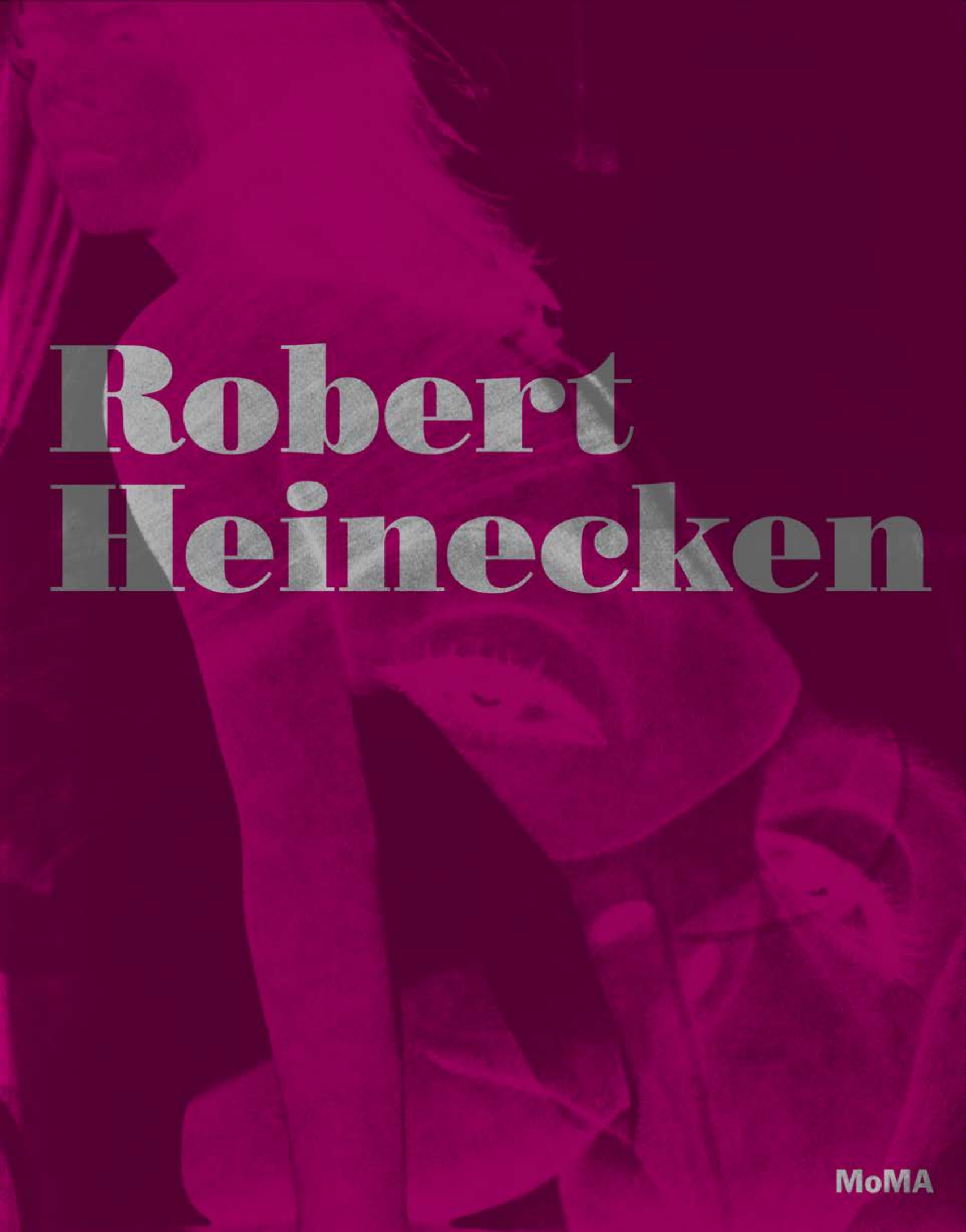

Robert Heinecken

MoMA

Robert Heinecken

Object Matter

Eva Respini
The Museum of Modern Art, New York

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Foreword

The Museum of Modern Art is proud to present *Robert Heinecken: Object Matter*, the first major consideration of Heinecken's art since his death in 2006. This exhibition surveys four decades of the artist's remarkable and unique practice, from the early 1960s through the late 1990s. A West Coast pioneer in experimental photography, Heinecken described himself as a *paraphotographer*, because his work stood "beside" or "beyond" traditional ideas associated with photography. Although he was rarely behind the lens of a camera, Heinecken's photo-based works question the nature of photography and radically redefine the perception of it as an artistic medium.

The Museum recognized Heinecken as an innovative experimenter early on—acquiring its first work by him in 1968—and continued to collect his work throughout his career. Heinecken's work was included in several landmark photography exhibitions at the Museum in the 1970s and 1980s, including *Photography into Sculpture* (1970), *Mirrors and Windows: American Photography since 1960* (1978), and *California Photography: Remaking Make-Believe* (1989). MoMA remains keenly attuned to the developments of art in our time, and in today's world of image oversaturation, photography plays a critical role in the visual culture. In the context of the twenty-first century, Heinecken is as contemporary as ever. His prescient explorations of the definition of photography, the possibilities of appropriation, and the limitations of artistic categories are as relevant today as they were fifty years ago. *Robert Heinecken: Object Matter* makes a major contribution to the reevaluation of significant artists of the 1960s and 1970s in the discourse of art today.

After its presentation in New York, this exhibition will be shown at the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles. This cross-country tour is possible only because the exhibition's lenders (listed on the page opposite) have been willing to part with important works, and we owe an enormous debt of gratitude to them.

I would like to salute Eva Respini, Curator, Department of Photography, for skillfully and thoughtfully organizing this exhibition and preparing this catalogue, assisted by the fine staff throughout the Museum. I am grateful to The Robert Heinecken Trust and Heinecken's family for their kind cooperation and support of this project. For their most generous support of the exhibition and publication, we extend our warmest thanks to our funders: The William Randolph Hearst Endowment Fund, The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation, The Junior Associates of The Museum of Modern Art, and the MoMA Annual Exhibition Fund.

Glenn D. Lowry
Director, The Museum of Modern Art

Not a Picture of, but an Object about Something

Eva Respini

Robert Heinecken (1931–2006) is a difficult artist to categorize, and a man who thrived on contradiction, in both his work and his life. He was a photographer who rarely picked up a camera;[1] a teacher well versed in photography's history who rebelled against the medium's conventions; a trained fighter pilot who cultivated a radical artistic persona, complete with ponytail and beard; a charismatic figure respected by the women who knew him, whose use of pornographic material, however, drew fierce feminist critique; a profoundly American artist with a strong allegiance to the European avant-garde. America and its obsessions with sex, consumerism, violence, war, TV, and cheap copies are at the forefront of his art. Heinecken's work is often messy, sometimes shocking, other times analytic, but always provocative—his examination of the particularly American terrain of sex and violence was unapologetic. He was a cross-disciplinary pioneer who used diverse techniques and materials to make his work. His free use of found images and inquiry into the nature of representation anticipated the current use of photographs as tools to investigate our culture's self-definition in a world overflowing with images and copies of images. Heinecken's photo-based works destabilize the very definition of photography, and essentially redefine its perception as an artistic medium. "The photograph," he argued, "is not a picture of, but an object about something."[2]

Heinecken's art has affinities with the work of artists such as John Baldessari, Wade Guyton, Barbara Kruger, Sherrie Levine, Cady Noland, Richard Prince, Robert Rauschenberg, and Gerhard Richter—in his free use of mass-media images and his fascination with popular culture and its effect on society, as well as with the relationship between the original and the copy—yet he is conspicuously absent from the histories of Pop, Conceptual, and contemporary art. This may be due to the fact that his œuvre is difficult to codify and reproduce, his allegiance to the photographic medium (which in the 1960s and 1970s was still struggling to gain mainstream acceptance as an art form), his location on the West Coast (considered a backwater by some East Coast intellectuals), and his hotly debated use of sexually explicit images.

This volume and the related exhibition survey four decades of Heinecken's artistic practice, with a focus on his pioneering work of the 1960s and 1970s, asserting his relevance within the discourse of contemporary art and Conceptual photography. Like some Conceptual artists who were his contemporaries—among them Baldessari, Douglas Huebler, and Ed Ruscha—Heinecken explored the material aspects of photography, exploited its vernacular and amateur uses, celebrated its capacity for mechanical reproduction, incorporated text as a major component of his work, and experimented with scale. Heinecken's work transcended photography, and indeed materiality. The unassuming and participatory nature of some of his efforts (for example, his reconstituted magazines, which were recirculated into the mainstream after his manipulations) is part of his larger investigation into the very definition of art, into central aesthetic and Conceptual issues of his period—specifically the "dematerialization" of the art object. Anticipating postmodern art practices of the 1980s, Heinecken used almost exclusively found images early on to comment on the state of image making in a crowded media landscape. His prescient enterprises are as relevant today as they were fifty years ago: investigating the definition of photography, exploring the possibilities of appropriation, engaging with and locating new meanings in the tsunami of found images, and challenging the limitations of artistic categories.

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To grasp the complexity and multidimensionality of Heinecken's work, it is worth revisiting his formative cultural and artistic influences. He was born in Denver in 1931, during the Depression, into a Germanic family of Lutheran missionaries.[3] In 1946 his family moved to Riverside, California, where Heinecken enrolled at Riverside Junior College, eventually transferring to the University of California, Los Angeles. He dropped out in 1953 to join the Naval Air Cadet Program, advancing to the Marine Corps as a jet fighter pilot and attaining the rank of captain. Just shy of the five-foot-six height requirement, Heinecken lined his socks with magazines in order to enlist—an amusing precursor to his extensive work with magazines.[4] By all accounts, his military experience indelibly shaped Heinecken, who became confident and focused, with a strong work ethic.[5]

After his discharge from the military in 1957, Heinecken finished his studies at UCLA, culminating in 1960 with a master's degree in art, with a focus on graphic design. In this, he followed the path of numerous canonical Pop artists—including Andy Warhol and James Rosenquist—who were likewise trained in graphic design and started their careers in that field. He studied printmaking under John Paul Jones and Don Chipperfield, took courses in typographic design, and worked at UCLA's Art Galleries (now called the Wight Gallery) as an art installer and designer of the gallery's invitations and catalogues.

