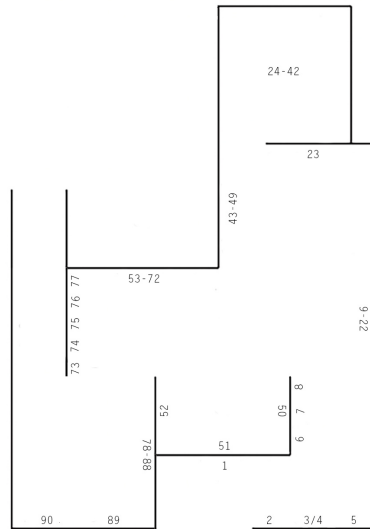


# SI

## Walter Pfeiffer May 4 – August 28, 2022

### GROUND LEVEL



**1. Untitled, 1966-1967**  
Mixed media on fiberboard  
105 x 107 in  
Collection of Ernst Reich

In 1966, Walter Pfeiffer moved to Zürich to attend art classes at Form + Fabre, a newly established art school led by educator and Marcel Duchamp scholar Serge Stauffer and artist Hansjörg Mattmüller. At this time, Pfeiffer was immersed in discourses of 20<sup>th</sup> century art: theories of color and shape established by the Bauhaus, philosophies of the absurd linked to Dada, and satirization of commercialism circulated by Pop Art in the 1960s. Liberated to create art that reflected his own interests and curiosities, Pfeiffer produced this large-scale depiction of a kitten across three panels of a folding screen. Upon its completion, Pfeiffer donated the work to an elementary school in the small town of Neunkirch, near his hometown, where it sat on display in a stairwell for decades.

**2. Untitled, 1971**  
Pencil on paper  
39 2/5 x 51 1/5 in  
Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Gregor Staiger, Zürich and Milan

**3. Untitled, 1970 (2022)**  
Pigment ink print  
15 3/4 x 23 5/8 in

**4. Untitled, 1970 (2022)**  
Pigment ink print  
15 3/4 x 23 5/8 in

Pfeiffer identifies these portraits of his sister, Maja, and friend, Lisa Enderli, as his first photographs. While his signature style of flash photography would develop throughout the 1970s, these early experiments with a camera showcase Pfeiffer's interest in posing and dress.

**5. Untitled, 1972**  
Watercolor and pen on paper  
19 x 26 in

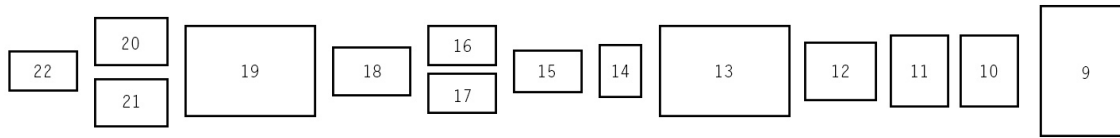
**6. Untitled, 1975 (2022)**  
Pigment ink print  
12 x 17 ¾ in

**7. Untitled, 1975 (2022)**  
Pigment ink print  
12 x 17 ¾ in

**8. Untitled, 1975 (2022)**  
Pigment ink print  
12 x 17 ¾ in

Three photographs depict German actress and sex worker Irene Staub posing on satin sheets while gazing provocatively at Pfeiffer's camera. These pictures served as source material for Pfeiffer's illustrated film posters for the Zürich cinema Filmpodium, whose commissions

supported Pfeiffer financially in the early 1970s. Later in the decade, Staub became a muse for artists including Luciano Castelli, Roswitha Hecke and Franz Gertsch, who depicted her in a monumental photorealist portrait in 1980.



