

NORBERT BISKY FAMILY RESEMBLANCES

Norbert Bisky is one of the most famous German painters in the world today. In his first solo show in Switzerland, at the Museum Langmatt, and in the companion catalogue *Fernwärme* (teleheating) he explores a spectrum of themes, which, although it threads throughout his work, has not been worked out previously to such a comparable extent: “the family.”

Berlin, August 31, 2018 – Norbert Bisky (*1970) was a graduate student of Georg Baselitz’s, and ever since his year studying abroad in Madrid, where he spent a lot of time at the Prado, he has counted the great Spanish masters Francisco de Goya, Francisco de Zurbarán, and Jusepe de Ribera among his role models. Bisky’s large paintings are extraordinarily bright images of mostly young men posing expressively and heroically outdoors in nature. However, the protagonists’ assumed self-confidence quickly dissolves into thin air. Blazing light eats holes into their bodies, and their faces are so mask-like that it is difficult to tell these superficial heroes apart.

Fernwärme is a monograph that offers insight into Bisky’s work on the complex of themes surrounding the concept of “the family,” stemming from the years 2008 to 2018. It features numerous new works of art, produced especially for the exhibition in Switzerland. They are based on photographs of the Brown Family, founders of the BBC and former owners of the Villa Langmatt, which the museum occupies today. Most of these photos have only recently been dealt with by scholars.

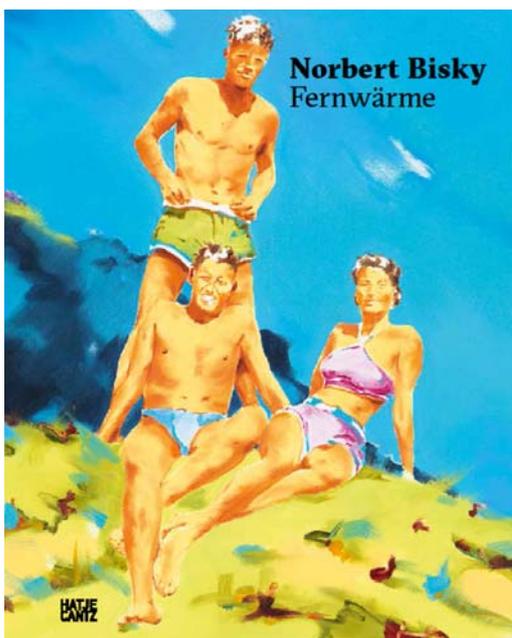
The artist recognized his own story in the photographs, which date from the first half of the twentieth century, but he also sees their historical significance: “What appears to be an ordinary family photo collection is in fact a mass of unique historic documents, traces left by restless decades played out between home and the outside world in a cruel century.”

Bisky also establishes “the family” as the traditional notion of a community related by blood. It is based upon belonging to a group, at least temporarily. Whether this membership is voluntary or not remains an open question. Thus, the people in many of his oil paintings act as if they are part of a community brought together randomly by fate. This process of artistic appropriation, in which Bisky, despite all of his figuration, provides no further narrative clues, makes up the allure of the works. According to the artist:

“After all, black-and-white photographs have that remote, cool distance. I wanted to oppose that with color as resuscitation, as vital signs. In this area, I feel more affinity with the Expressionists than with, for instance, Edward Hopper.”

This publication, edited by Markus Stegmann, is supplemented by thematic essays by Nicole Althaus, Barbara Bleisch, Arno Geiger, Silke Scheuermann, Markus Stegmann, and Susanne Völker, as well as an interview with Norbert Bisky.

Exhibition: September 2 – December 9, 2018, Museum Langmatt, Baden



**NORBERT BISKY
FERNWÄRME**

Ed. Markus Stegmann, texts by Nicole Althaus, Barbara Bleisch, Arno Geiger, Silke Scheuermann, Markus Stegmann, Susanne Völker, contributions by Norbert Bisky, graphic design by Markus Bucher

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PRESS CONTACT

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

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