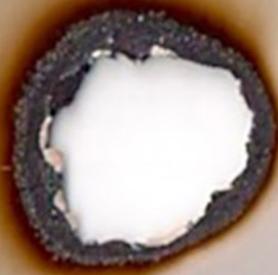


PETER MILLER

Dear Photography
11/09/-03/12/2021



CO Berlin

PRESS RELEASE

Berlin, 27 July 2021

PETER MILLER

Dear Photography

C/O Berlin presents the exhibition **Peter Miller . Dear Photography** from **Sep 11 to Dec 3, 2021**. The **opening** takes place on **Fri, Sept 10, 2021** at **21:00** at **C/O Berlin** in the Amerika Haus in Hardenbergstrasse 22–24, 10623 Berlin.

From a cloud of green light there emerge flickering yellow spheres. Are we witnessing planets taking shape? Or a spectacular display of the northern lights? Neither. These are the bioluminescent traces of fireflies lighting up as they traverse the surface of light-sensitive photographic paper. The work of American artist Peter Miller, who lives in Germany, still hints at his childhood dream of becoming a magician. Today, however, Miller's preoccupation with magic finds expression primarily in the media of film and photography. He also creates installations and sculptures, spatial interventions, and works drawing on the tradition of 1970s performance art. Utilizing a wide variety of forms and materials, he explores the history of the technical media and their constituent, irreducible elements: light, chemistry, audience, flicker, optics, and perspective.

With Miller's focus on analog photographic practices, his work may seem anachronistic in the digital age. Yet the opposite is true: More and more artists have been exploring analog and darkroom processes in recent years. Their works are seen as part of an 'analog turn' in photography—a critical countercurrent to digital photographic practices. Peter Miller is one of the most exciting voices in this emerging movement. His work is playful and lighthearted, combining an analytical and archaeological approach to probe our everyday life for its media relevance. His works invite us to rediscover photography: In one piece, he transforms a mailbox into a darkroom (*Envelope*, 2020), and in another, he sends secret messages to be deciphered by photo lab assistants—whose profession is threatened with extinction by the spread of digital photography (*The Letter*, 2009). In yet another work, Miller brings a living tree into his lab and helps it to create a photographic self-portrait using photograms (*The Leaves*, 2021). He often employs a reduced technical setup, either eschewing cameras, lenses or any chemical treatment of the paper. The works that emerge from Miller's Wunderkammer invite viewers to embark on a journey to discover analog media technologies and to reflect on how media shape the world around us.

With *Peter Miller . Dear Photography*, C/O Berlin is presenting the first institutional solo exhibition of the artist's work worldwide. It features key works from the last 15 years as well as numerous objects that the artist created especially for the exhibition. These include two participatory interventions that encourage visitors to take photographs in the exhibition, either with a special camera or in a special setup. The exhibition also draws connections between Miller's photographic work

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and the cinematic and performative aspects of his oeuvre. Curated by Dr. Kathrin Schöneegg, C/O Berlin Foundation.

The exhibition is made possible by the Capital Cultural Fund (HKF).

Peter Miller (b. 1978 in Burlington, Vermont, USA) studied fine art at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) and apprenticed to be a silversmith. Through a Fulbright fellowship, he worked with experimental filmmaker Peter Tscherkassky in Vienna, followed by a position at the Friedl Kubelka School for independent film. Later, through a DAAD fellowship, he worked with Matthias Müller at the Academy of Media Arts in Cologne. His work has been shown in international exhibitions such as SFMOMA (2019), the 57th Venice Biennale (2017), Biennale for Contemporary Photography in Mannheim, Ludwigshafen, Heidelberg (2017) and at international film festivals in Berlin (2017), London (2012), Rotterdam (2009, 2013, 2015), Toronto (2012) and Vienna (2013, 2016). Peter Miller has been a professor of photography and time-based media at Folkwang University of the Arts, Essen, since 2018. He lives in Essen and Paris.