Although Heinecken had a long-standing interest in art, design, and printed materials, he had yet to experiment with photography. In a 1973 interview, he recalled:

> *There were no photography courses at that time [. . .] Primarily my work was in printmaking. It was at this time in an art history seminar paper that I got into the idea, "In what way does the form of a thing communicate its essence?" The professor who was teaching the course suggested that I try to explore that proposition in terms of photographs. What was*

the relationship of that kind of image making technique to a manually formed one? So I began to try making some photographs and something happened, the bug hit.[6]

Heinecken began making photographs in the early 1960s, and he quickly became an obsessively prolific producer. Throughout his career, he was interested in the *image*, rather than the fine art print or direct observation. One could say that Heinecken was most interested in the objectification of the image, as he often translated the same image into many different formats, from photographs to lithographic film to three-dimensional objects and participatory art. Printmaking is a medium of reproduction, variation, and plurality, and Heinecken applied those ideas to photography. He often opted to work in series and sequences—transferring, recycling, and reworking images from medium to medium. Being self-taught in photography permitted him the freedom to experiment: "I was never in a school situation where someone said, 'This is the way a photograph is supposed to look.' I was completely open to cut them up, or do anything like that."[7] While Heinecken was not alone in questioning the traditions of photography in the early 1960s (contemporaries such as Ray Metzker and Jerry Uelsmann were experimenting alongside him), his work challenged photographic conventions and social norms at a time when both were being radicalized.

Heinecken began teaching printmaking at UCLA shortly after receiving his master's degree, just as the university was starting a photography program.[8] A self-styled "guerrilla,"[9] Heinecken was instrumental in establishing that curriculum in 1962; it would become one of the most influential photography programs in the country, and remained under his leadership until his retirement in 1991. His legacy as a teacher is remarkable: his students' work is wide-ranging, and a number of them went on to become leading voices in the field.[10] Heinecken's teaching files[11] reveal a broad knowledge of contemporary photography and art—his lectures included work by artists such as Robert Cumming, Barbara Kruger, Sherrie Levine, Richard Prince, Robert Rauschenberg, Martha Rosler, and Lucas Samaras. He encouraged his students to think critically regardless of medium, process, or agenda; this openness was reflected in his files of diverse reading materials, which included Sol LeWitt's 1969 "Sentences on Conceptual Art"; Lucy Lippard's 1976 "The Pains and Pleasures of Rebirth: European and American Women's Body Art"; and John Szarkowski's introduction to MoMA's 1976 monograph *William Eggleston's Guide*.[12]

Heinecken's challenge to photography's conventions links him to the traditions of the European avant-garde, and he, like many other American artists—such as Jasper Johns, Rauschenberg, and Robert Morris—often cited Dada and Marcel Duchamp as his biggest influences: "If I had a hero, it would be [Duchamp. . . .] The concept of ready-mades, as Duchamp termed them, is probably one of the most important things to have happened in the history of Western art [. . .] I would probably unconsciously fashion myself after him, because he took nothing seriously but everything seriously. It's a very wonderful frame of mind."[13] Like the art of the Dadaists, Heinecken's work is absurd, often humorous; he delighted in creating chaos out of order. His transgressions in photography also link him to the experimental photographers and Surrealists of interwar Europe, including Man Ray, John Heartfield, and László Moholy-Nagy, who championed multidisciplinary ways of working to explore the revolutionary "new vision" of the era.

Although Heinecken was indebted to the European avant-garde, as an artist he was unquestionably American: his recontextualization of magazines, newspapers, advertisements, television, and other consumer ephemera places him firmly within the distinctly American lexicon of Pop and, later, of postmodernism. Furthermore, Heinecken's brand of experimentation with obscene, base, and "low-culture" materials situates him within a particularly Californian visual context. Contemporaries such as Baldessari, Wallace Berman, Kienholz, and Ruscha, together with other California assemblage artists such as George Herms, Bruce Conner, and Llyn Foulkes, created a uniquely innovative visual language that seemed possible only in Los Angeles in the 1960s and 1970s. During those two decades, Los Angeles was fertile ground for artistic agitations, which played out in various unconventional approaches to photography and materials for art. The working atmosphere, under the specter of the film industry, resulted in a fascination with the manufactured image, and the newly built, man-made landscape was influential in many ways—for example, Ruscha's interest in vernacular architecture, and John McCracken's use of industrial materials inspired by car and surf culture.

New institutions cropped up in the 1960s and 1970s that had a profound impact on art in Southern California.[14] The influential Ferus Gallery operated from 1957 to 1966 (Kienholz was both a founder and a featured artist, and Berman, Foulkes, and Ruscha were in the gallery's stable); the gallery presented Warhol's first one-person exhibition in 1962. *Artforum* operated in Los Angeles for a few years before settling in New York in 1967. Several groundbreaking exhibitions were mounted in the region: the Pasadena Art Museum's 1963 Duchamp retrospective and Warhol's first major solo museum show in 1970 (Heinecken would have a solo exhibition at the museum in 1972); and Man Ray's posthumous survey at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in 1966. Moreover, there was a surge of new educational programs in photography across Southern California, including at UCLA and the California Institute for the Arts (Baldessari and Huebler taught at the latter, where photography was incorporated into the curriculum in 1975). New, young faculty members were being hired by many of these institutions—expanding ideas and possibilities for the photographic medium.

At a time when there were few links among artists on the two coasts of the United States, Heinecken was an influential social connector between East and West Coast photography.[15] While Heinecken was mostly associated with the photographic community, he also commingled with Los Angeles artists making work in other mediums, most notably Berman, with whom he maintained a close relationship until Berman's death in 1976.[16] In the early 1960s, Heinecken became involved with the East Coast–based Society for Photographic Education (SPE)—a professional organization for academics, photographers, and historians—and became chairman in 1971. Through the SPE, he forged strong professional and personal relationships with Harry Callahan, Van Deren Coke, Jerome Liebling, Metzker, Aaron Siskind, and Uelsmann, among others. Through the SPE he also met curators Nathan Lyons (who would include Heinecken, the only West Coast artist, in his influential 1967 exhibition *Persistence of Vision* at the George Eastman House) and Peter Bunnell (who included him in his important 1970 MoMA exhibition *Photography into Sculpture*). Through Heinecken's prominent position at UCLA, his involvement with the SPE, and an active exhibition record on both coasts, he became one of the most influential voices in American photography, and *the* representative of experimental photography in the 1960s and 1970s.

• • •

Heinecken rarely used the camera in a conventional way in his art; it is thus interesting to note that his earliest photographic efforts were relatively straightforward pictures. He began working seriously with photography in the early 1960s, using a 35 mm camera to shoot signs, symbols, and graffiti found on the street (fig. 1). An avid reader, Heinecken delighted in the intersection of language and image, which evolved and developed in his work. He was already flouting photography's conventions in how he shot and processed his early photographs. The antithesis of the fine-print tradition exemplified by West Coast giants Ansel Adams and Edward Weston, who photographed landscapes and objects in sharp focus and with objective clarity, Heinecken's early work is marked by high contrast, blur, and under- or overexposure, as seen in *Shadow of Figure* (1962; plate 2) and *Strip of Light* (1964; plate 3). In addition, he sometimes reversed, obscured, or flipped the negative, as in *Trapeze Figure* (1964; plate 4), to introduce new relationships between figure and ground.

The female nude body is a recurring motif, featured in a series of photographs in which Heinecken rephotographed text and images and projected them onto the nude bodies of hired models with slide projectors. In a bold move, Heinecken gave 35 mm cameras to his models to make their own photographs as they were wandering around the space. By relinquishing the act of taking a photograph, Heinecken explored the possibilities of the performative, chance operations, and random juxtapositions—all dominant themes in his career. His antiformalist approach to the classic motif of the female nude was vastly different from that of his modernist predecessors, such as Weston, Bill Brandt, and André Kertész. The superimposed images include pictures of World War I soldiers (*World War I Figure*, 1964; plate 5) and truncated texts (*Then People Forget You*, 1965; plate 7), subverting their original intention and exploring new associative and formal relationships.

In the mid-1960s the artist began combining and sequencing disparate pictures, as in *Visual Poem/About the Sexual Education of a Young Girl* (1965; plate 1). Evoking the structure of poetry, this cross-shaped work is comprised of seven black-and-white photographs of dolls, with a portrait of his then-five-year-old daughter Karol at the center. Reminiscent of Hans Bellmer's Surrealist experiments with dolls in the 1930s, *Visual Poem* prefigures the trend toward large-scale photography that would come several decades later, as well as the set-up works of artists such as David Levinthal and Laurie Simmons. Heinecken made a few other works in this series, but quickly moved to cutting and reassembling found images, making them into three-dimensional photo-objects.