This wall showcases artworks made by Pfeiffer from 1970-1980, a formative decade for the artist. Entrenched in Zürich's counterculture, Pfeiffer fashioned an identity as both an eccentric bon vivant and sharp observer of experimentation and expression amongst the city's youth. Pfeiffer's residences throughout the decade, particularly a 19<sup>th</sup>-century villa in the center of Zürich, became hubs for creative-minded individuals. With an inexpensive Polaroid camera, Pfeiffer began photographing his visitors, pasting the pictures in "guestbooks" that also featured the subjects' signatures. Characterized by a strong flash and casual composition, Pfeiffer's photography soon developed into a substantive practice that married candid depictions of gay sexuality and homosocial playfulness with empty vistas and careful studies of domestic life. Together, a selection of these pictures coalesced in the publication, *Walter Pfeiffer: 1970-1980*. Capitalizing on his momentum, Pfeiffer headed to New York City in 1980 for a government-sponsored residency, where he lived in an apartment on West Broadway.

**9. Untitled, 1972**

Pencil on paper  
51 x 39 1/3 in  
Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Gregor Staiger, Zürich and Milan

**10. Untitled, 1974 (2022)**

Pigment ink print  
15 3/4 x 23 5/8 in

**11. Untitled, 1978 (2009)**

Black and white inkjet print  
19 1/3 x 21 1/2 in  
Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Sultana, Paris

**12. Untitled, 1976**

Colored pencil on paper  
19 3/4 x 27 3/4 in

**13. Untitled, 1974 (2022)**

Pigment ink print  
31 1/2 x 47 1/4 in

**14. Untitled, 1974 (2003)**

Black and white print  
9 1/2 x 13 in  
Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Bob van Orsouw, Zürich

**15. Untitled, 1979 (2022)**

Pigment ink print  
17 3/4 x 11 2/3 in

**16. Untitled, 1979 (2022)**

Pigment ink print  
17 3/4 x 11 2/3 in

**17. Untitled, 1979 (2022)**

Pigment ink print  
17 3/4 x 11 2/3 in

**18. Untitled, 1975 (2022)**

Pigment ink print  
15 3/4 x 23 5/8 in

**19. Untitled, 1976 (2022)**

Pigment ink print  
31 1/2 x 47 1/4 in

**20. Untitled, 1974 (2022)**

Pigment ink print  
15 3/4 x 23 5/8 in

**21. Untitled, 1975 (2022)**

Pigment ink print  
15 3/4 x 23 5/8 in

**22. Untitled, 1976 (2022)**

Pigment ink print  
17 3/4 x 11 2/3 in

**23. Carlo Joh, 1973**

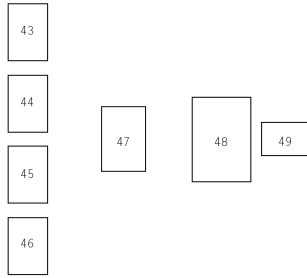
Pencil on paper  
66 x 39 1/3 in  
Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Gregor Staiger, Zürich

**24-42. (All works, from left, clockwise)**

**Untitled, 1973**  
Gelatin-silver print on document paper  
8 3/4 x 11 3/4 in  
Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Gregor Staiger, Zürich

In 1973, Pfeiffer was invited by Swiss curator Jean-Christophe Ammann to participate in a group exhibition at Switzerland's Kunstmuseum Lucerne entitled *Transformer: Aspekte der Travestie*. Groundbreaking for its perceptive understanding of gender fluidity and sexual expression in both contemporary art circles and popular music at the time, the exhibition placed artists like Pfeiffer and Urs Luthi in dialogue with Brian Eno, Mick Jagger and the New York Dolls. For his contribution, Pfeiffer enlisted a new muse named Carlo Joh, whom he had met in the library of Zürich's art school earlier that year. Across four sittings, Pfeiffer photographed Joh in varying states of dress and drag, light and shadow. The 19 photographs shown here were printed surreptitiously in the art school's photo lab on special document paper, lending them a subtle metallic sheen. Shortly after the

exhibition in Lucerne closed, Joh died of an undisclosed illness. Pfeiffer's exhibition at Swiss Institute marks the first time these works have been presented since their original 1974 showing in Lucerne.



