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MUSEUM LUDWIG

PRESS RELEASE

4 May – 11 August 2019

Fiona Tan. GAAF

as part of the “Artist Meets Archive” series, initiated by the Internationale Photoszene Köln

Opening: Friday, May 3, 2019, 19 p.m.

Press conference: Thursday, May 2, 2019, 11 a.m., press preview starting at 10 a.m.

Afterwards a bus tour is organized for the press to all venues of the “Artist Meets Archive” exhibitions by the Photoszene Festival. Further information at: festival.photoszene.de/en/press.html. Please register for the tour at presse@photoszene.de.

International artists discover archives in Cologne: this is the idea behind the Internationale Photoszene Köln 2019 festival's program “Artist Meets Archive.” As cooperating partners, six institutions each invited an artist to develop a project based on their collection. Apart from the Museum Ludwig, the institutions are: the Museum of the City of Cologne, the Museum of Applied Arts Cologne, the Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum, the Rheinische Bildarchiv, and the Photographische Sammlung/SK Stiftung Kultur.

The Museum Ludwig invited the artist and filmmaker Fiona Tan (b. 1966 in Pekanbaru/Indonesia, lives in Amsterdam) to realize an exhibition project with the museum's photography collection as the starting point. Fiona Tan's work revolves around questions of time, identity and memory. The archive as a time capsule has played a role in her artistic strategies of research and classification in previous projects.

Fiona Tan. GAAF takes as its starting point the Agfacolor advertisement archive—several thousand 6x6 color negatives and photographs which were taken between 1952 and 1968. This archive served Agfa as a stock for advertisements, brochures, exhibitions, and the magazine *Agfa Photoblätter*. After discovering this almost forgotten and uncatalogued archive in the Museum Ludwig, Tan became interested in the inherent paradox of its images: staged and idealized scenes of models posing for professional photographers, nonetheless intended to appear spontaneous and authentic, as if taken by amateurs. “These images cause me to reflect upon the pose, upon artificiality versus spontaneity and authenticity,” says Tan who brings these images into public view for the first time.

The Dutch word ‘gaaf’—an anagram, i.e. reordering of the letters for Agfa—means ‘neat’ or ‘perfect.’ In this exhibition Fiona Tan focuses upon the image and the role of women as portrayed

in these photographs, drawing attention to the ideal as opposed to the reality of these formative decades in postwar Germany. Juxtaposing fantasy with reality, professional with vernacular, color with black & white, Tan confronts this advertising archive with documentary photographs of the same era from the Museum Ludwig collection and with a small selection of her own works dealing with portraiture. *Vox Populi London* embodies an informal snapshot, a playful group portrait of a city. In *Linnaeus' Flower Clock* Tan reflects upon the nature of time itself. Intentionally blurring the divisions between film and photography, the six part installation *Provenance* questions if it is possible to look at a film in the same way as a painted portrait.

An essay written by artist is published in an artist book accompanying this exhibition, and there will be a program of films curated by Fiona Tan as well as lectures.

Exhibition Curator: Fiona Tan

Curator, Photography Collection: Miriam Szwaust

Web and Social Media

The Museum Ludwig will be posting about the exhibition on its social media channels with the hashtags #MLxFionaTan #photoszenefestival #photoszene2019 #artistmeetsarchive

Facebook/Instagram/Twitter/Vimeo: @MuseumLudwig – www.museum-ludwig.de