PRESS RELEASE

Berlin, 27 July 2021

Peter Miller

Dear Photography

Exhibition

Sep 11 – Dec 3, 2021

Press Tour

Sep 10, 2021 . 11:00

Opening

Sep 10, 2021 2021 . 21:00–00:00

Opening Hours

Daily . 11:00–20:00

Admission

10 euros . reduced 6 euros

Organizer

C/O Berlin Foundation

Amerika Haus . Hardenbergstraße 22–24 . 10623 Berlin

Tel +49.30.284 44 16-0 . www.co-berlin.org

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#PeterMiller

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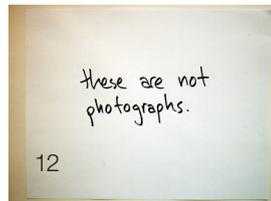
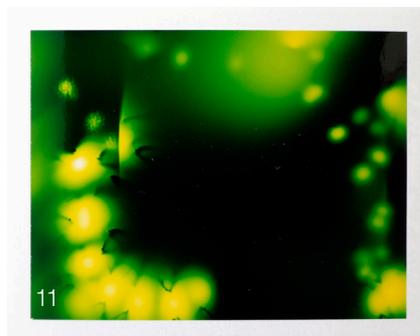
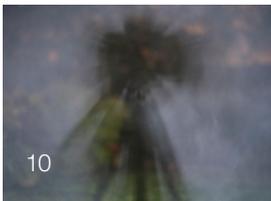
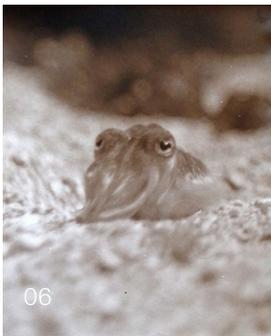
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PRESS IMAGES

Peter Miller . Dear Photography

11/09–03/12/2021



PRESS IMAGES

Peter Miller . Dear Photography
11/09/–03/12/2021

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01 *Burnt Hole Sun VIII*, 2016 . Courtesy Galerie Crone Berlin/Wien **02** *Run, Sallie, Run*, 2017 . Courtesy Galerie Crone Berlin/Wien **03** *Bokeh*, 2019 **04** *Grainbow*, 2010 **05** *Polaroid Portrait*, 2009 **06** *Sepia I*, 2017 . Courtesy Galerie Crone Berlin/Wien **07** *Selfportrait with Headlamp*, 2009 **08** *Imaginary Landscapes*, 2014 **09** *Aperture*, 2019 **10** *Spectre*, 2021 **11** *Photuris #13*, 2013 . Courtesy Galerie Crone Berlin/Wien **12** *The Letter*, 2008

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Editorial note when referring to C/O Berlin:

C/O Berlin is an exhibition space for photography and visual media. We are a non-profit foundation unconstrained by commercial concerns. As such, we would appreciate if the word “gallery” was avoided when reporting on C/O Berlin. Many thanks!

Contact Magnus Pölcher . press@co-berlin.org . +49.30.284 44 16 41

WALL TEXTS

Peter Miller . Dear Photography

11/09–03/12/2021

INTRODUCTION

As a child, Peter Miller wanted to become a magician. Today he is one of the important voices of media reflexivity in contemporary photography, revitalizing analog photographic practices that are dying out in the digital age. Since the early 2000s, he has been playing with—and against—the medium of photography in the darkroom to probe the secrets hidden in its technical history, which are often only brought to light by way of detour. He frequently uses a reduced technical setup, without cameras, lenses, or any chemical treatment of the paper.