**43. Untitled, 1984 (1992)**

Cibachrome print  
21 5/8 x 16 1/2 in  
Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Bob van Orsouw, Zürich

**44. Untitled, 1984 (1992)**

Cibachrome print  
21 5/8 x 16 1/2 in  
Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Bob van Orsouw, Zürich

**45. Untitled, 1984 (2022)**

Pigment ink print  
21 5/8 x 16 1/2 in

**46. Untitled, 1984 (2022)**

Pigment ink print  
21 5/8 x 16 1/2 in

**47. Untitled, 1985**

Pigment ink print  
23 5/8 x 15 3/4 in

**48. Untitled, 1971**

Colored pencil on paper  
31 3/4 x 26 in  
Courtesy of Restaurant Kronenhalle, Zürich

This early pencil drawing depicts. Hulda Zumsteg (1890-1984), Swiss hostess, restaurateur and proprietor of the Kronenhalle, Zürich's renowned dining room and bar. Both a muse and a patron, Zumsteg counted Bertold Brecht, Christobal Balenciaga and Yves Saint Laurent amongst her customers and friends. Art from 20<sup>th</sup> century masters including Joan Miró, Pablo Picasso and Robert Rauschenberg adorns the walls of the entire establishment. A gift to her son, Gustav, Pfeiffer's portrait of Zumsteg hangs in the restaurant's office.

**49. Untitled, 1976**

Crayon  
15 3/4 x 20 in  
Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Gregor Staiger, Zürich

**50. Untitled, 1997**

Gouache on paper  
28 1/2 x 36 1/2 in

**51. Untitled, 1994**

Gouache on paper  
33 x 44 3/4 in  
Collection of Torvio11 Jashari

**52. Untitled, 1996**

Gouache on paper  
42 1/2 x 32 in

Following a decade of travel and activity in the 1980s, in which the artist produced a third photography book, exhibited at Kunsthalle Basel in a two-person exhibition with Bruce Weber (also curated by Ammann) and began photographing for erotic gay magazines such as *Gai Pied* and *Torso*, Pfeiffer's interest shifted. In a more solitary practice of still life painting, he frequently depicts meticulously arranged, chromatically cohesive tablescapes and bouquets from his mother's garden. Pfeiffer often takes photos of his arrangements as a preparatory measure before painting, and later imbues his tableaux with psychedelic detail.



