

MECHANISMS OF DIGITAL WORSHIP CHRIS DRANGE ON INSTAGRAM'S CULT OF PERSONALITY

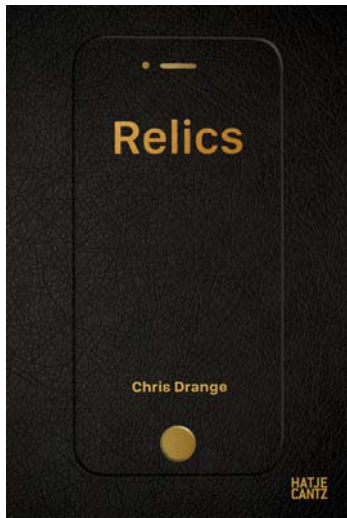
More than 700 million people around the world use Instagram. The most successful among them are American pop icons and “It” girls like Miley Cyrus, Kim Kardashian, and Gigi Hadid. In *Relics* the young artist Chris Drange devotes himself to the relationships between these new superstars and their followers.

Berlin, July 18, 2017 — The photo-sharing platform Instagram is the medium for the perfect outfit, the perfect interior décor, the perfect moment. The most popular format is the so-called selfie—a self-portrait that presents perfection through filters. These selfies are met with enormous admiration, envy, or rejection and generally achieve a high quota of interaction. Chris Drange's book *Relics* observes this special relationship between Instagram icons and their followers. He contrasts selfies by some of the most successful Instagrammers, such as Selena Gomez or Ariana Grande, with selected commentary from her followers, drawing a precise picture of the dynamics between the stars and their fans.

Through the curated Instagram accounts of stars and the reactions of their followers Drange succeeds in telling absurd stories. He combines photos with fan commentary. For instance, one of the pop icon Miley Cyrus's followers asks her which beauty projects she uses, while others swear their endless love, and still others share the most intimate details of their private lives in the comments section below the pictures.

According to Drange the title *Relics* refers to two phenomena: “First, to a new form of worship, where selfies become the digital objects of adoration and smartphones become “shrine devices.” And second, to an image of women that exists between the poles of antiquated male fantasies and modern female self-determination.” The title, says Drange, refers to the religious adoration of relics that can be transferred to the processes of following, liking, and commenting on social media. “Previously, healing was promised to those who worshipped the relics. Today, we no longer have any problems healing, but more a problem of prestige or validity. The same patterns of worship are always observed on Instagram: men want to have the famous women like Kim Kardashian or Kylie Jenner in some kind of way, while the female followers want to be these women. Imitation plays a very big role there.”

In seven chapters and with fifty re-photographs set against black double page backgrounds, the book, which resembles a smartphone, visualizes a body image that cuts two ways inside the field of tension that lies between being liberated from the dominant ideals of beauty and the digital cult of the body. In the prominent, full-page presentations of the pictures on black matte paper the artist contrasts the cell phone display with the museum presentation of a painting. Drange, a graduate of the Hochschule für bildende Kunst in Hamburg, lives in Berlin.



**CHRIS DRANGE
RELICS**

English, German
2017. 112 pp., 93 ills.
hardcover
11.30 x 16.60 cm
ISBN 978-3-7757-4362-4

15,00 EUR

ABOUT HATJE CANTZ

Hatje Cantz is a groundbreaking international publishing company specializing in art, architecture, and photography. Since 1945 Hatje Cantz has been using its profound expertise and enthusiasm for craftsmanship to produce and publish books of the highest quality. We currently release around two hundred new titles annually.

Especially in the digital age, Hatje Cantz regards itself an element linking museums, artists, galleries, collectors, and art lovers. Conveying knowledge - in terms of both content and visuals - as well as an enthusiasm for art is always at the heart of our engagement.

In keeping with our ambition to make it possible to experience art beyond the medium of the book, Hatje Cantz has launched the EDITION GERD HATJE as we continue to expand our portfolio of strictly limited, signed editions featuring works on paper, photographic works of art, and art objects.

www.hatjecantz.de
www.editiongerdhatje.com

PRESS CONTACT

Sara Buschmann
Head of Press Department
s.buschmann@hatjecantz.de
Tel. +49 30 3464678-08

Jennifer Berndt
PR Manager
presse@hatjecantz.de
Tel. +49 30 3464678-23

**HATJE
CANTZ**