The mid-1960s was among Heinecken's most radical and fertile periods, during which he moved away from engaging with discrete media and toward sculptural, environmental, and participatory practices. His photo-objects—intended to be manipulated by the viewer, so that there is never a single, fixed configuration—were central to Heinecken's fundamental redefinition of photography's possibilities. These works were aligned with larger artistic currents

1

Page 8: Robert Heinecken. From *Periodical #5*. 1971 (see fig. 10)

1. Robert Heinecken. *Venice Alley*. 1963. Gelatin silver print, 25 1/4 x 38 11/16" (64.2 x 98.2 cm). The Robert Heinecken Trust, Chicago

2

3

4

2. Robert Heinecken. *Transitional Figure Sculpture*. 1965 (plate 15)

3. Robert Heinecken. *Related to Transitional Figure*. 1965. Six gelatin silver prints, approximately 19 ½ x 15 ½" (49.5 x 39.4 cm) each. The Robert Heinecken Trust, Chicago

4. Robert Heinecken. *Black Figure*. 1963. Gelatin silver print, 7 x 6 1/16" (17.8 x 15.4 cm). Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona, Tucson. Robert Heinecken Archive

of the time: on a formal level, there are clearly links to the sculptures of Minimalists (such as Robert Morris), but perhaps more significant are the connections to various forms of participatory art, such as Happenings, performance art, and kineticism.[17] Viewer participation, crucial in activating Heinecken's sculptures, corresponds to a phenomenological reading of Minimalism put forth by art historian Michael Fried.[18] While it might be said that Heinecken's photo-sculptures transcended media, he used representational, figurative photographic elements to build the sculptures. These photographs, because of their relationship to referents in the objective world, allow for a multiplicity of subjective engagements; the "objecthood" (to borrow Fried's term) of the photograph combined with the participatory aspect of the sculptures results in a profound tension in Heinecken's work.[19]

Refractive Hexagon (1965; plate 17), one of several "photo-puzzles," is comprised of photographs of female body parts mounted onto twenty-four individual "puzzle" pieces; the interchangeable elements never create a continuous picture, only an impossible anatomy, which, Heinecken suggested, produces "frightening Rorschach pattern overtones."[20] His three-dimensional sculptures—geometric volumes ranging in height from five to twenty-two inches (12.7 to 55.9 centimeters)—consist of photographs mounted onto individual blocks, which rotate independently around a central axis. In *Fractured Figure Sections* (1967; plate 16), the female figure is never resolved as a single image; the body is always truncated, never contiguous. In contrast, a complete female figure can be reconstituted (fig. 2) in his largest photo-object, *Transitional Figure Sculpture* (1965; plate 15), a towering octagon comprised of twenty-six layers and drawn from photographs of a nude, altered through various printing techniques (fig. 3). As with other participatory art forms of the 1960s and 1970s, here viewer engagement is key to creating random configurations and relationships in the work; any number of possibilities may exist, only to be altered with the next manipulation.

In subsequent works, such as *Figure/Flower #1* (1968; plate 10) and *Breast/Bomb #5* and *#6* (both 1967; plates 11, 12), Heinecken fixed the composition and displayed them on the wall. Reminiscent of Kertész's and Brandt's distorted nudes, *Breast/Bomb #5* (iterations of which exist in different scales and materials [plate 6]) is comprised of nine separate prints made from the same negative, cut up, reassembled, and mounted to produce a continuous new image that, although bizarre, is recognizable as the female anatomy. Heinecken's fixed picture configuration is drawn not from commercially available pornography, but from a rather traditional nude he made a few years earlier, in 1963 (fig. 4). Heinecken was actively using found images from magazines and other public sources, but the recycling and re-editing of his own work are hallmarks of his method.

• • •

Magazines became the principal source materials for Heinecken, and were central to his groundbreaking work *Are You Rea* (1964–68; plate 25), a series of twenty-five photograms[21] made directly from magazine pages. Representative of a culture that was increasingly commercialized, technologically mediated, and suspicious of established truths, *Are You Rea* cemented Heinecken's interest in the multiplicity of meanings inherent in existing images and situations. Culled from more than two thousand magazine pages (fig. 5), the work comprises pictures from publications like *Life*, *Time*, and *Woman's Day*, contact printed so that both sides are superimposed in a single image. Recalling his earlier projections of text and political images onto the figure, the resulting X-ray-like photographs merge bodies with language and hover between legibility and illegibility. Building on concepts about the visual and linguistic strategies of commercial manipulation in the mass media introduced by Marshall McLuhan (particularly in his 1951 book, *The Mechanical Bride*), *Are You Rea* affirms the magazine page as a window into the symbols and signs embedded in cultural iconography. "The selection of the pages is based on my assumption that they are visually stimulating and that they seem to reveal ironic or significant cultural conditions, much in the same way that some contemporary documentary photographers are doing," Heinecken wrote in the portfolio's introduction. "The distinction may be drawn however that these pictures do not represent first hand experiences, but are related to the perhaps more socially important manufactured experiences which are being created daily by mass media."[22]

5. Source materials for *Are You Rea* (1964–68; plate 25). Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona, Tucson. Robert Heinecken Archive

Wordplay is at the heart of *Are You Rea*. A case in point is the title itself—Heinecken enjoyed the transposition of the letters ARE and REA.[23] The title asks an open-ended question that could be interpreted as either "Are you real?" or "Are you ready?" (made more suggestive when coupled with an image of a woman holding her top open). Furthermore, the "you" in the title is ambivalent: it might refer to the woman (is she real?) or the viewer (are you ready for this?). Just as he urged viewers to participate with his photo-sculptures, here Heinecken recruits us to complete the reading of the work, ceding his artistic authority and intentionality. As Roland Barthes famously noted around the same time that Heinecken was creating the portfolio, with the death of the author comes the birth of the reader.[24] Heinecken's art suggests how the possibilities offered by an open reading can also be marshaled to manufacture and manage desire.

6. Lee Friedlander. *Washington, D.C.* 1962. Gelatin silver print, 5 5/8 x 8 11/16" (14.4 x 22 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase

7. *Cavalcade* magazine, May 1968; source material for Heinecken's periodical works. Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona, Tucson. Robert Heinecken Archive

While the juxtapositions in *Are You Rea* were found, Heinecken's choices of pages and imagery are calculated to reveal specific relationships and meanings. The materials are diverse, and include a profile on Lynda Bird Johnson's makeover (page 53, bottom); ads for Coppertone juxtaposed with ads for spaghetti dinners (page 55, upper right); an article about John F. Kennedy superimposed with an ad for Wessex carpets (page 59, upper left); and the cover story from *Life*'s November 4, 1966, issue about Lyndon B. Johnson's visit to Vietnam (page 59, upper right). Heinecken's production materials reveal a deliberately calculated matrix and a sequential structure in five "chapters": cosmetics, women and children, lesbianism, marriage, and politics. The portfolio's narrative moves from relatively commonplace and alluring images of women to representations of violence and the male body.

While Heinecken's work was closely associated with artistic developments in California, there are parallels between his brand of experimentation in *Are You Rea* and the sensibilities of photographers on the East Coast, particularly in New York. His statement in the portfolio's introduction, aligning it with conventional documentary photography and the "real," draws comparisons to his East Coast contemporaries working in the tradition of street photography, including Diane Arbus, Garry Winogrand, and Lee Friedlander. Heinecken was lifelong friends with Friedlander (who studied at the Los Angeles Art Center in the 1950s), and invited him to lecture at UCLA. While at first glance their approaches seem very different, Friedlander's interest in signage and vernacular landscape, his photographs of television sets, and his use of reflection and layering (fig. 6) all resonate with Heinecken's work.[25]

Magazines and the printed page were preoccupations throughout Heinecken's career, expressed fully in his wide-ranging series of manipulated periodicals. He employed three basic methods to create "revised" or "compromised" magazines (his preferred terms): overprinting an image on every page in the publication via photolithography; collating pages from various magazines and recombining them to make a new periodical; and incising magazines by cutting out elements from the page with an X-Acto knife.[26] His magazines are intended to be handled and read, as the sequential narratives built into their pages expose the "underlying structure of mass-produced illusions," as critic David Pagel puts it. "By violating the integrity of advertisements and articles, they highlight intertextuality and self-referentiality—so that both fall outside the confines of magazines and museums."[27]

Heinecken's periodicals address a range of issues, from politics and violence to consumerism and the use of sex to sell practically everything. He described working with magazines as "an exercise, as a warm up [. . .] As something that keeps you tuned,"[28] and indeed this practice informed every aspect of his art. It was an organized "exercise," entailing an elaborate cataloguing system of manila folders populated with magazine pages according to categories. Within these, the verso and recto of each page were noted so that the anatomy of the magazine could be maintained, even when recombined.[29]

Heinecken began creating entire periodicals in 1969 with a series of rainbow-hued magazines titled *MANSMAG: Homage to Werkman and Cavalcade* (plate 39). In October of that year, he acquired a small offset press, and used the men's erotic magazine *Cavalcade* as source material (fig. 7), making plates of every page, and randomly printing them on pages that were then reassembled into a magazine, so that all the visual data from the original publication appears in the issue, but now scrambled. He made a total of 120 *MANSMAG*s, each one unique, because the colors vary from magazine to magazine (in some cases making them illegible). The unusual printing is Heinecken's "homage" to the Dutch avant-garde printmaker, typographer, and artist Hendrik Nikolaas Werkman, killed by the Nazis in 1945 for his politically outspoken work. Heinecken's mash-up of a relatively obscure artist and a lowbrow men's magazine is characteristic of his broad gamut of influences and interests.

In the same year, Heineken gathered numerous *Time* magazines, disassembled them, imprinted pornographic images taken from *Cavalcade* (fig. 7) on every page, and reassembled them with the original *Time* covers (plate 40). He circulated these reconstituted magazines, clandestinely leaving them in the waiting room at his dentist's office or slipping them onto newsstands to be sold unwittingly as authentic magazines. "I sometimes visualize myself as a bizarre guerrilla, investing in a kind of humorous warfare in which a series of minimal, direct, invented acts result in maximum extrinsic effect, but without consistent rationale," Heinecken wrote in 1974. "I might liken it to the intention of making police photographs in which there is no crime involved—but with that assumption."[30] Like his East Coast contemporary Stephen Shore, who around the same time surreptitiously placed his own postcards (images he made in Amarillo, Texas) into the racks at gas stations all over the country, Heinecken was interested in circulating his work within broader channels of communication, a concern he also shared with Conceptual artists such as Dan Graham. The work essentially comes full circle: Heinecken's source material originates from magazines, is modified, and then returns to its point of origin.