Peter Miller is an artist specializing in photography and film. His interests lie not in the narrative modes of documentary photography or Hollywood film, but in the constituent, irreducible elements of the technical media: chemistry and light, lens and perspective. In his works, he probes our everyday life, seeking what is relevant to the media of photography and film and setting a stage for nature, for things, and above all for photography itself. He lets bioluminescent insects trace their paths across light-sensitive photographic paper. He creates photograms of each individual leaf of a living tree. He wraps long sheets of photographic paper around a chandelier and, by briefly flicking on the light, records its abstract self-portrait. In an affectionate homage to the father of film and chronophotography, Eadweard Muybridge (1830-1904), Miller brings brightly colored horses to gallop across a sheet of photographic paper. And elsewhere, he transforms everyday objects like T-shirts, tables, windows, and chairs into art. *Dear Photography* is an invitation to encounter photography in an altogether new way.

The exhibition extends the boundaries of photography to include projections, installations, and sculptural works that in some cases build on the conceptual art of the 1970s. Miller explores how the technical media shape the world around us in processes as diverse as silver gelatin, cyanotype, Polaroid, slide, and 16mm film. He develops and refines these processes further through practices that may at first seem experimental but which have been common throughout photographic history—he uses chicken noodle soup to develop color film and cuttlefish ink to give his papers their sepia tone.

With *Peter Miller . Dear Photography*, C/O Berlin presents the first comprehensive institutional exhibition of the artist's work worldwide. It features key works from the last 15 years as well as numerous new works that the artist created especially for the exhibition. These include two participatory and site-specific interventions that invite visitors to take photographs of themselves inside the exhibition space. Beginning with Peter Miller's photographic work, the exhibition *Dear Photography* also develops connections to the cinematic and performative aspects of his oeuvre.

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Peter Miller . Dear Photography
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Peter Miller (b. 1978) studied film at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and apprenticed to be a silversmith. Through a Fulbright and a DAAD fellowship, he worked with experimental filmmakers Peter Tscherkassky at the Friedl Kubelka School in Vienna and Matthias Müller at the Academy of Media Arts in Cologne. His works are in prestigious public collections such as the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) and Centre Pompidou, Paris. His work has been shown in international exhibitions such as the 57th Venice Biennale (2017), Biennale for Contemporary Photography in Mannheim, Ludwigshafen, Heidelberg (2017), Berlinale (2017), Viennale, Vienna (2013, 2016), and at international film festivals in Toronto (2012, 2016), London (2012), and Rotterdam (2016). Peter Miller has been a professor of photography and time-based media at Folkwang University of the Arts, Essen, since 2018.

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TRICK PHOTOGRAPHY

Photography is used in science and art, in manufacturing and news reporting, but it has also always been a form of entertainment. In the late nineteenth century, when roll film had caught on and cameras had become available to the general public, diverse manuals aimed at amateur photographers were published with titles such as *Photographischer Zeitvertreib* (Photographic Diversion, 1893), *Trick-Fotografie* (Trick Photography, 1906), and *Photographische Amusements* (Photographic Amusements, 1896). They contained instructions in optical and chemical tricks and gimmickry—Doppelgänger photos, selfilluminating photography, and magic pictures that only became visible after being immersed in special chemical solutions.

Today, Peter Miller uses many similar optical tricks and manipulations of common photographic processes. The works exhibited here fall into the classic photographic genres— still-life and object photography, architectural and landscape photography, animal studies and nudes. But is the sunset really the reflection of the setting sun in the sea (*Unfocused Candles on Shiny Tables*, 2016)? Is the close-up of a woman's pelvis a camera photo, or is it an optical illusion (*Chemigram V*, 2015)? And which of the two views of the Bridge of Sighs in Venice shows the correct perspective (*The Bridge's Size*, 2021)?

Miller's works challenge the viewer to look again. Often, the title hints at the underlying phenomenon or experimental chemistry used in the artist's laboratory. Could it be that some of the works shown were developed in chicken noodle soup (*Freemamol*, 2021) or tinted with cuttlefish ink (*Sepia*, 2017)?

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BERLIN ROOM

An oversized picture stand and slide frames, a table in the primary colors red, green, and blue; a couch in the shape of an infinity cove with the artist sleeping on it; T-shirts with photos from the 1920s printed on them; clothes racks made of photo tripods; fabric patterns that are suspiciously reminiscent of the pictures on the surrounding walls—in this site-specific installation at C/O Berlin, everything becomes photography.

