26/08/2023-28/01/2024

Werner Bischof Unseen Colour

26/08/2023-28/01/2024

Rosellina – Living for Photography





Fotostiftung Schweiz



In parallel, Fotostiftung Schweiz and the Rosellina Archive present the exhibition Rosellina - Living for Photography. As a founding member of Fotostiftung Schweiz, Rosellina Burri-Bischof (1925-1986) played a crucial role in the history of photography in Switzerland.

in Europe.

The Face of War house Conzett & Huber, which wanted the publication of the reconstruction sites.

Werner Bischof **Unseen Colour**

It was in this context that he took one of his most fa- the American way of life, which he perceived as superturbingly realistic. Those in charge of the publishing editors justified the publication with, among other local cultural scene, he gained deeper insight into this came the public face of an aid campaign launched by and people in Central America and captured it in lively Du under the title Help the Children of Europe!

never released, the May 1946 and June 1949 issues while Rosellina returned to Zurich to give birth to their of Du provided a major overview of Bischof's Europ-second son. Bischof was deeply impressed by Incan ean photo-reportage.

Asia - Longing and Reality

more effectively than with the Devin. The Rolleiflex not also played a major role. only allowed him to take spontaneous snapshots, but sitions. In 1946, Kodak introduced Ektachrome, the south fell into a ravine. first colour film for medium-format cameras. Bischof was already working with it in the following year. The results took him a step closer to 'poetic' colour photography, which artists and photographers like Luigi Ghirri, Ernst Haas and Saul Leiter would bring to fruition later. Stylistically, Bischof's Rolleiflex colour pictures from Poland, Hungary and Finland, still closely linked to his large-scale European project, were already very different to the Devin photographs. Above all though, it was his trips to Asia that brought him further in aesthetic terms.

In 1951, Werner Bischof, by then a member of Magnum Photos, travelled to India for the American magazine Life, to report on a disastrous famine in the province of Bihar. With his impressive, emotionally charged black-and-white photographs, he caused an international sensation and the corresponding reportage is among his best-known photojournalistic work. In parallel though, he also took colour photographs in India, which were more about mood than action. In Indochina, where Bischof observed the querrilla war between French forces and the Viet Minh in the jungle, he managed, at least sometimes, to put press

mous photographs: a portrait of a Dutch boy, whose ficial, egoistic and automated. And yet he was fascinatface was badly disfigured by an explosion of a so-ed by it, as shown by the pictures he took in 1953. He called 'booby trap'. Although Bischof was reluctant also acknowledged the country's outstanding achieveto make the suffering Jo Corbey pose in front of the ments in research and art preservation. To translate Devin, his scruples were overcome by the prospect the confusing coexistence of opposites and the rapof having this portrait on the cover of Du - and of thus idly changing impressions into meaningful images, sending a chilling and memorable anti-war image into the handy Leica camera served him best. These im-Switzerland's fine parlours. The picture was indeed ages played with light and form, captured details of the published on the cover in May 1946 and caused a modern attitude to life like a mirror, or sought new ways shock, as the colour photograph came across as dis- of dealing with colour in formal abstract experiments.

In 1954, Bischof left New York to travel to Mexico house had intervened, but eventually agreed to it. The with his wife Rosellina. Thanks to his contacts in the things, a fundraising campaign: Bischof's picture be- country. Bischof appreciated the warmth of the places photographs with strong colour contrasts. Full of hope, Although the planned *European Photo Book* was Werner Bischof eventually travelled on to Peru alone, culture. In his diaries and letters, he described the interplay of colour and light on the ancient irregular walls, and the mysterious life that must have been led In the photographs that Werner Bischof took with a among the imposing structures. Their window-like Rolleiflex camera between the late 1940s and early openings, always offering new perspectives, inspired 1950s, he was able to realise his artistic ideas even him to produce photographic studies, in which colour

Tragically, Bischof's journey through life came to especially when working outdoors, also enabled bet- a sudden end on the 16th of May 1954, when the car ter control of the framing and more deliberate compo- in which he was crossing the Andes to head further

> A project by MASI Lugano and Werner Bischof Estate, in collaboration with Fotostiftung Schweiz. With the support of: Else v. Sick Stiftung, Vontobel-Stiftung and Dr. Werner Greminger Stiftung.