Heinecken undertook a similar "guerrilla" action in 1971 with *Periodical #5* (plate 38), wherein he printed an image of a grinning Cambodian soldier holding two severed heads on each page of fashion and home decor magazines. The original picture, taken by German photographer Dieter Ludwig and published in the February 1971 issue of *Time* magazine (fig. 8), is a particularly ghastly one among the influx of Vietnam War images published regularly at the time in the press. In Heinecken's magazines, a rhythm is developed through the varying darkness of the printed image of the soldier, so that he appears in front of, mixed with, or behind the existing magazine content. In what might be considered mail art, Heinecken also made single magazine pages with this image superimposed, and sent the pages to the entire membership of the SPE; he also made 24-by-20-inch Polaroids of the single sheets (fig. 9). Depending on the magazine Heinecken used, the effect is startlingly different. For example, in the *Periodical #5* that uses *Living Now* magazine, the soldier is incongruously located in lavish modern home settings, whereas with *Vogue*, he is a ghoulish double of the high-fashion models bounding across the magazine pages (fig. 10). Although it seems that they were not aware of each other's work in this vein at the time, Martha Rosler was producing collages that similarly juxtaposed images from *House Beautiful* with Vietnam War photoreportage published in *Life* magazine for her series House Beautiful: Bringing the War Home (1967–72; fig. 11). Both artists offered new narratives that considered the way the collective experience of war is shaped by and contextualized in the mass media.

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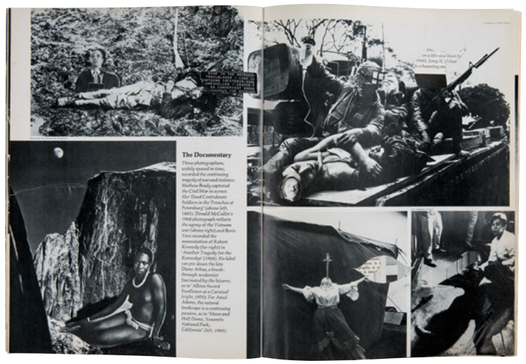
8. Paste-ups for *Periodical #5* (1971; plate 38). Photograph by Dieter Ludwig: *Grisly Trophies*. Published in *Time* magazine, February 1971. Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona, Tucson. Robert Heinecken Archive

9. Robert Heinecken. *Related to Periodical #5*. 1972. Internal dye-diffusion transfer print (Polaroid Polacolor), 32 x 22" (81.3 x 55.9 cm). The Robert Heinecken Trust, Chicago; courtesy Cherry and Martin, Los Angeles

10. Robert Heinecken. From *Periodical #5*. 1971. Offset lithography on found magazine with repurposed cover, 12 1/4 x 9" (31.1 x 22.9 cm). Collection Philip F. Denny, Chicago

11. Martha Rosler. *Cleaning the Drapes*, from the series House Beautiful: Bringing the War Home. 1967–72 (printed 2011). Pigmented inkjet print (photomontage), 17 1/16 x 23 3/8" (43.3 x 59.4 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase and The Modern Women's Fund



12. Robert Heinecken. From *Newsweek, October 21, 1974*. 1974. Incised found magazine, 8 ⅛ x 10 ¾" (20.6 x 27.3 cm). The Robert Heinecken Trust, Chicago

Heinecken's incised magazines recall *Are You Rea*, in which recto and verso merge, and figure and ground, text and image are combined to reveal new readings. Notable among these is a 1974 issue of *Newsweek* magazine. "I tried to use whatever my feelings told me about the material that was being presented to the public and alter it in a specific rather than a random way," he said of this work, titled *Newsweek, October 21, 1974* (fig. 12). "So by putting an African person into an Ansel Adams landscape or by relating William Buckley to war or by giving Diane Arbus, who committed suicide, a censor's mark, I attempted to expand a sick bed idea into something more expressive."[31] The artist reprised this technique in 1989 with a meticulously altered issue of *Time* titled *150 Years of Photojournalism* (plate 44), a greatest hits of historical events seen through the lens of photography. In Heinecken's version, iconic images interact in new ways, and text becomes a key component. The issue of *Time* had a single advertiser—Kodak—and the company's distinct red-and-yellow logo appears consistently throughout, bleeding through pages and inserting itself into gritty black-and-white images. Here, consumerism and branding are entwined with images seared in the collective consciousness.

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Ever the experimenter, Heinecken began using transparent film in 1965 to explore different kinds of juxtapositions. He observed:

> *Superimpositional and negative (reversed) and combinational methods seem to me to be inate [*sic*] to the photographic process. The fact that light initially causes density and hence a reversed image, seems relevant. The fact that the emulsion is on a transparent base seems important. The fact that the emulsion can be applied to almost any surface seems like a gift.*[32]

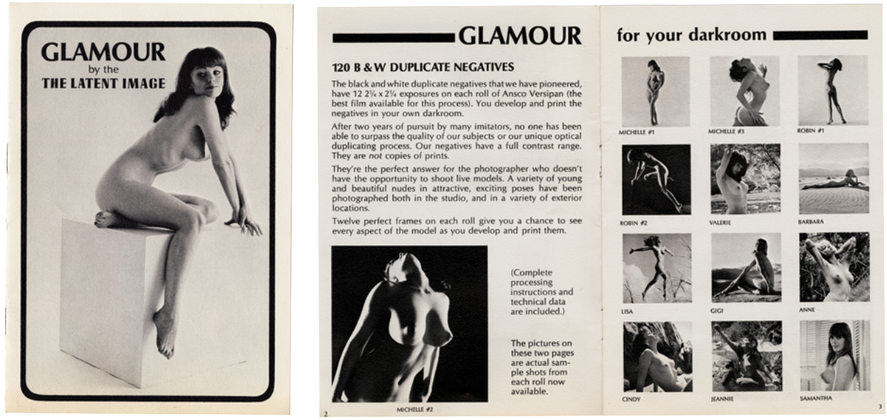
Early experiments with transparency include *Child Guidance Toys* (1965; plate 23), which depicts a child aiming a toy gun at a doll of John F. Kennedy in his rocking chair, an image found in an advertising supplement to a Los Angeles newspaper shortly after Kennedy's assassination. Like the juxtapositions in *Are You Rea*, this was found as is; Heinecken points to it as a way to decode cultural artifacts.

The artist experimented with larger-scale transparencies, which he hung unframed from the ceiling, allowing them to curl and sway, taking on dimensionality and material presence as objects. Frequently hung a few feet from the gallery wall, they were lit in such a way that the image (often a found image) was doubled, recast, and amplified onto the wall. Heinecken's large transparencies simulate film negatives and strips (in many, the sprocket holes are visible) in a greatly enlarged size, and feature pornography—female nudes—superimposed onto nature imagery. In one instance, pornographic images are superimposed on a Christmas snapshot of Heinecken's kids (*Kodak Safety Film/Christmas Mistake*, 1971; plate 49), with the suggestion in the title that somehow two rolls of film were mixed up at the photo lab. *Kodak Safety Film/Taos Church* (1972; plate 51) takes photography itself as a subject, picturing an adobe church in New Mexico that was famously photographed by Ansel Adams and Paul Strand, and painted by Georgia O'Keeffe and John Marin. Presented as a negative, Heinecken's version transforms an icon of modernism into a murky structure flanked by a pickup truck, telephone wires, and other modern-day detritus.

Heinecken utilized positive transparencies in combination with collages made from magazines and newspapers in a series of works that addressed the Vietnam War and social unrest in the United States, such as student demonstrations and riots in the late 1960s (plates 28–30). The glossy surface of the transparency and texture of the collages produces a combination that is simultaneously pleasing and disturbing, and reprises his technique of layering text and politics over the body.

The source material for these transparencies is the now-defunct company The Latent Image, a mail-order outfit that sold unprocessed rolls of film of pinups and soft-core pornography, to be developed by individuals in their homes as a way to circumvent the illegality of importing sexuality explicit images over state lines. Operating during the boom of the porn industry in Southern California, the company marketed itself to amateur photographers—each roll of film included printing instructions and sample model releases, presumably so that the client could begin making his own nude images from home. The company's catalogues (fig. 13) featured short descriptions of the models or the types of photographs on a roll of film. Heinecken delighted in using these existing images: "Why should I hire a model or get a friend to pose in a way which neither of us know anything about, when an authentic source exists for four or five dollars?"[33]

Heinecken's use of found images is clearly an investigation into photography's conceptual possibilities. And yet, perhaps due to his activities within and allegiance to the photographic community, he has scarcely been considered within the lineage of Conceptual art.[34] In many ways, Heinecken's approach to photography is analogous to that of artists such as Vito Acconci, Mel Bochner, Hans Haacke, and Douglas Huebler, who emphasized ideas and meaning over form, and utilized grids, seriality, and chance—all tenets central to Heinecken's art. Consider Bochner's influential 1966 exhibition at New York's School of Visual Arts, *Working Drawings and Other Visible Things on Paper Not Necessarily Meant to Be Viewed as Art*, for which he collected drawings and documents (as the title indicates, they weren't necessarily intended as "art") from artists and friends, and placed photocopies of them into binders, which were presented in the gallery on pedestals. This relates to Heinecken's magazines, wherein he questioned the status of both the magazine and the work of art, especially when they were slipped back into the newsstand to circulate as ordinary publications. Another icon of Conceptualism, Huebler's 1970 *Location Piece #6 National* (fig. 14), consists of collected found images of "local interest" published in newspapers throughout the country, which encapsulates the artist's attitude about photography: "The world is full of objects, more or less interesting; I do not wish to add any more."[35] On his use of found images, Heinecken had a similar insight: "I find these found,



