

Michael Mandiberg
Duncan Forbes
Pilvi Takala
Marina Vishmidt
Kathi Hofer
Anthony Carfello
Laura Bielau
Jens Asthoff
Larry Achiampong
Olamiju Fajemisin



From left to right: Gudmund Vidsun, Sven Johannesson Henriksen, Armand Henriksen, Per Barclay, and Brita Møystad Engseth. Installation view at Fotogalleriet, Oslo, 2022. Photo: Julie Hrnčířová/Fotogalleriet, Oslo.

Fotogalleriet, one of the epicenters of photography in the city, leaves us with mixed feelings. On paper, it's a wonderful initiative; a collaborative effort between the Norwegian photographer Fin Serck-Hanssen and the authors Bjørn Hatterud and Caroline Ugelstad Elnæs, presented in honor of the fiftieth anniversary of the decriminalization of homosexuality in Norway. Heavy on form and iconography, it's an exhibition that does not shy away from being queer—or at least not the public's perception of what it entails aesthetically. Glitter, sequins, and cheap fabrics, it's all here. At hand are various-sized portraits of various queer personalities and community leaders born before 1970, some mounted on textiles, others either framed resting against the wall or presented as floor-to-ceiling prints. Centrally placed in the space is also an installation of a circular-shaped, cushion-clad daybed enveloped in sheer fabrics on which written statements have been printed. Somewhere, there is a feeling of being stuck in time, being in the midst of something taken out of a Pride festival of the nineties. *Fun and sassy. Finger snap.* Of course, it's easy to see how this show could have been framed very differently. Having said this, given its celebratory purpose and historical throwback, the choices made by the curator, Antonio Cataldo, somehow make perfect sense. Seeing the portraits, people of all sizes and looks, a painful re-

minder emerges; how the young cis gay man of hegemonic beauty standards is still predominant in today's queer realm. Exhibitions like this one are so needed to remind us of what the trailblazing "face" of queer has been and continues to be, even as within the queer community itself some will disregard it as a "freakshow" to disassociate with and amp up existing stigma.

Ashik and Koshik Zaman are Stockholm-based (SE) curators and founders of *C-print Journal*, a noncommercial art project with the objective of highlighting diversity in artistic expression. Ashik Zaman currently works as a curator at SKF/Konstnärshuset, Stockholm.

Seiichi Furuya: Rewriting Memory

Seiichi Furuya, First Trip to Bologna 1978 / Last Trip to Venice 1985

Chose Commune, Marseille 2022

Fotografia Europea: An Invincible Summer

Reggio Emilia, 29. 4. – 12. 6. 2022

Photolux Festival: You Can Call It Love

Lucca, 21. 5. – 12. 6. 2022

by Mariacarla Molè

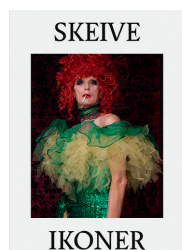
The only way I found to enter Seiichi Furuya's photographs is on tiptoe. Falling within his shots makes you feel as if someone had just left the room. A living presence is still palpable, and the only way to come in contact with it is by violating a sacred and intimate space. The presence of his wife, Christine Gössler, is predominant. After meeting in Graz in 1978, he photographed her throughout their life together. At home, outdoors, with their son Komyo-Klaus, alone, around people, smiling, marked by illness, or engrossed in something. But after her death, he continued to explore, reread, and reorder his private archive with an ongoing interest.

In March 2020, in the suspended temporal dimension due to the new coronavirus, Furuya decided to do "the final cleanup of my life" and get

rid of his archive, as he said in conversation with Tim Clark during the artist talk at Fotografia Europea. As if the lack of concentration and stamina, due to the virus, had left him space for an unexpected deep trip down memory lane, through pictures and film material he had utterly forgotten. These refreshing memories, stitched together, have become part of *First Trip to Bologna 1978 / Last Trip to Venice 1985*, the book he started to work on in 2020 but was published only recently by Chose Commune. It collects frames from Super 8 film rolls, in both color and black and white, that he recorded in Bologna in 1978, during the first holiday with Christine, and the photographs taken in Venice a few months before her death. In the two series, contexts and atmospheres are different and meld together public and private spheres: the places they visited, the streets they walked into, and the beds they slept on. His posthumous look reveals precious, almost forgotten shots of everyday moments, with all their spontaneity, but also pain and loss. Bologna's series is a stunning finding because Furuya did not even remember being there very shortly after they had met for the first time in Graz. Thus, after having seen like it was the first time, the digitized video, again and again, he decided to cut from the video the frames in order to imagine a new memory in the form of a book. The images, printed on a black background, are grainy and blurred, really close to melting in a TV snow effect, as if the oblivion had been deposited on top in the form of a bluish patina. It's a trip from the edge to the center, the human presence slowly coming, merging from the desolate and dark landscapes. Images become increasingly populated



Seiichi Furuya, Venice, 1985, from the series: Last Trip to Venice 1985. Inkjet print on Baryta, 35.7 × 23.9 cm. Courtesy: Chose Commune, Marseille. Copyright: the artist.