Publication Werner Bischof - Unseen Colour Scheidegger & Spiess, CHF 49, fotostiftung.ch/shop

Werner Bischof, Generation X: Michiko Jinuma (front), Tokyo,1951. Ruins as playground (left), Berlin, 1946. Orchid (Study) (Inside), Zurich, 1943. © Werner Bischof Estate / Magnum Photos.

Werner Bischof (1916–1954) is one of the most significant Swiss photographers of the 20th century. With his dedicated photojournalism and iconic images in striking black-and-white aesthetics, he gained international recognition at an early stage.

Although certain exhibitions and publications have addressed the fact that Bischof also took colour pictures throughout his career, this part of his oeuvre has largely remained unexplored. The exhibition Werner Bischof - Unseen Colour aims to rectify that. It is based on newly discovered archive holdings, which Marco Bischof, son of the photographer, and Tania Kuhn, Werner Bischof Estate, have now made accessible for the first time: several hundred glass negatives from 1939 onwards, which Werner Bischof realised using a Devin Tri-Color camera. The exhibition is a journey through Bischof's world of colours, and showcases a largely unknown area of this famous Swiss photographer's work.

Werner Bischof enrolled at the Zurich School of Applied Arts in 1932 to become a painter. Contrary to his intentions though, he was put in the photography class that had recently been set up by Hans Finsler, a pioneer of the 'new objectivity' movement. Nevertheless, he found the training there interesting. The design principles of the Bauhaus, the search for pure form, and the constant experimentation with light all left a mark on the young photographer, who in 1936 became the first student to graduate from Hans Finsler's master class. Alfred Willimann, who taught graphic design and practical applications of photography at the school. was also a major influence on the early works that Bischof produced in his first studio, in Zurich, from 1936 onwards. These included assignments for the advertising agency Amstutz & Herdeg and for the Swiss National Exhibition of 1939. Although he left for Paris that year to devote himself to painting after all, the outbreak of war thwarted his plans and led him back to ing on the process of reconstruction.

Vernissage: Friday, 25th of August 2023, 6 pm Welcoming address: Peter Pfrunder, Director of Fotostiftung Schweiz.

Introduction to the exhibitions: Marco Bischof, Tania Kuhn, Alessa Widmer

Sunday, 27th of August 2023, 11:30 am 'Always a painter at heart' – Werner Bischof and colour Guided tour with Marco Bischof and Peter Pfrunder (in German)

Sunday, 8th of October 2023, 11:30 am The challenge of colour – a new perspective on Bischof's work? Reading and talk with Dieter Bachmann, journalist and writer. Moderation: Peter Pfrunder (in German)

Switzerland, where he was called up for military service. to be a means of demonstrating the outstanding gual-reporting aside and capture the atmosphere of places During these years. Werner Bischof frequently ity of its reproduction of colour images using the inta- in subjective colour images used the Devin Tri-Color camera. This camera allowed glio printing process. While colour printing was initially that required a tripod Bischof managed to depict the theme 'the Swiss worker' Bischof was then able longer journalistic, but profound. As he had done in

is impressive. His motivation to experiment increased take remedial action by recording what people do to published until after his death in 1954. even more when he joined the artists' group allianz in each other. Conzett & Huber supported him in this 1942; this association of modern Swiss artists, found- endeavour: When Werner Bischof was commissioned The New World-from New York to Peru

