, the beholder and the person portrayed, meet eye-to-eye. In exhibitions, Vera Isler sets great store by her portrait photos being hung in serried rows, to give visitors the impression of "meeting" the individuals portrayed.

Before finding her way to photography Vera Isler was active in many media and used a variety of techniques, devoting herself to overlaps at the interface between art and the natural sciences and working in the field of three-dimensional art. In the 1970s Vera Isler used disposable medical packaging to create reliefs and objects that she called "programmations"; later she also visualized DNA in her series "genetics". In this period Vera Isler's pictures and sculptures were truly pioneering in that they addressed themes that are of burning interest today.

It was only around 1980 that Vera Isler came to photography, by way of series of photographs devoted to the U.S. gay scene and the youth movements of the early 1980s, whose "AJZs" ("autonomous youth centres") she documented in a book entitled "Kunst der Verweigerung" or "Art

of Non-Compliance". Later her interest as a photographer turned towards old people. Since 1992, however, portraits of photographers and artists have occupied the central position in her work. Over the last ten years she has expanded her range of media techniques in the direction of video and film stills – as has always been the case, Vera Isler's artistic explorations are still driven by the desire to experiment.

In co-operation with Museum der Moderne, Salzburg (Austria)

The exhibition will be accompanied by the catalogue "Face to Face II" (96 pages; 52 illustrations; CHF 22) published by Bibliothek der Provinz, with a foreword by Toni Stooss, Roland Wetzel and Andres Pardey and texts by Jean-Christophe Ammann and Margit Zuckriegl.

Homepage of the artist: <http://www.veraislerleiner.com>

Tuesday, February 7, 6:30 pm:

Vera Isler will read from her autobiographical book *Auch ich...*, Edition Ost, Berlin, 2000 (in German).

Sunday, February 12, 11:30 am:

Premiere of *Vera Isler Einen Augenblitz, bitte*, a film by Daria Kołacka and Piotr Dżumała, followed by a guided tour of the exhibition with the artist (in German)

General information:

Opening hours: Tuesday – Sunday 11 - 18 h (closed on Mondays)

Admission prices: Adults: CHF 15

Students, trainees, seniors, people with disabilities: CHF 10

Groups of 20 people or more: CHF 10 (per person)

Children aged 16 or under: free

For further information and press images please visit our website: www.tinguely.ch.