**53. Untitled, 1995 (2022)**

Pigment ink print  
16 3/4 x 24 3/4 in

**54. Untitled, 1983 (2022)**

Pigment ink print  
16 3/4 x 24 3/4 in

**55. Untitled, 1998 (2022)**

Pigment ink print  
16 3/4 x 24 3/4 in

**56. Untitled, 1981 (2022)**

Pigment ink print  
16 3/4 x 24 3/4 in

**57. Untitled, 1996 (2022)**

Pigment ink print  
16 3/4 x 24 3/4 in

**58. Untitled, 1998 (2022)**

Pigment ink print  
16 3/4 x 24 3/4 in

**59. Untitled, 2008 (2022)**

Pigment ink print  
16 3/4 x 24 3/4 in

**60. Untitled, 1983 (2022)**

Pigment ink print  
16 3/4 x 24 3/4 in

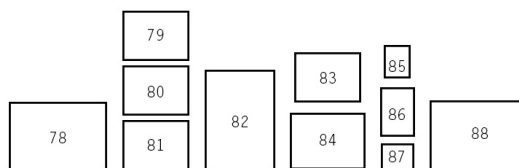
**61. Untitled, 1982 (2022)**

Pigment ink print  
16 3/4 x 24 3/4 in

**62. Untitled, 2004 (2022)**

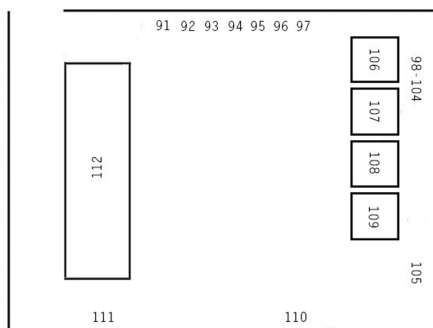
Pigment ink print  
16 3/4 x 24 3/4 in

63. **Untitled, 2003** (2022)  
Pigment ink print  
16 ¼ x 24 ¼ in
64. **Untitled, 1995** (2022)  
Pigment ink print  
16 ¼ x 24 ¼ in
65. **Untitled, 2003** (2022)  
Pigment ink print  
16 ¼ x 24 ¼ in
66. **Untitled, 1983** (2022)  
Pigment ink print  
16 ¼ x 24 ¼ in
67. **Untitled, 1995** (2022)  
Pigment ink print  
16 ¼ x 24 ¼ in
68. **Untitled, 2003** (2022)  
Pigment ink print  
16 ¼ x 24 ¼ in
69. **Untitled, 1991** (2022)  
Pigment ink print  
16 ¼ x 24 ¼ in
70. **Untitled, 1995** (2022)  
Pigment ink print  
16 ¼ x 24 ¼ in
71. **Untitled, 1980** (2022)  
Pigment ink print  
16 ¼ x 24 ¼ in
72. **Untitled, 1989** (2022)  
Pigment ink print  
16 ¼ x 24 ¼ in
73. **Untitled, 2004** (2022)  
Pigment ink print  
24 x 17 ¼ in
74. **Untitled, 1995** (2022)  
Pigment ink print  
24 x 17 ¼ in
75. **Untitled, 1994** (2022)  
Pigment ink print  
24 x 17 ¼ in
76. **Untitled, 1997** (2022)  
Pigment ink print  
24 x 17 ¼ in
77. **Untitled, 1974** (2022)  
Pigment ink print  
24 x 17 ¼ in



78. **Untitled, 2004** (2022)  
Pigment ink print  
16 ¼ x 24 ¼ in
79. **Untitled, 2005** (2022)  
Pigment ink print  
12 ¼ x 18 ½ in
80. **Untitled, 2006** (2022)  
Pigment ink print  
12 ¼ x 18 ½ in
81. **Untitled, 2004** (2022)  
Pigment ink print  
12 ¼ x 18 ½ in
82. **Untitled, 2005** (2022)  
Pigment ink print  
24 x 17 ¼ in
83. **Untitled, 1976** (2022)  
Pigment ink print  
12 ¼ x 18 ½ in
84. **Untitled, 1989** (2015)  
Inkjet print on satin paper  
15 x 21 in  
Private collection
85. **Untitled, 1981** (2022)  
Pigment ink print  
6 ¾ x 9 ¾ in
86. **Untitled, 1996**  
Gouache on paper  
14 ¼ x 10 ¼ in
87. **Untitled, 2005** (2022)  
Pigment ink print  
9 ¾ x 6 ¾ in
88. **Untitled, 2005** (2022)  
Pigment ink print  
16 ¼ x 24 ¼ in
89. **Untitled, 1975** (1992)  
Cibachrome print  
21 5/8 x 16 ½ in  
Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Bob van  
Orsouw, Zürich
90. **Untitled, 2016** (2022)  
Pigment ink print  
39 ½ x 59 ¼ in

SECOND FLOOR



91. *Untitled*, 2007 (2022)

Pigment ink print, 9 ¾ x 6 ¾ in

92. *Untitled*, 1988 (2022)

Pigment ink print, 9 ¾ x 6 ¾ in

93. *Untitled*, 1978 (2022)

Pigment ink print, 16 ¼ x 24 ¼ in

94. *Untitled*, 1975

Unique black and white vintage print

18 1/4 x 14 5/8 in

Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Bob van Orsouw, Zürich

95. *Untitled*, 1980 (2022)