However, with regard to the development of his him to expose three light-sensitive glass plates simul- limited to advertisements and front pages, many of own style of colour photography, his encounter with taneously. By using colour filters, three different colour which constituted reproductions of artworks photo- Japan was the most significant. Here, Werner Bischof separations were captured (red, green and blue), which, graphed by Bischof, the first colour photographs in the discovered a spiritual beauty with which he immediwhen printed in layers on paper, would result in a full- editorial section appeared in 1942 and were obviously ately fell in love. He was overwhelmed by the things colour image. Despite being a cumbersome camera taken in a studio. In the May 1943 issue, dedicated to he saw, and he spoke of a way of seeing that was no completely different worlds: from almost surreal ex- to publish three compelling portraits of workers, taken India, he explored the interplay between modern life periments in the studio to fashion assignments, from at the Escher Wyss machinery factory in Zurich. and ancient traditions. In reductive meditative colour capturing moody scenes and landscapes to poignant As soon as the borders reopened after the end photographs, he succeeded in reproducing the inner portraits, from documenting war-torn cities to report- of the Second World War, Werner Bischof set off by calm that he longed for so much - with growing conbicycle for southern Germany. The impressions made tempt for editorial offices that expected reports on In his enthusiastic handling of light and colour, on him by the destruction there radically changed his conflicts and human misery. His stay in Japan lasted Bischof went far beyond the teachings of Finsler or worldview: He now saw the studio as an ivory tower, about a year; what it amounted to, he eventually conthe rules of Moholy-Nagy. The technical and formal and his previous work as useless and hypocritical. He veyed in a photo book. He was involved in the producquality of his geometric and biomorphic compositions resolved to look facts in the face from then on and to tion of the book right through to the end, but it was not

ed in 1937 by Richard Paul Lohse and Leo Leuppi, was by the aid organisation Schweizer Spende to docu- After returning from Asia, Werner Bischof could not inspired by Max Bill, among others, and the *allianz* ment the consequences of the war, as well as the bear staying in Switzerland for long. He wanted to set members paid particular attention to colour. By the reconstruction work in Europe, Arnold Kübler and the off again, to travel, to get away from not only prosperity, end of the war, Werner Bischof had gathered a lot publishing house offered him the opportunity to pub- but also the memories of war and poverty. He felt a of technical and creative experience and was well lish his photo-reportage in Du, and to tackle a large-need to get back to nature and chose South America equipped to use the Devin on his travels for reportage scale project under the working title European Photo as his destination. To finance the trip, he embarked for Book, in which colour photographs in particular were to New York and accepted various assignments, such as play a key role. Between 1945 and 1948, Bischof went photo-reportage on the construction of motorways for on several extensive trips to Germany, the Netherlands, the magazine The Lamp, published by the Standard From 1942 to 1946, Werner Bischof was a 'full-time Belgium, Luxembourg, France, Poland, Czechoslova- Oil Company. This assignment allowed him to observe photographic employee' of the magazine Du under kia, Hungary, Romania, Italy, Greece, Finland and Nor- American cities and their skyscrapers from a helicopeditor-in-chief Arnold Kübler. This monthly magazine, way, repeatedly bringing home stirring reports on peo- ter. Alongside the spectacular view from above, the launched in 1941, was the new flagship of publishing ple and their fates, along with his informative pictures cold and impersonal side of New York was what impressed him most. Bischof could not empathise with



Rosellina – Living for Photography

Fotostiftung Schweiz and the Rosellina Archive are jointly presenting the fascinating life's work of Rosellina Burri-Bischof (1925–1986) alongside the exhibition Werner Bischof – Unseen Colour. "There is perhaps no name that remains so endearingly and imaginatively associated with photography in our country as Rosellina Burri-Bischof's," wrote Hugo Loetscher in her obituary in 1986.

Rosa Helene Mandel grew up in Zurich as the daughter of politically active Hungarian-Czech emigrant parents. After the end of the war, she travelled to Rimini to assist in post-war reconstruction efforts in Europe. In 1946, 'Rösli' – now known as Rosellina in Italy – and Werner Bischof met in Milan while passing through. They shared a desire to engage in humanitarian causes, as well as a sensitivity towards art and photography. After they married in 1949, Rosellina took on the task of promoting her husband's photographic work.