Skeive Ikoner (Queer Icons).

With a foreword and contributions by Bjørn Hatterud, Caroline Ugelstad Elnæs (nor.). With works by Fin-Serck Hanssen. Pitch, Oslo 2022. 302 pages, 17 × 24 cm, numerous color illustrations. Forthcoming

by a city life made by churches, people, pigeons, and streets. And Christine spans all of them, posing, smiling to the camera, or looking elsewhere. Rotating the book, the Venice series, on a white background, can be another starting point, another way to read their love story going back from the closest point to her death, but it also makes very clear that life and death drink from



Spread from: Seiichi Furuya, *First Trip to Bologna 1978 / Last Trip to Venice 1985*, 2022, n.p.

the same cup. Death thus gives new meaning to the lives of those still alive and allows them to create new memories and new stories. Christine's presence is more ephemeral and painful, in the middle of her struggle with psychotic symptoms, and Venice seems to be wrapped in a dreamy atmosphere. Color photographs are often overexposed, as if the sight were struggling to go elsewhere, maybe in one less painful place. Something like a layer keeps reality away, like the sea can give a little respite. Shots taken in Venice are inhabited by mirrors, vitrines, windows, and panes of glass that reflect other places, and this happens in the very city that continuously reflects itself on the water. Also, holding the book, through the dust jacket's weightlessness, one can see images overlapping other images in transparency as if they emerged from faraway places.

Seiichi Furuya makes his way through the debris of pain and void to reach a core still hot. And he has found forgotten memories in which the beholder meets her but also himself with joy. This aspect resonates in the verse by Albert Camus that inspired the seventeenth edition of *Fotografia Europea* in Reggio Emilia: "In the depths of winter, I finally learned that within me there lay *an invincible summer*."

As part of *An Invincible Summer*, the exhibition *First Trip to Bologna 1978 / Last Trip to Ven-*

ice 1985 displays along the timeline a selection of photos from both Italian trips. The two series flow in opposite directions, meeting and overlapping in the middle. In correspondence with this layering, Christine's mysterious and joyful young face and her nudes from behind, with colors shifted to blue, overlap the last Christine portraits, dominated by clear colors. The display of the exhibition thus also suggests a back-and-forth walking in the space, reflecting the work



Seiichi Furuya, *Izu 1978*, from the series: *Face to Face 1978–1985*, 2022. Type-C print, 17.7 × 25.2 cm. Copyright: the artist.

that Furuya did so as to reorganize and rewrite a memory frame by frame, a process that needs discontinuous time that goes back and forth.

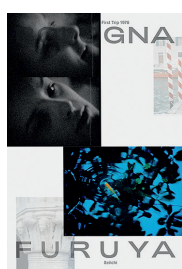
This dynamic way of enjoying his works in the exhibition reminds of Seiichi Furuya's nomadic attitude. He left Tokyo in 1973 and moved first to Vienna and later to Graz, where he was one of the founders of Camera Austria, and continued traveling a lot with Christine. There is the impression that, throughout his life, he has felt nowhere at home, except in his books.

And the eponymous exhibition in Lucca is again primarily based on a book, *Face to Face* published by Chose Commune in 2020. Rica Cerbarano curated it as part of the 2022 edition of Photolux Festival, *You Can Call It Love*, which investigates any possible declination of love. *Face to Face, 1978–1985* displays Seiichi and Christine's love story in the form of a visual dialogue in chronological order. Starting from his pictures taken by Christine, Furuya decides to compose photographic diptychs. Every couple of photos they inhabit the same space, the same

background, and the same feelings of complicity, trust, worry, intimacy, or overwhelmed bewilderment. The display activates an exchange of looks and a game of reflections—as the presence of mirrors inside of the exhibition makes visible—because we often need to recognize ourselves in those who face us. Taking photographs is a way to greet someone with no words and to transcend the linguistic barriers. It is also a way to communicate using a common language, to deepen each other's knowledge, and to meet on the same level, eye to eye, face to face. Furuya has found himself and his presence in the past, whether joyous or painful. The old photographs have become a tool to help find a piece of his former self, to remember his role in the past with Christine, but also to process the loss and reimagine life. It is pretty clear that they are not nostalgic images, for there is not the desire to save the past at all costs, but rather the awareness that "the ability to forget is very important for humans," again with Furuya's words that close the exhibition.

The fact that I had the chance to randomly spend a few days in Venice and to meet Christine's figure in Reggio Emilia and Lucca makes me feel like a thief of their images, their places, and their story. The books and the exhibitions are not the last chapters of this love story. There will be a story till death draws the curtain.

Mariacarla Molè, born 1991 in Ragusa (IT), graduated with a degree in philosophy and is now an independent researcher, freelancing for *il manifesto* (IT), *Flash Art* (IT), *ArtReview* (GB), *Domus* (IT), and *il Tascabile* (IT).



Seiichi Furuya: *First Trip to Bologna 1978 / Last Trip to Venice 1985*.

Ed. by Cécile Poinboeuf-Koizumi.

With a contribution by the artist (eng./fre./jap./ger.).

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