Black and white print, 24 ¼ x 16 ¼ in

96. *Walter* (from the series *Chez Walti*), 1977 (2004)

Cibachrome print, 13 ¾ x 11 in

Collection Fotomuseum Winterthur

97. *Untitled*, 1970 (2022)

Pigment ink print, 16 ¼ x 24 ¼ in

98 to 104. *Untitled* (from the series *Die Augen, die Gedanken, unentwegt wandernd*), 1986

Gelatin silver print, 21 x 19 ½ in

Collection Fotomuseum Winterthur

Photographed in Paris and Zürich, the series *Die Augen, die Gedanken, unentwegt wandernd* (*The eyes, the thoughts, ceaselessly wandering*) frames the faces of young men in clinically uniform close-ups. Some models for the series were cast from chance encounters on the street, though several of Pfeiffer's acquaintances appear as well. In an essay in the Summer 2003 issue of *Artforum*, critic and curator Bob Nickas writes of the series: "As Pfeiffer gets up close, he no longer occupies the space of a voyeur standing safely at a distance but an intimate space, where the person seen is there. Pfeiffer understands that scale relates directly to the viewer, and it is to the viewer, not the subject, that the term life-size can be applied...Evidence for Pfeiffer, no matter how direct, is never delivered dispassionately, and seduction is rarely achieved from a distance."

105. *Self-portrait*, 1973

Pencil on paper, 78 ¾ x 47 ¼ in

Collection of Verena & H.R. Fricker

106, 107. *Documentation of Assorted Notebooks*, 1971-1985

108. *Documentation of Assorted Guestbooks and Scrapbooks*, 1971-1990

Throughout his adult life, Pfeiffer has kept a series of notebooks, guestbooks and scrapbooks as both a diaristic endeavor and a forum for artistic experimentation. Pfeiffer's notebooks are characterized by their extensive use of text, usually ruminations on a single prompt or concept. A photo, either the artist's own or a clipping from a book, magazine or newspaper, typically accompanies the entry. Guestbooks, which the artist made in the 1970s, follow a similar logic in which a single portrait is adorned with the subject's signature and often a note to the artist. The scrapbooks, the most formally diverse of the artist's books, unite Pfeiffer's photographs and clippings from print media with tchotchkes, souvenirs and occasionally foodstuffs. Pfeiffer started this practice in 1971 when he began working for Zürich's Globus department store and received a daily planner as a new employee. Rather than fill its pages with tasks, Pfeiffer used each page to accumulate images and items of interest including: tabloid clippings, celebrity glamour shots, a baby's pacifier, museum postcards and sausage casings. These subtly harmonious compositions, suffuse with deadpan and tawdry humor, typify Pfeiffer's interest in arrangement and affect.

109. *Music for Millions*, 1977

Video, 19 min 29 sec

*The Plaza*, 1981-2005

Video, 3 min 10 sec

These videos demonstrate Pfeiffer's experimental approach to moving images. In *Music for Millions*, a group of friends and muses gather to enact scenes and dances with musical accompaniment from the radio. Pfeiffer began teaching in 1983, filling in for a professor who was ill. He soon was hired by F+F, his former art school, as a professor where he taught in the 1980s and 1990s. Pfeiffer channeled the classroom's collaborative energy into his work often casting his students as models. *The Plaza*, a work named for Pfeiffer's favorite hotel, shows these students and friends over two decades experimenting in the studio. Across these sessions, Pfeiffer has one rule: invent something new, from scratch.

110. *Untitled*, 1989

Gouache on paper, 14 ¼ x 10 ¼ in

Collection of Beda Achermann

111. *Untitled*, 1990

Gouache on paper, 37 ½ x 31 ½ in

Collection of Torvioll Jashari

112. *Selected Scrapbooks*, 1971-1988

Unless otherwise noted, all works courtesy of the artist.