When Werner tragically died in an accident during reportage in 1954, Rosellina preserved his legacy and continued to promote Bischof's work by means of exhibitions and publications. She served as the director of Magnum Photos in Zurich and co-founded the International *Fund for Concerned Photography* in New York. In 1963, she married Magnum photographer René Burri and continued her dedication to photography. In 1971, she became one of the founding members of the Foundation for Photography (now Fotostiftung Schweiz). As part of an extensive professional network, she made significant contributions to the appreciation of photography at both national and international level.

Parental home and youth

Rosa's parents met in 1915 as immigrants in Zurich Her mother, Anna Mandel-Prazak (1895-1984) came from a Czech family that had emigrated to southern Germany. Anna's father worked as a miner and was subjected to unbearable working conditions. He suffered from so-called 'black lung'. These experiences shaped Anna and heightened her political awareness. which she later incorporated into the upbringing of her daughter and grandchildren

Rösli's father Moses Mandel (1883–1938) from Hungary also settled in Switzerland in 1911. The trained carpenter was an active socialist, committed to workers' rights. When Rösli was twelve years old, he fell seriously ill and died on the 12th of May 1938. The drawing artist Walter Roshardt, with whom Moses had been very close friends, became a father figure for Rösli in the following years.

Also in 1938, Rösli joined the socialist children's and youth group Rote Falken ('red falcons'). With the falcons, she went on hikes, attended summer camps visited cooperatives and organised cultural activities. Rösli described the Rote Falken youth centre 'Mösli' in the Albis hills as the "most beautiful place". In many photos, she appears playing the flute

After graduating from the girls' school Hohe Prome- worldwide reportage for the coming years. The pair always a major concern for her. She devoted herself nade in Zurich as a qualified kindergarten teacher, married in December 1949 and their first son, Marco, to it out of passion – but also for financial reasons, to ner Bischof Estate/Magnum Photos (right). Werner and Rosellina decided to work at Centro Educativo Italo- was born in the following year. Svizzero (CEIS) in Rimini. Beginning in October 1946, Between 1950 and 1954, Rosellina and Werner presence of her mother Anna Mandel, who played an she spent three years running a day-care centre there travelled to produce photo-reportage in Europe (three important role in the family's everyday life, that Roseland working as a kindergarten teacher, with orphans months), Asia (seven months) and North America (four lina was able to be so active professionally and to do who had been injured in the war; but she also taught months). Rosellina wrote the captions and texts, and her pioneering work. the methods of Swiss pedagogy to interested Italian took care of organisational work and translations. She seminary students. At CEIS, which was set up by Swiss would combine the stories with the films while the The Concerned Photographer hilfswerk, war-relief charity Schweizer Spende and the them off to Magnum in Paris or New York. The couple tographer in the small Magnum family to die on the Rimini authorities, Rosellina, as she was called from considered it very important to use images as a means job. The desire to establish a foundation thus became then on, found fulfilment in a variety of tasks as an of conveying foreign cultures and expressing their all the more pressing, as there were no state or instieducator and as an organiser of cultural activities. personal attitudes.

to Rimini, Rösli met Werner Bischof during a stopover ly spent around two years in Asia, sometimes togeth- was not until 10 years later that Rosellina and Cornell in Milan. Werner was on his way to Greece on behalf er with Rosellina. His report on the famine in Bihar Capa, together with David Seymour's sister Eileen of Schweizer Spende. A lively exchange of letters sub- made him internationally famous. On one hand, it con- Shneiderman, founded the Capa-Seymour-Bischof sequently began: Rosellina sensitised Werner to the firmed his belief that he could make a difference by Photographic Memorial Fund in New York, which was subject of children. Werner sent her travel reports and means of photography and photojournalism. On the soon renamed the International Fund for Concerned pictures, which she used as teaching material. They other hand though, he suffered from being on the road Photography. The term 'concerned photographer' saw the reconstruction of destroyed Europe as a com- as a 'roving reporter'. Rosellina supported him in his describes photographers who see their work as a mon goal and hope.

