

**Jan Groover**  
**The Virtue of Balance**  
**9.9. – 22.10.2016**

**Opening: September 9 | 6-9 pm**

We are very happy to announce the first solo exhibition by Jan Groover (USA, 1943–2012) in Germany. Shown will be works spanning almost three decades as well as several groups of works that define the artist's œuvre.

Before Jan Groover dedicated herself to photography, she was a painter. Born in 1943 in Plainfield, New Jersey, Groover turned away from abstract painting in the early 1970s to experiment with the medium of photography – a medium that seemed more open than the restrictive and male-dominated painting of the time.

Her approach to photography, however, remained 'abstract' in a certain sense. Her works remind less of the supposed authenticity of the observed moment associated with the medium but rather show a consciously staged image. Color and form dominate, perspective is vague, spatial ambiguity is constructed, and light becomes an object in itself. Jan Groover was interested in photographic images that seemed precisely planned and made, rather than discovered and captured by the camera.

In the course of her artistic development, she eliminated the documentary elements from her works little by little and challenged the limits of the medium, investigating the relationship between the elements of an image – the aesthetic effect of structure and form – instead. Everything became form. Not just in her well known still lifes, for which she made her kitchen sink the site for formal-aesthetic experiments, but also in the early movement studies, the intimate figure photographs and the late, almost scenographic-looking arranged ensembles.

The astonishing thing is that Jan Groover's works never stayed locked in strict and dry formalism. Instead, whatever she photographed was leant – in an always striking fashion and in wonderful balance – a certain depth and an unprecedented charm.

John Szarkowski, art historian, curator, and at the time director of photography at MoMA, who presented a large solo exhibition of Jan Groover in 1987, put it this way: "Good to look at, good to think about." Groover's concentration on the formal aspects of diverse objects culminates in a rich visual experience, without sacrificing any of the artist's conceptuality or complexity.

Jan Groover's images don't just resonate as a subtle record of feminism and the acceptance of photography as art, but also as extraordinary aesthetic investigations of a 'fiction' that is inseparably bound with the 'factual' conventions of the medium. Her work is still influencing successive generations of artists and, especially in light of current digital conventions and procedural image creation, seems fresh and timeless at the same time.

*Jan Groover (born 1943 in Plainfield, USA; died 2012 in Montpon-Ménésterol, France) studied at the Pratt Institute and at Ohio State University. She has been represented in numerous solo and group exhibitions in the US and abroad. Her work was the focus of a mid-career retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1987, and the subject of solo exhibitions at, among others, the Baltimore Museum of Art, the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, and the International Museum of Photography, George Eastman House, in Rochester, New York. In addition, in the early 1990s, the photographer Tina Barney made a film about her titled Jan Groover: Tilting at Space.*