

JOCHEN RAIß**WHO WANTS TO BE A POLAR BEAR? NEW FROM THE COLLECTOR OF
WOMEN IN TREES**

The collector Jochen Raiß, whose photographs from *Women in Trees* and *More Women in Trees* have already elicited enthusiasm from photography fans, now opens up his treasure chest for a new, mysterious series: pictures of people posing as polar bears. What at first sounds like a dangerous hobby turns out to have been a strange tradition in twentieth-century photography.

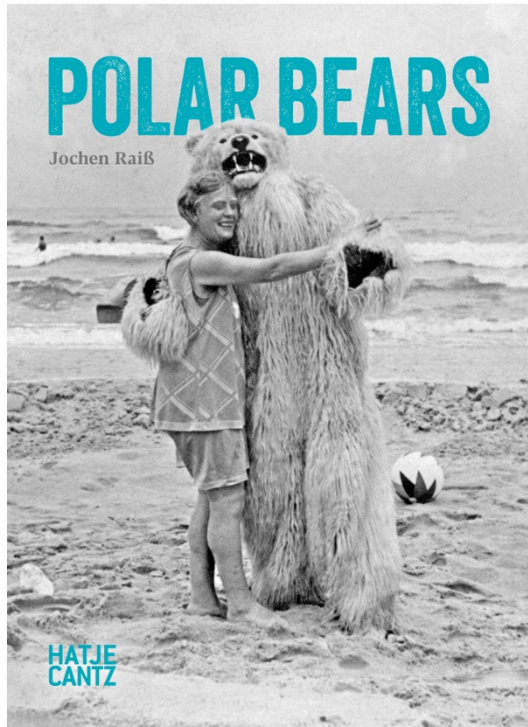
Berlin, September 19, 2019 – Collecting amateur photographs requires a certain kind of stubbornness and constant searching. Jochen Raiß (*1969) has been on this hunt for more than twenty-five years, first as a personal hobby, and then, later, by very purposefully combing through flea markets, on the lookout for historical photos.

After the success of *Women in Trees* and its sequel, Raiß's new volume *Polar Bears* compiles examples of a special trend in photography in the first half of the twentieth century. People of various ages had themselves photographed in polar bear costumes—at the beach, in the pub, in the snow, at fairs, with the whole family, or with friends, with a partner, or alone. They are snapshots of past (and, apparently, because they landed in flea markets) also forgotten days.

Produced between the 1920s and the 1960s, before everyone could afford a camera, the photographs provide a brief glimpse of the lives of those portrayed. There is a lot of room for stories. "I love photos of people in unusual situations. Pictures that aren't perfect, pictures I know nothing about. Then stories immediately start to develop in my mind," says Raiß about the appeal of his collection.

How the trend got started remains unclear. Raiß imagines that there must have been an inventive photographer behind the business idea of putting his assistant in a costume and taking souvenir photos at popular tourist destinations. The costume is the one constant, regardless of whether the picture was taken in midsummer at the Baltic seashore with tourists in bathing suits, or during the dead of winter in Garmisch, with skiers in their outfits. Raiß dedicates his new book to the people who either sweated or froze in a polar bear costume for the sake of their art.

On **October 8, 2019 at 7:30 p.m.** Jochen Raiß will present the book at the Sautter & Lackmann bookstore in Hamburg, in conversation with Christian Gargerle, head of photo editing for GEO EPOCHE.



POLAR BEARS

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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 HATJE CANTZ as we continue to expand our portfolio of strictly limited, signed editions featuring works on paper, photographic works of art, and art objects.

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PRESS CONTACT

Jennifer Berndt
Press Director
(on parental leave)

Max Schadow
Junior PR Manager
presse@hatjecantz.de
Tel. +49 30 3464678-23

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