

PHOTOMACHINÉES

“Art doesn't go to sleep in the bed made for it. It would sooner run away than say its own name: what it likes is to be incognito [...].”

Jean Dubuffet's famous quote comes up often enough for anyone interested in Art Brut to have it in mind. This call to exploration is both clear and uncompromising, offering to whoever hears it clues to uncover what is sufficiently close not to be considered and far enough from exhibition spaces not to be seen.

The inconspicuous person that one regularly encounters on flea markets and at secondhand stores is found here in family photographs. In this untamed mass of memories condemned to oblivion, forms are revealed that are neither entirely photographs nor objects. These small, emotion-laden fetishes were never intended to be exhibited. Collectors call them *photomachinées*.

By dint of patience and research, collectors have formed an ensemble ranging from simple cut-outs to more complex stagings where the original photographs become part of a different story. These creations were made from the late 19th century onwards and disappeared at the same time as photography on paper and the arrival of digital technology. While collecting these *photomachinées*, similarities were perceived which, regardless of place of origin and time of production, resulted in homogeneous sets: *photorejetées*, *photorescapées*, *photocaviardées*, *photoencadrées*, *photoadorées*...

After meeting in 2017, Antoine Gentil and Lucas Reitalov began a collection of family photos together that now boasts several tens of thousands of prints and a few hundred *photomachinées* all featured in this book.

Antoine Gentil, 35 years old, curator and author, passionate about Art Brut, he exhibits more or less famous artists at 57 bis, in a second-hand clothing store in the Pigalle district of Paris. His guiding thread is his search for the essence of art.

Lucas Reitalov, 53 years old, from Amsterdam. He is an art lover and collector with a passion for unfashionable works. He has multiple collections, from the Letterists to the oak leaves perforated by French 1st World War infantrymen, not forgetting Al Hensen's Venuses, popular art and Art Brut.