13. Catalogue for The Latent Image, 1960s; source material for several of Heinecken's works. The Robert Heinecken Trust, Chicago

14. Douglas Huebler. *Location Piece #6 National*. 1970. Sixteen gelatin silver prints and one chromogenic color print with captions and text, 40 x 60" (101.6 x 152.4 cm) overall. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Larry Aldrich Foundation Fund

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15. Ed Kienholz. *The Eleventh Hour Final*. 1968. Mixed media assemblage, 10 x 12 x 14' (304.8 x 365.8 x 426.7 cm)

16. Robert Heinecken. *TV/Time Environment*. 1970 (plate 52). Mixed media, dimensions variable. Installation view in *Continuum*, Downey Museum of Art, Downey, California, 1970

17. Les Krims. *Les Krims Performing Aerosol Fiction with Leslie Krims, Fargo Avenue, Buffalo, New York, 1969*. 1969. Gelatin silver print, 4 3/4 x 7" (12.1 x 17.8 cm)

18. Robert Heinecken. *Kodak Safety Film/Figure Horizon* (installation view). 1971

anonymous images to be more interesting and strangely more authentic than ones I might make myself."[36]

It is true, however, that Heinecken's work does not often fit neatly into a single category or reading. While many Conceptual artists similarly drew upon commercial and vernacular photographic sources and practices, many, such as Bochner, were focused mostly on the imagery's conceptual and philosophical implications. Heinecken's work was first and foremost concerned with photography's practical uses and social role. His interest in the *content* diverges from the more evidentiary approach of his Conceptual peers, setting him apart as a figure engaged, somewhat paradoxically, with conceptual approaches to photography as *well* as with the social signification of borrowed images.

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Heinecken's first large-scale sculptural installation, *TV/Time Environment* (1970; plate 52), is the earliest in a series of works addressing the increasingly dominant presence of television. The work explores random relationships through live television and plays off ideas of violence and desire found in the underbelly of American culture, seen also in the work of Los Angeles contemporaries such as Ed Kienholz (fig. 15). Kienholz, an assemblage artist whose materials were often found or scavenged—a predecessor to artists such as Robert Gober, Mike Kelley, Glenn Ligon, Paul McCarthy, and Noland—was, like Heinecken, intrepid in his exploration of the dark impulses in the American psyche. In Heinecken's installation, which varied with every display, a positive film transparency of a female nude (sourced from The Latent Image) was placed in front of a functioning television set in an environment that evokes a middle-class living room, complete with recliner chair, plastic plant, and rug (fig. 16). The images that are visible—flickering and changing—through the nude figure in *TV/Time Environment* include Vietnam news updates, ads for local car dealerships, and sitcoms, producing surreal moments of social satire and commentary.

Heinecken produced several iterations of *TV/Time Environment*, translating a live sculptural environment into two-dimensional still works in several mediums. In one 1970 installation, Heinecken photographed the television set with a 35 mm camera, resulting in set of 3M prints (a process that allowed Heinecken to manipulate and intensify the color; plates 53–55); five of them were also produced as four-color lithographs in 1976. *TV/Time Environment* underscores the complexity of Heinecken's relationship to photography. On one hand, his sculptural installation, which became the mechanism for producing a new set of two-dimensional works, illustrates how he skirted conventional notions of mediums and continuously sought to transform one medium into another. On the other hand, from the live television images, he created still, "decisive" images (a practice he later revisited with *Inaugural Excerpt Videograms* [plate 81]), revealing a continued engagement with the temporality of photography, seen in subsequent works, such as *Vanishing Photographs* (1973; plate 50).

A sequence of enigmatic pictures (originally twelve in number; one has been lost), *Vanishing Photographs* represents a departure for Heinecken. Each print is composed of up to three superimposed images and is unfixed, so when they are exhibited, the photographs darken to eventual illegibility. Heinecken layered works by his friends Uelsmann and Les Krims, including the latter's controversial photograph *Les Krims Performing Aerosol Fiction with Leslie Krims, Fargo Avenue, Buffalo, New York, 1969* (fig. 17).[37] Heinecken stipulated that four pictures from the group should be on view at one time and swapped out at regular intervals throughout the duration of an exhibition. This time-based work is part of a small group the artist made about photographic chemistry, which includes his 1978 collage *The S.S. Copyright Project: "On Photography"* (plate 69), but it is atypical in his use of high art as source material.

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In the early 1970s Heinecken began using photographic emulsion on canvas, also known as *photo-linen*,[38] to produce hybrid photographic paintings, including the *Figure Horizon* works. For these, Heinecken reprised the cut-and-reassemble techniques from his puzzles and photo-sculptures, sequencing images of sections of the nude female body (culled from The Latent Image negatives) like a filmstrip, to create impossible, undulating landscapes. He first printed the images on transparencies in multiple sizes and displayed them in a variety of ways (plates 59, 62), including pinned to the wall, hung from the ceiling in a transparent bag affixed to fishing wire, and framed and wrapped around the corner of a wall (fig. 18). A canvas version, *Figure Horizon #1* (1971; plate 60), is comprised of ten individual canvases and can be arranged in a variety of configurations on the wall.[39] The sense of play, reinvention, and re-editing of his own work is typical—for Heinecken there was never one fixed image, but rather many possible permutations, all equal in status.

A related work, *Le Voyeur/Robbe-Grillet #2* (1972; plate 61), is perhaps the ultimate example of Heinecken's interest in multiple iterations. The title refers to one of Heinecken's favorite novels, the 1955 mystery *Le Voyeur* by French theorist, critic, and writer Alain Robbe-Grillet,[40] who developed narrative by describing events from multiple points of view. Heinecken printed the same fragments of female bodies on a stretched canvas, then treated the image with bleach, stained it, scraped the surface, and drew on it with chalk. In his three-panel homage, small sections of the female body are selected, magnified, and reworked to simulate a body viewed from different perspectives. Heinecken situates himself as both author and viewer, proposing a new paradigm for picture making.

The relationship between representation and reproduction is at play in Heinecken's slyly titled *Lingerie for a Feminist Suntan* (1973; plates 64, 65).[41] Crafted from photo-linen, canvas, and Mylar, these life-scale pieces incorporate an image of the female body[42] with three-dimensional undergarments dangling from clothes hangers in front of the canvas ground. The shadow behind the bra is constructed of unprocessed photo-linen; the darkness of the shadow is dictated by the raw material's exposure to light: it becomes darker each time it is exhibited. In addition, the outline of a bikini has been added to the female body with pastel chalk, acrylic paint, and colored pencil. Always a fan of wordplay, Heinecken commented: "The title, *Lingerie for a Feminist Suntan*, doesn't tell the viewer what the piece is about, but the language used is within the grasp of most people and does suggest a mild political stance which

is inherent in the work. In fact the obliqueness of titles and levels of content are sometimes as important to me as the illusionary qualities of the piece."[43]

A midcareer survey organized by the George Eastman House in 1976 marked an important juncture for Heinecken: "In that year familial relationships dissolved, a fire destroyed my studio, which contained two years of work, and my personal emotional state peaked. All of this combined in such a way to cause my work to coagulate. I also felt that the six or seven large canvas pieces completed from 1974 through early 1976 had attained a mature authentic vision which embodied most of my previous concerns and sensibilities."[44] During those years, Heinecken produced *Cliché Vary*, three large-scale modular works, each comprised of twelve separately stretched canvas panels with considerable hand-applied color on the photographic image.[45] *Cliché Vary*, a pun on the nineteenth-century *cliché verre* process, is comprised of three individual works, all from 1974: *Autoeroticism*, *Fetishism*, and *Lesbianism* (plates 66, 67, 68); each invokes clichés associated with those terms. Reminiscent of his cut-and-reassembled pieces, each panel pictures disjointed views of bodies and fetish objects that never make a whole, and increase in complexity, culminating with *Lesbianism*, which is made with seven or eight different negatives. As he did in the *Figure Horizon* works and *Robbe-Grillet*, Heinecken here used negatives from The Latent Image mail-order company, but in this case, the hand-application of pigments is much more painterly and overt. He noted the hand-coloring was intended to "illuminate fetish objects, or more correctly, my own uninitiated middle class cliché view of fetish objects."[46]

Perhaps the most contested aspect of Heinecken's work is his frequent use of images of the female body. Rosler dismissed Heinecken's work as "pussy porn,"[47] and Allan Sekula, another outspoken critic of his work, charged him with sexism, racism, and conservatism.[48] The critique of Heinecken's use of sexually explicit images coincided with the writing of feminist theory, specifically theories about the "male gaze" as a defining force in culture and the lens through which much of art history is read. Women in the arts were increasingly aware of gender-driven imbalances, and they organized accordingly. A Women's Caucus of the SPE was formed in the early 1980s; there, Heinecken's work was the subject of much debate. In 1982 he participated in a symposium about pornography and art at New York's International Center of Photography, alongside Susan Sontag, Hollis Frampton, and Joyce Neimanas; a review of the event noted that Heinecken left "all conclusions about the obscenity or sensuousness of his pictures up to the audience. [. . .] Granting that some people might interpret these pictures as sexist propaganda, he merely stated, 'I tend not to see it that way.'"[49] Heinecken's muted response to the feminist critique seemed characteristic. In 1992 the SPE named him an "Honored Educator," and a journalist reporting on the disappointment of the Women's Caucus at Heinecken's selection referred to him as a "misogynist photographer."[50] When questioned later, the artist replied that he did not know "whether to be more insulted at being called a 'misogynist' or a 'photographer.'"[51]

Those who knew Heinecken defended him. Curator Colin Westerbeck pointed out that work by his female students Ellen Brooks, Jo Ann Callis, and Judy Coleman similarly addressed issues of sexuality: "Heinecken's female students seem to have been encouraged by his teaching rather than degraded by his art. Thus their work might stand as a rebuttal to his feminist critics."[52] Another student, Eileen Cowin, elucidated:

> *[Heinecken] was truly interested in sexuality. [. . .] I think that the misunderstanding is that he used pornographic imagery not in some gratuitous way but turned it on its ear to make us question not just the pornographic images that we're looking at but images in general and what is obscene in culture and art. I think it just happened at a time when women became more [. . .] empowered and militant. It's like a perfect storm where the work gets caught in kind of a vortex of misunderstanding.*[53]

Significantly, Heinecken's partner, Joyce Neimanas, who defines herself as a feminist, declared that she would never have married a misogynist.[54]

Indeed, Heinecken's relationship to sexually explicit imagery is perhaps more complex than was suggested by the critique at the time. His sources were widely available mass-media publications (from pornography to fashion magazines), and thus a mirror of culture at large. For him the found images are artifacts of a culture driven by commercialism, sex, desire, and violence. This was problematic for his critics, who maintained that his work reinforced the very stereotypes he sought to critique by making use of such images. While many were able to recognize the social commentary in the Pop artists' use of commercial imagery, Heinecken's employment of pornography (which can be considered a strain of popular imagery) was much debated, shedding light on the limits of viewers' relationship to images. Moreover, the tendency of some of his canvases to veer toward the beautiful, his personal reputation as a womanizer, and his relatively open attitudes toward sexuality contributed to his work's reading. Heinecken stated in 1976: "I do feel that the most highly developed sensibility I have is sexual, as opposed to intellectual or emotional. I think it's a matter of understanding that and using that and accepting that and not trying to alter myself."[55]

Along these lines, we may consider Gerhard Richter's contemporaneous use of pornographic images from magazines to make his 1967 painting *Spanish Nudes* (*Spanische Akte*; fig. 19). The translation of photograph to painting necessarily distances the viewer from the subject: Richter's use of sexually explicit images thus becomes a project about the *nature* of representation; furthermore, he frustrates the male gaze (or any gaze) through composition and blurring. In contrast, Heinecken's co-opting of unmediated pornographic images would seem to prioritize their veracity, rather than their construction. Heinecken's use of pornography, while not always comfortable for viewers, and perhaps not always successful as an artistic strategy, was part of a larger project to shed light on hidden late-capitalist exploitation and hypocrisy. It is precisely in the rawness of the work that we see Heinecken as shocking, messy, and unflinching—a complicated artist who strays from the cool analytics of Conceptual art and enters an artistic domain that never quite fits into any category.

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In the mid-1970s Heinecken became interested in photographic technologies that were being introduced by Polaroid and began a new chapter of his career. In his continued exploration of the medium of photography as a reproductive technology, Polaroid—specifically the SX-70 (which required no darkroom or technical know-how)—was perfectly suited to Heinecken. He called it the "bedroom camera," and indeed it afforded its operators privacy, as they did not have to send images out to be developed. Neimanas introduced him to the SX-70; she was using it in unique ways to make large-scale collages, such as *TV and Dog (#4)* (1981; fig. 20). However, unlike Neimanas, or Lucas Samaras, who were both experimenting with expanding the physical capacities of the SX-70, Heinecken purposefully used it as an amateur might. For his series He/She, he paired self-portraits, close-ups of objects, and images of body parts—items that suggest intimacy and sex—with short lines of a conversation between a man and a woman (plates 70–74). The relationship between text and image in He/She is a complex weave of fiction, autobiography, narrative, and disassociation. While the use of text was not new for Heinecken, there is here an unprecedentedly strong sense of autobiography, as the "He" is presumed to be Heinecken. However, the images and text seem clearly staged, and the relationship between performance and photography is seen in the self-conscious theatricality of the images. The photographs do not function as illustrations for the text; they run tangent to it, and the conversations can be seen as a kind of sound track or screenplay. Raising questions about what Heinecken would later call "relational possibilities,"[56] He/She offers a set of texts and dissociated images about sexual relations, undermining expected narrative resolutions.

With his series Lessons in Posing Subjects (1981–82), Heinecken used the SX-70 to rephotograph images of models posing in clothing catalogues and presented as typologies of body positions and facial expressions (plates 75–79). Building on ideas in Erving Goffman's 1976 book, *Gender Advertisements*, Heinecken's mocking sociological critique of mass-media imagery reduces standard fashion poses to formal gestures and the textbook tone of the accompanying copy functions as explication of the cultural values communicated with each stance. This analytical impulse is reprised in his 1984 *Tuxedo Striptease* (plate 80), in which he used the 24-by-20-inch camera to photograph cheesecake images of women (and a picture of one baby) wearing tuxedo-inspired clothing or lingerie, organizing them in order of increasing disrobement (ending with the fully tuxedoed infant). These socioanalytical works can be understood within a tradition of Conceptual photography, in that they take on the utilitarian aspects of photography, but exploit the medium to express an idea through simple rephotography and text. Like Ruscha, who used applied and vernacular photography in his artist's books, here Heinecken celebrated the amateur applications of photography, underscoring its reproductive qualities and its capacity to function as "document."

Heinecken's most physically impressive and conceptually ambitious work with instant prints is the two-panel *S.S. Copyright Project: "On Photography"* (1978; plate 69), made the year after the publication of Susan Sontag's collection of essays *On Photography*. *The S.S. Copyright Project* consists of a magnified and doubled picture of Sontag, derived from the book's dust-cover portrait (taken by Jill Krementz), and an explanatory text written by Heinecken.[57] The work equates legibility with physical proximity—from afar, the portraits appear to be grainy enlargements from a negative (or, to

19. Gerhard Richter. *Spanish Nudes* (*Spanische Akte*). 1967. Oil on canvas, 68⅛" x 6' 6" (160 x 200 cm)

20. Joyce Neimanas. *TV and Dog (#4)*. 1981. Internal dye-diffusion transfer prints (SX-70 Polaroids) and paint, 40 x 32" (101.6 x 81.3 cm)

21. Robert Heinecken. *Waking Up in News America*. 1986. Installation view in *Robert Heinecken: Photographist*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, 1999

contemporary eyes, pixilated low-resolution images), but at close range, it is apparent that the panels are composed of hundreds of small photographic scraps stapled together. The portrait on the left is comprised of photographs of Sontag's text, and that on the right, of random images taken around Heinecken's studio and UCLA by Hali Rederer, an assistant hired by Heinecken.

The S.S. Copyright Project suggests that Heinecken disagreed with Sontag's privileging of the indexical nature of the medium over its expressive qualities. With the two panels, Heinecken sets up dichotomies for thinking about the medium's properties: expression versus description, image versus text, handmade versus mechanical. Heinecken also took the physicality and materiality of photography into consideration. In a 1985 letter to MoMA's photography curator John Szarkowski, who inquired about the work's yellowing, Heinecken stated:

The gradual aging/yellowing process was conceived by me and built in as an integral part of its eventual content. By this I mean that the dichotomies listed in the text:

Left		*Right*
words	*vs*	*pictures*
relevant	*vs*	*arbitrary*
craft	*vs*	*feelings*
casual	*vs*	*research*

*will be resolved by ones [*sic*] carefully noting of which picture yellows most and at what rate.*

*(If the left one yellows most, then the right one is correct and vice versa. I carefully treated the materials in such a way that full yellowing process will take 10 years. (This # is related to the zone system ten.) Therefore sometime in the year of our lord 1988 the truth will be revealed and Susan Sontags' [*sic*] actual role in the history of photography will be ascertained, finally.*[58]

Thirty years later, the two sides of the work appear equally yellowed. In an echo of Heinecken's *Vanishing Photographs*, *The S.S. Copyright Project* represents a complex investigation of the photograph as a series of realities with multiple levels of legibility.

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Around 1980, television became a focal point for a vast number of works Heinecken produced in a variety of media, including direct captures from the TV, slide shows, and room-sized sculptural installations (see, for example, his 1986 *Waking Up in News America*, fig. 21). Direct captures from the television, which Heinecken called *videograms*, were produced by pressing Cibachrome paper onto the screen and turning the television on and off to expose the sensitized paper. The one or two seconds of flickering, colored light forms an image on the paper; due to the relatively long exposure, however, each videogram is a composite of movements, resulting in a blurry bluish-green image. Since a single talking head suited this process best, Heinecken focused on newscasters—and, in the case of his impressive 1981 *Inaugural Excerpt Videograms* (plate 81), Ronald Reagan. Made with the aid of Neimanas during the live television broadcast of Reagan's inauguration speech and the surrounding celebrations, this work (originally in twenty-seven parts, now twenty-four) includes randomly chosen excerpts of the oration and news reports of it. Heinecken (who was at UCLA during the event) directed Neimanas (at home in their shared Los Angeles studio) via phone, instructing her when to expose the paper.[59] There were thus several layers of mediation: a news producer who determined the framing of Reagan and a camera operator who executed it; Heinecken choosing which moment to capture and Neimanas making the exposure (presumably an instant after Heinecken's instruction); and, finally, the random association of Reagan's excerpted speech (written by a speechwriter) with news reports of the events. The added dimension of the "actor-president" as protagonist further underscores and complicates the work's link to performance, chance, and questions about authorship. With this work, Heinecken investigates a culturally determined context through a series of random and arbitrary actions.