The installation recreates the artist's studio, posing the question of where photography becomes life, and conversely, where life eludes photography. In this room, found objects with a photographic quality are exhibited together with objects that have been formed from photographic materials and equipment and transformed into things used in everyday life. It is up to the visitor to seek the connections between the industrially manufactured and the handmade, and to question the relationship between everyday life and photography. In our digitalized world, the photographic medium permeates all areas of life. We encounter it on labels, book covers, postcards, textiles, and even at the fair—where photographs painted onto boards serve as life-sized cutouts, allowing you to pose for a photo as the world's strongest woman or the world's smallest man.

In this room, a work from the retrospective exhibition of US photographer Lee Friedlander, which is currently taking place on the first floor, is reinterpreted. As a stand-in photo cut-out, it now serves as a backdrop for new photographs.

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WONDERS OF NATURE, WONDERS OF TECHNOLOGY

The works presented here are at the intersection of photography, performance, and film. They revolve around themes of color and chemistry as well as light and exposure. In one, the artist has folded sheets of light-sensitive photographic paper into envelopes that he sent to the Amerika Haus in Berlin. As artifacts, they record the fleeting traces of light encountered on their journey through the postal system (*Envelope*, 2020). In another, he has probed the tipping point at which light focused through the camera lens no longer produces an image but instead destroys it (*Sun Burns Fade*, 2015). And in yet another work, he has downloaded and edited 10,000 amateur photographs of the setting sun from the Internet and arranged the individual still images so that they appear set in motion as a collective sunset (*Set*, 2018).

From the beginning, photography has occupied a peculiar position between fact and artifact, art and nature, wonder and technology. Like alchemy, the ancient and medieval study of substances and their reactions, it is both rule-bound process and mystery in equal measure. In many of his works, Peter Miller explores this double logic of the analog photographic process by allowing his works to demonstrate how they came into being, and to show this process in the image itself. In many cases, the artist's interventions are minimal. Through small adjustments to the standard photographic process, he sets a stage for photography and allows photographs to exhibit the method of their production— the technique and the wonder of the photographic process.

In this room, visitors can pose for pictures in an installation with a photo booth. But unlike standard photo booths, which had become popular by the late nineteenth century, this device does not take people's pictures *inside* the booth. Miller manipulated the apparatus, enlarging the field of view and orienting it in such a way that full-body photos can be taken for the first time outside the booth. Visitors are invited to have their photos taken with the photo booth in the background.

In this room, a work from the retrospective exhibition of US photographer Lee Friedlander, which is currently taking place on the first floor, is reinterpreted. As a stand-in photo cut-out, it now serves as a backdrop for new photographs.

EVENTS

Peter Miller . Dear Photography
11/09–03/12/2021

OCTOBER

Fri. 08/10/2021 . 19:00–20:00

Artist Tour

With Peter Miller . Artist of the exhibition
Dr. Kathrin Schöneegg . Curator . C/O Berlin Foundation
Ticket 15/11 euros (incl. exhibition)

Sat. 09/10/2021 . 11:00–18:00

Digital + Analog = Dialog

Photo workshop in two parts
With Peter Miller . Artist of the exhibition
Fee 240 Euro

NOVEMBER

Thu. 18/11/2021 . 19:00–20:00

Artist Tour

Mit Peter Miller . Artist of the exhibition
Dr. Kathrin Schöneegg . Curator . C/O Berlin Foundation
Ticket 15/11 euros (incl. exhibition)

Fri. 19/11/2021 . 00:00–02:00

Videoart at Midnight

At BABYLON Kino Berlin
With Peter Miller . Artist of the exhibition
Dr. Kathrin Schöneegg . Curator . C/O Berlin Foundation
Free admission

Sun. 21/11/2021 . 11:00–18:00

Digital + Analog = Dialog

Photo workshop in two parts
With Peter Miller . Artist of the exhibition
Fee 240 euros

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