Travels from 1949 to 1954

In 1949, Rosellina returned to Zurich. In that year, Wer- Photographen (College of Swiss Photographers) ex- tography' is a visual outcry against wars, violence, ner became a member of the photographers' cooper- hibition in Zurich. From December 1951 to June 1952, oppression and injustice.

of 1952.

The book was published in June 1954.

Estate and exhibitions

On the 7th of July 1954, just a few months after Wer- Roman Vishniac. ner's death, Inge Bondi, an employee at the Magnum office in New York, wrote to Rosellina: "I can only write Swiss Foundation for Photography to you as I would write to Werner, and I am sorry if it (Fotostiftung Schweiz) estates.

exhibitions and publications.

Magnum Photos

young photographers."

from 1956 to 1968, ensuring that the work of Mag- officially founded. num members was published on a regular basis in

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Sunday, 17th of September 2023, 1:30 pm

Rosellina - Living for Photography. Guided tour with Marco Bischof and Teresa Gruber, curator at Fotostiftung Schweiz (in German)

Sunday, 19th of November 2023, 1:30 pm Rosellina – pioneer of the Swiss photography scene Guided tour with Tania Kuhn and Alessa Widmer (in German)

Sunday, 3rd of December 2023, 11:30 am

Who was Rosellina? Panel discussion with Guido Magnaguagno, art historian, Jürg Gasser, photographer and David Streiff, art historian. Moderator: Alessa Widmer (in German)

ative Magnum Photos, which had been founded in venues; in some cases, she was involved in the imple- With the support of: Else v. Sick Stiftung, Vontobel-Stif-Paris in 1947. Together with their Magnum colleagues mentation herself. and befriended editors, Werner and Rosellina planned The promotion of photography in Switzerland was and Dr. Werner Greminger Stiftung.

workers' relief organisation Schweizerisches Arbeiter- latter were still mostly undeveloped, before sending In 1956, David 'Chim' Seymour became the third pho-

sustain her family. It was thanks to the supporting Rosellina Bischof, New York, 1953 © Peter Bally (back).

tutional establishments for preserving or conveying On the 20th of October 1946, while still on her way In 1951, Werner travelled to India. He subsequent- the works of deceased photographers. However, it struggle against superficiality. Together with Ernst humanitarian commitment. Their photography strives Scheidegger, she supervised Werner Bischof's con- to express how they themselves are affected and to tribution to the major Kollegium Schweizerischer go bevond mere reporting. In a way, 'concerned pho-

Rosellina worked with Werner in Japan and Hong The Concerned Photographer was also the title of the Kong. The two of them were back in Zurich by the end exhibition with which the new foundation introduced itself in 1967 at the Riverside Museum in New York. In 1953, Rosellina and Werner set off for America Alongside pictures by Bischof, Capa and Seymour, in search of "new ways to express oneself photograph- works by Leonard Freed, André Kertész and Dan ically". Numerous standalone works were produced. Weiner were also shown. Up until 1971, the exhibition The frequent correspondence between Rosellina and toured America, Japan, Europe and Israel. In 1972, it her mother Anna contains many thoughts about their was continued in the extensive follow-up project The plans and outlook. In order to have more control over Concerned Photographer 2. While Cornell Capa directhis work, Werner wanted to turn to filmmaking. At the ed the foundation in New York, giving rise to the reend of March, Rosellina flew back to Switzerland, while nowned International Center of Photography (ICP) in Werner travelled on to Peru. On the 16th of May 1954, 1974, Rosellina worked on spreading the ideas behind he had a fatal accident in the Andes. Their second son, the International Fund for Concerned Photography Daniel, was born two weeks later. Rosellina put togeth- worldwide. After bringing the exhibition The Concerned er an exhibition with the publisher Robert Delpire and *Photographer* to Zurich in 1970, she also brought *The* realised the Japan maquette that Werner had made. Concerned Photographer 2 to Switzerland in 1974, thus drawing attention to the committed work of Marc Riboud, Bruce Davidson, Hiroshi Hamaya, Ernst Haas, W. Eugene Smith, Gordon Parks, Donald McCullin and