Video, which offered the possibility to record or copy television images, allowed Heinecken to produce a number of other TV-related works, including the 1986 slide show *Surrealism on TV* (plates 82, 83). Heinecken, described by Neimanas as an "ace" channel flipper,[60] isolated humorous and kitschy moments from public-access television, local and national news, and late-night advertisements, by pausing previously recorded footage and photographing the television set. The slide show is comprised of more than two hundred images loaded into three slide projectors and projected in random order, so that every showing is unique. The images generally fit into broad categories, which include newscasters (local talking heads as well as national icons such as Jane Pauley, Maria Shriver, Faith Daniels, and Barbara Walters); animals (mostly in anthropomorphic scenarios); TV evangelists; aerobics; and explosions. Heinecken, as a teacher and frequent lecturer, was no stranger to slide presentations, and had experimented with the performative and chance possibilities of the medium in the early 1960s. For one presentation at Mount St. Mary's College in Los Angeles, he made slides from magazines, books, and catalogues, loaded them into five projectors attached to remotes on long cords, which were handed out to members of the audience to control at their own pace and according to their own interest.[61] Like *Are You Rea* and his reconstituted magazines, *Surrealism on TV* explores the idea of transparency and layering and using found media images to produce new readings.

Among Heinecken's most interesting artistic activities in the late 1980s is a series of color photograms made with the same method as *Are You Rea*. Of the approximately one hundred fifty color photograms he produced altogether, twelve were published as the portfolio *Recto/Verso* in 1989 (plate 85). Unlike *Are You Rea*, *Recto/Verso* is not based on news or political magazines as source material—instead, the artist utilized fashion magazines, so the narrative is driven by sex, desire, and consumerism as marketed toward women. The Cibachrome process results in positive images, and the combined rectos and versos explode with brilliant color, enhanced by the paper's shiny surface, which mimics the pages of a glossy fashion magazine. More legible than their *Are You Rea* antecedents, the color photograms produce their own brand of obscene and grotesque juxtapositions.

In the last decade of his life, Heinecken revisited his 1960s idea of creating photographic objects, and produced a number of large-scale sculptures. The *Shivas*, hybrid works that combine photography, painting, and sculpture, are contemporary stand-ins for the multi-limbed Hindu deities fashioned out of cut-and-crumpled magazine pages (plate 86). "Hinduism is the only religion where the boss can become anything: man, woman, tree," Heinecken said. "[. . .] The love of sex, the poetry of sex, is so much tied into the Hindu religion [. . .] I think you can find sexuality in everything, if you look closely enough, and I think it's there in all my work."[62] He similarly draws on the language of commercial consumerism with his standing figures: cutouts of famous people—life-size and full color—produced by film and television companies, and other corporate entities, to be displayed in retail outlets or movie theaters. Heinecken collaged images onto the found cutout figures of recognizable icons, such as tennis champion Andre Agassi and actress Cybill Shepherd (plate 88), and then rephotographed and remounted the images onto foamcore. By subverting the initial commercial intent of these figures, Heinecken critiques the very images they are used to project.

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Heineken's wide-ranging and diverse œuvre is mutable—and at times inscrutable. Rife with contradictions, friction, and disparities, his work draws from the unlimited supply of images from magazines, television, books, mail-order catalogues, and even packaged TV dinners. During the decisive decades of the 1960s and 1970s, when artists were attuned to the illusionistic impulses in American culture, Heinecken underscored that meaning is constructed referentially; it is not inherent to photographs themselves. The raw quality of Heineken's œuvre, and his reliance on visual clichés, can at times obscure our understanding of it—although in some ways, his focus on sex seems prescient when considered from today's culture of instantly available, sexually explicit images. For Heinecken, America is a place of brutal extremes.[63]

Perhaps Heinecken's most significant challenge was to photography itself. His love of visual codes and photomechanical processes resulted in a body of work that runs the gamut from photograms to photo-sculptures to multimedia installations. But the consistent thread throughout his career has been the singular confrontation of the nature of the photographic medium—its materiality, its truthfulness, its cultural import. Heinecken followed the Dada dictum of letting the material find its own form. Working against the fine-art print tradition in photography, he created complex visual readings and narratives through repetition, manipulation, and cinematic sequencing, and then subverted the systems he created by re-editing and rearranging his own work. The artist described his process as "leap-frogging,"[64] and in essence, he was as much an editor as a picture maker. This is a vital connection to the ways that today's artists—among them Daniel Gordon, Wade Guyton, and Mariah Robertson—engage with photography in a world of utter image saturation: as editors and curators.

In assessing Heinecken's career, it is imperative to acknowledge that he was deeply committed to photography, even as he was breaking its rules. Who better to rebel against the medium than the director of UCLA's photography program and the chairman of the Society for Photographic Education? Just as Heinecken's critique of consumerism came from within, so did his challenge to photography. Rather than eviscerating the medium, Heinecken celebrated photography's limitless permutations and possibilities, and proposed alternate narratives—narratives that continue to resonate well into the twenty-first century.

NOTES

1. Heinecken used the term *paraphotographer* to describe himself: "I have taken advantage very much of the photographic medium, and photographers supply my ideas in my work. My ideas are photographic ideas, they are not drawing ideas, and most printmaking ideas are drawing ideas. I don't like the implication of the professional use of the word photographer. I'm going to call myself 'paraphotographer.'" Robert Heinecken, adapted from an informal conversation in the studio of W. Earl Dreyer at the Hermitage Foundation in Norfolk, Virginia, March 8 and 9, 1978, in *Second Annual Student Photography Exhibition: An INTERPLAY Presentation* (Norfolk, Va.: Old Dominion University, 1978).

2. Heinecken, "The Photograph: Not a Picture of, but an Object about Something," in *21st Annual Art Directors Show* (Los Angeles: Art Directors Club of Los Angeles, 1965), n.p. This complete text is reproduced in the present volume, p. 155.

3. Heinecken's paternal grandfather and his great-uncles were either ministers or taught theology. His paternal grandfather studied art (he trained in lithography), and as a young missionary, traveled to India. While there, he married a Hindu woman and rejected his own background and ministry, although he later returned to Germany and the church. Because of his Hindu grandmother, Heinecken had a long-standing interest in India and Hindu literature, manifested in his 1990s *Shiva* sequence of large-scale Hindu deities. Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona, Tucson (hereafter CCP), Robert Heinecken Archive, video interview with Heinecken by Harold Jones, 11/28/75, CCP #75:023.

4. Heinecken describes this in his 1975 interview with Harold Jones; ibid.

5. Luke Batten, director of The Robert Heinecken Trust and the artist's former studio assistant, recalled Heinecken worked every day from 6 A.M. to 4:30 P.M., and on weekends. Batten, in conversation with the author, February 28, 2013.

6. Heinecken, interview in Steven Lewis, James McQuaid, and David Tait, *Photography—Source and Resource: A Source Book for Creative Photography* (State College, Penn.: Turnip Press, 1973), p. 29. In a 1976 interview, Heinecken noted that Don Chipperfield introduced him to photography. See Charles Hagen, "Robert Heinecken: An Interview," *Afterimage* 3, vol. 10 (April 1976): 9.

7. Hagen, "Robert Heinecken: An Interview," p. 9.

8. Of his teaching post, Heinecken recalled: "It was supposed to be a one year job, but I began to talk up the idea of photography as an integral part of the fine arts curriculum." Heinecken quoted in Colin Westerbeck, "Tongue in Cheek: The Strange Relationship between Robert Heinecken and Wallace Berman," in Claudia Bohn-Spector and Sam Mellon, eds., *Speaking in Tongues: Wallace Berman and Robert Heinecken, 1961–1976* (Pasadena, Calif.: Armory Center for the Arts, 2011), p. 6.

9. Heinecken often used the word *guerrilla* to describe his artistic process and outlook. See for example his statement in the present volume on page 154.

10. Among Heinecken's students were Ellen Brooks, Eileen Cowin, John Divola, and Uta Barth.

11. Heinecken's teaching files are housed at the CCP.

12. CCP, Robert Heinecken Archive, UCLA Teaching Files, AG45:42.

13. *Heinecken, Photographist: Oral History Transcript, 1996: Robert F. Heinecken*. Interview by Stephen K. Lehmer. Oral History Program, University of California, Los Angeles, 1998. http://oralhistory.library.ucla.edu/Browse.do?descCvPk=30080, accessed November 19, 2012.

14. For an overview of California photography of this era, see Charles Desmarais, *Proof: Los Angeles Art and the Photograph, 1960–1980* (Los Angeles: Fellows of Contemporary Art, 1992).

15. Heinecken's card from Mike Mandel's series of Baseball Photographer Trading Cards (illustrated in this volume on p. 164) begins: "Bob was the direct seeing radical synthesizer the West Coast Team of Photography had been looking for."

16. See Bohn-Spector and Mellon, eds., *Speaking in Tongues*.

17. Heinecken cited the influence of "an artistic activity called 'the happening,' currently redefined as performance" in reference to his performative projection works (see plates 5–8). CCP, Robert Heinecken Archive, UCLA Teaching Files, AG 45:42.

18. In many ways, Heinecken's photo-objects make explicit what Michael Fried sees as the durational, contingent, and overly subjective aspects of Minimal art. In Fried's book *Why Photography Matters as Art as Never Before* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2008), he connects Roland Barthes's concept of the *punctum* with the multiple subject positions offered by Minimal art. On this subject, I am grateful to Robert Slifkin for his perceptive reading.

19. See Fried's influential essay "Art and Objecthood" (*Artforum* 5, no. 10 [June 1967]: 12–23), in which he relates his theories about "objecthood" to objects that were created in the mid- to late 1960s as Minimalist art.

20. Heinecken, adapted from a lecture given at the CCP, January 28, 1976, in James Enyeart, ed., *Heinecken* (Carmel, Calif.: Friends of Photography, in association with Light Gallery, 1980), p. 116.

21. In 1968 the photograms were made into a portfolio of offset lithographs.

22. Heinecken, introduction to *Are You Rea* portfolio (1964–68) (Los Angeles, 1968).

23. Curator William Jenkins, in his 1980 essay on Heinecken, points out that the same three letters in a different arrangement would soon become familiar as the initials of the Equal Rights Amendment. He notes: "When this was pointed out by a student, Heinecken was pleased but not surprised." Jenkins, "Introduction," in Enyeart, ed., *Heinecken*, p. 14.

