

## Portrait of a Spectacular Historical Photography Collection – Photographs from the Ruth and Peter Herzog Collection

The old photograph of a handful of women spinning was a chance find at the flea market in Zurich in May 1974. Yet for collectors Ruth and Peter Herzog it kindled the flame and became the first photograph in their collection, which today amounts to more than 500,000 photographs. The Herzogs' quite deliberate diversity of themes and motifs in their collection serves as orientation both for the exhibition at the **Kunstmuseum Basel** (*The Incredible World of Photography, 18 July – 4 October 2020*) and for this present publication. Almost four hundred selected examples in the publication *Exposure Time* (Christoph Merian Verlag) tell the story of photography from its beginnings, as of 1839, up to the 1970s.

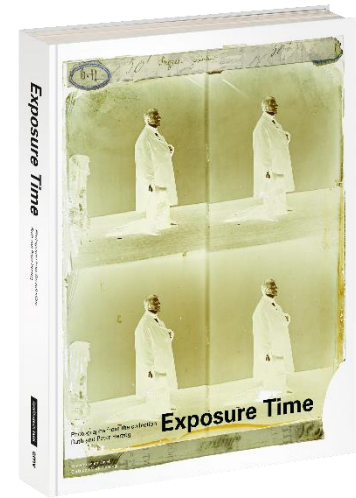
Breathtaking in its scope and fascinating in its range – the collection was intentionally not confined to particular eras, techniques or styles. That would not have been permissible, given the curiosity of Ruth and Peter Herzog, who saw their collection as a huge dynamic mosaic of life. Peter Herzog concentrates primarily on the interrelations between photography and art, while the essays of an interdisciplinary team of fourteen renowned authors deal, among other things, with the historical dimension, with collecting photographs, with early scientific photography and with the prominent Swiss photographer Hans Hinz, who is considered to be a pioneer of colour photography. The result is a comprehensive portrait of the Herzog Collection which also relates analogue photography to our digital treatment of images.

Centre stage, however, are the photographs, the iconic images themselves. The diversity of photographs taken for scientific, documentary, political or private purposes with its motifs and themes by anonymous and famous photographers from all over the world, seems like a continuous photographic narrative about life in the industrial era.

With essays by Martina Baleva, Jan van Brevern, Eva Ehninger, Steve Edwards, Peter Geimer, Valentin Groebner, Michael Hagner, Peter Herzog, Paul Mellenthin, Katja Müller-Helle, Olga Osadtschy, Katja Petrowskaja, Vanessa R. Schwartz und Kelley Wilder.

The German edition of the book is entitled *Belichtungszeit* (ISBN 978-3-85616-903-9).

Paul Mellenthin and Olga Osadtschy conceived and organized the exhibition in the Kunstmuseum Basel in close collaboration with the Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron Cabinet.



Kunstmuseum Basel  
Paul Mellenthin, Olga Osadtschy  
(eds.)

**Exposure Time**  
**Photographs from the Collection**  
**Ruth and Peter Herzog**

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If you have any other questions please  
contact:

Andrea Bikle  
Presse- und Öffentlichkeitsarbeit  
Christoph Merian Verlag  
St. Alban-Vorstadt 12  
Postfach  
4002 Basel  
Tel. +41 61 226 33 50  
[a.bikle@merianverlag.ch](mailto:a.bikle@merianverlag.ch)

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