hurts you." She referred to the challenges that Rosel- The exhibition The Concerned Photographer was lina and Magnum Photos would have to face after Wer-shown at Centre Le Corbusier in Zurich from the 30th ner's untimely passing: What was to happen to his of October to the 30th of November 1970 and simulphotographic oeuvre? Cornell Capa, brother of Mag- taneously prepared the ground for the founding of a num co-founder Robert Capa, who had died a few Swiss version of the International Fund for Concerned days after Werner Bischof on assignment in Indochina, Photography. Since the mid-1960s, Rosellina (who was gave Rosellina a lot of support. Their friendship, as by now married to René Burri, another prominent Mag-'companions in fate', proved very instrumental in estab- num member) had been discussing a similar institution lishing new structures for safeguarding photographic for Switzerland with Walter Binder, who taught the photography class at the Zurich School of Applied Arts. In the following years, Rosellina took charge of the Around 1970, the two of them succeeded in forming an further dissemination of Werner Bischof's work. From initiative group, made up of prominent representatives 1954 onwards, she realised numerous international of the photography scene who wanted to launch a 'Stiftung für die Photographie' (foundation for photography).

Before that step could be taken. The Concerned *Photographer* helped to raise the general public's In 1957, Cornell Capa, Henri Cartier-Bresson and Ernst awareness of photography's importance. A fringe pro-Haas proposed a close collaboration with Rosellina: gramme included discussions, project presentations "We would like Rosellina to continue representing Mag- and film screenings, featuring Henri Cartier-Bresson, num in Switzerland. We want her to be able to expand René Burri, Bruno Barbey, Hans Finsler, Monique her activities both within and outside Magnum. We Jacot, Lucia Moholy-Nagy, Marc Riboud and others. would like her to have the full freedom to develop as Over 10,000 visitors were counted in just four weeks a fully-fledged photo agent, editor and promoter of and the media response was huge. A report from Swiss television, for example, bore witness to this. Finally, on Rosellina directed Magnum Photos Switzerland the 4th of May 1971, Stiftung für die Photographie was

Rosellina Burri-Bischof and Walter Binder jointly Swiss magazines, such as Sie und Er, Die Woche and managed the affairs of the new foundation on a vol-Du. Thanks to be extensive network of contacts she untary basis, and were the main people responsible also acted as an intermediary when it came to present- for the implementation of its first major exhibition ing exhibitions on Magnum photographers at Zurich project: *Photographie in der Schweiz – 1840 bis heute* (Photography in Switzerland - 1840 to the Present). Shown in 1974 at Kunsthaus Zürich, it offered a historical and contemporary overview. As the first comprehensive photography exhibition in a Swiss art museum. it was a milestone in institutional engagement with photography in Switzerland. It was seen by 70,000 people in 10 weeks and contributed significantly to public acknowledgement of the medium. Due in no small part to this success, Kunsthaus Zürich provided the foundation with office and archive space from 1976 onwards, and the foundation was also able to run its own photo gallery in the museum for the next six years. Walter Binder took care of the collection and Rosellina was responsible for the programme: Thanks to her contacts, not only Swiss but also international photographers were presented. Her last major exhibition project was a comprehensive retrospective at Kunsthaus Zürich, accompanied by a monograph on Werner Bischof, but she was prevented from completing it by cancer, to which she succumbed on the 30th of January 1986. After her death, Marco Bischof, Guido Magnaguagno, Harald Szeemann, Walter Binder and Letizia Enderli brought the project over the finishing line. The exhibition then spent 13 years travelling around the world with Pro Helvetia.

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