24. See Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," in *Image-Music-Text*, trans. by Stephen Heath (London: Fontana, 1977).

25. On this subject, I am indebted to Robert Slifkin's paper presented at the Robert Heinecken Scholars' Day at MoMA, May 17, 2013.

26. For a thorough account of Heinecken's work with periodicals, see David Pagel, "Pictures Turned Inside Out: Robert Heinecken's Homemade Magazines," in Lynne Warren, ed., *Robert Heinecken, Photographist: A Thirty-Five-Year Retrospective* (Chicago: Museum of Contemporary Art, 1999), pp. 27–31.

27. Ibid., p. 30.

28. CCP, Robert Heinecken Archive, Heinecken interview, Video Data Bank, 1976, #84:015.

29. Batten, in conversation with the author, February 28, 2013.

30. Heinecken, "I Am Involved in Learning to Perceive and Use Light," in Peter Thompson, ed., *Untitled 7/8: On Change & Exchange* (Carmel, Calif.: Friends of Photography, April 1974), p. 44. Reproduced in the present volume, pp. 158–59.

31. Heinecken, adapted from a 1976 lecture at the CCP, in Enyeart, ed., *Heinecken*, p. 92. Heinecken referred to his work with manipulating magazines as a "sick bed idea" as he began it while recovering from chicken pox in the late 1960s. See Joyce Neimanas interview, in *Speaking in Tongues: The Art of Wallace Berman and Robert Heinecken: Oral History Interviews* (Pasadena, Calif.: Armory Center for the Arts, 2011), pp 22–24. Pacific Standard Time Oral History Interviews with Artists, Filmmakers, Curartors Collectors and Critics, 2008–11. Getty Research Institute (IA4011) http://hdl.handle.net/10020/cifaia40011, accessed November 19, 2012.

32. Heinecken, "Learning to Perceive and Use Light," in Thompson, ed., *Untitled 7/8*, p. 46. See p. 159 in the present volume.

33. CCP, Robert Heinecken Archive, UCLA Teaching Files, AG45:42.

34. On this topic, I am indebted to Anne Tucker's lecture on Heinecken, delivered on the occasion of his retrospective at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, in 1999.

35. Douglas Huebler, "Untitled Statements (1968)," in Kristine Stiles and Peter Selz, eds., *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: A Sourcebook of Artists' Writings* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), p. 840.

36. Heinecken, untitled lecture, Symposium on Photography, Forum Stadtpark, Graz, September 29–October 2, 1979, in Manfred Willmann and Christine Frisinghelli, eds. *Symposion über Fotograafie/Symposion [sic] on Photography* (Graz, Austria: Forum Stadtpark, n.d. [1980]), p.17.

37. Krims's images of nudes were deemed highly offensive by a faction of the public when they were exhibited at a Memphis gallery in 1971. When a Memphis boy was kidnapped that year, his safe return was contingent on the removal of four Krims photographs (including *Aerosol Fiction*) from the show.

38. For more on this process, see Jennifer Jae Gutierrez, "Pinups, Photograms, Polaroids, and Printing Plates: Iterations in Robert Heinecken's Work Processes," in the present volume, p. 148.

39. An installation drawing found in the collection archives of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art maps a vertical configuration of the work.

40. Heinecken said of Robbe-Grillet: "I've been more affected by what I think his ideas are than by any other writer." Hagen, "Heinecken: An Interview," p. 11.

41. Heinecken originally made eleven versions, but five were destroyed in the 1976 studio fire.

42. The source material for the *Lingerie for a Feminist Suntan* works is from The Latent Image Company; the same model appears in *Cliché Vary*.

43. Heinecken, adapted from 1976 lecture at the CCP, in Enyeart, ed., *Heinecken*, p. 87.

44. Heinecken, "Statement by the Artist," in ibid., p. 6.

45. These works were subsequently made into a portfolio of lithographs, the first set of which was destroyed in the 1976 studio fire. Heinecken later created a second set, titled *Vary Cliché*.

46. CCP, Robert Heinecken Archive, UCLA Teaching Files, AG45:42.

47. Martha Rosler, "Lookers, Buyers, Dealers, and Makers: Thoughts on Audience," *Exposure* 17, no. 1 (Spring 1979): 22.

48. Allan Sekula, letter, *Spot* (Spring 1988): 24–25.

49. Martha Gever, "The Neurotic Erotic: Debating Art and Pornography," *Afterimage* 10, nos. 1–2 (Summer 1982): 5.

50. Nadine L. McGann, "Dumb Luck at SPE," *Afterimage* 19, no. 10 (May 1992): 3.

51. Mark Alice Durant, *Robert Heinecken: A Material History* (Tucson: Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona, 2003), p. 86.

52. Colin Westerbeck, "Tongue in Cheek," in Bohn-Spector and Mellon, eds., *Speaking in Tongues*, p. 7.

53. Eileen Cowin, interviewed by Claudia Bohn-Spector and Sam Mellon, c. 2009–10, transcript, pp. 17–20, Pacific Standard Time Oral History Interviews with Artists, Filmmakers, Curators, Collectors, and Critics, 2008–11, Getty Research Institute (IA40011). http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/kt1z09r9h1/dsc/#ref12, accessed November 19, 2012.

54. Joyce Neimanas, in conversation with the author, March 23, 2013.

55. Hagen, "Robert Heinecken: An Interview," p. 11.

56. Heinecken, quoted in Andy Grundberg, "Robert Heinecken—Asking Provocative Questions," *New York Times*, June 7, 1981, section 2, p. 31.

57. The text, which outlines Heinecken's breakdown of photographic expression versus objective description, is not always exhibited with the photographic panels. The artist left it to the curator to decide its relevance, as stated in his letter to John Szarkowski of March 1, 1985. Department of Photography correspondence files, The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

58. Ibid.

59. CCP, *Robert Heinecken*, from Voices of Photography: The Photographer at Work Series (2008), VOP08:020.

60. Joyce Neimanas, unpublished essay, CCP, Robert Heinecken Archive, Biographical Materials, 1962–, AG45:1.

61. As recounted by his friend and fellow artist Darryl Curran, interviewed by Claudia Bohn-Spector and Sam Mellon, June 6, 2009, transcript 11, Pacific Standard Time, Oral History Interviews with Artists, Filmmakers, Curators, Collectors, and Critics, 2008–11. The Getty Research Institute (IA40011).http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/kt1z09r9h1/dsc/#ref12, accessed November 19, 2012.

62. Heinecken, in conversation with A. D. Coleman, December 3–5, 1998; Coleman, "'I Call It Teaching': Robert Heinecken's Analytical Facture," in Warren, ed., *Heinecken, Photographist*, p. 7.

63. Matthew Biro expands on the idea of extremes in Heinecken's art in his essay "Reality Effects: Matthew Biro on the Art of Robert Heinecken," *Artforum* 50, no. 2 (October 2011): 250–59.

64. See Gutierrez's essay in this volume for more about Heinecken's working methods, and Heinecken's 1980 untitled text, p. 161, about leap-frogging.

Plates

1. **Visual Poem/About the Sexual Education of a Young Girl. 1965**

2. **Shadow of Figure. 1962**

3. **Strip of Light. 1964**

4. **Trapeze Figure. 1964**

5. **World War I Figure. 1964**

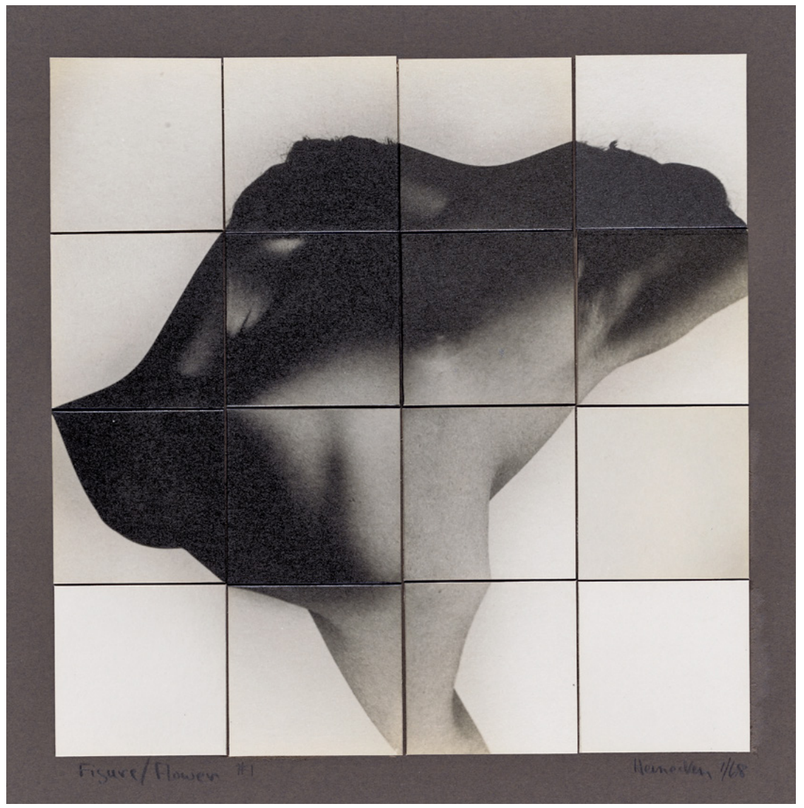
6. **Typographic Nude. 1965**

7. **Then People Forget You. 1965**

8. **Man and Figure. 1965**

9. **Twelve Figure Squares #2. 1967**

10. **Figure/Flower #1. 1968**



11. **Breast/Bomb #5. 1967**

12. **Breast/Bomb #6. 1967**

13. **Figure Cube. 1965**

14. **Figure in Six Sections. 1965**

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