

David Zwirner
34 East 69th Street
New York, NY 10021

Köln, February 27, 2020

Dear Andrea Cashman,

The official title of this exhibition is *Footwear (Adapted for Use)*. Three additional titles – *How German Is It, One American Photograph*, and *Standard Men's Insoles (Adapted for Use)* – can be introduced as “mistakes” into the system of information distribution regarding the exhibition.

Production notes for Models 2745, 1542, and 1316:

6 pillows, 552.00 € (BRD); 6 linen pillowcases, 192.00 € (DDR); 3 linen sheets, 432.00 € (DDR); 3 duvets, 567.00 € (BRD); 2 linen duvet covers, 492.00 € (DDR); 2 yak-hair blankets, 772.00 € (BRD); 3 sets of pyjamas, 247.16 € (DDR); Model No. 2745 (Son) 3 days/9 hours,¹ 1,232.84 €; Model No. 1542 (Mother), 3 days/24 hours, 3,852.62 €; Model No. 1316 (Father), 3 days/24 hours, 3,852.62 €.

The family picture is organized around three focal planes. This is a family of professionals, lifestyle models skilled in the art of producing the appearance of sleep. Each model is calibrating their performance to correspond to their specific position as it relates to the three planes of focus. To feign the visible conditions of sleep for hours, remaining motionless, with eyes closed, while a team of technicians calibrate lighting, adjust camera settings, maintain hair and makeup, and arrange set and wardrobe details for continuity and blocking, requires a great deal of discipline. In this “production play”, in this Cold War drama, the cloak of labor provides cover for dreaming. The son, Model No. 2745, is positioned 105.5 cm away from the lens, and, unlike the mother and father,² is in sharp focus. Although he is a model, producing an image of sleep for the camera, and although his sleepwear has been pressed and prepared for this production, his garment appears to be several sizes larger than necessary. While this is readily apparent to anyone looking at the photograph, what is not so obvious is a detail that becomes clear upon the examination of the garment label: HANOI TOCONTAP VIETNAM 48. The sleepwear was rented from Adlershofer Fundus Kostüm- & Requisitenverleih in Berlin, a prop house specializing in props and costumes for period film and theater productions set in former East Germany. But what about the mother and father? To focus is to assert a preference for one surface over another. What value or significance is assigned to this focus and why is it privileged? What are the ideological implications of depth of field? What does the son's isolation mean? To speak of one thing, it is necessary to remain silent in regard to another. A model is a representation of a system.

Please note that the text “Is every sentence containing the word ‘worker’ a socialist sentence? Is every picture in which a worker is depicted a socialist picture?” should instead read: “Vietnam as Subject. Vietnam as Form. Vietnam as Genre.” There are 54 characters in this quote, 4,721 characters in this letter, and 6 to 8 framed photographs, 6 hand-painted signs, 6 vitrines with archival materials, 2 digital videos, 2 monitors, 2 constructed walls, 2 Franz West sofas, 1 poster, 1 publication, 1,017.37 sq. ft. yards of East German wallpaper,³ 507.3 sq. ft. of West German wallpaper, and 997.63 sq. ft. of seed pearl paint in this exhibition.

Amicably,

Christopher Williams

- 1 According to the Jugendarbeitsschutz (Youth Employment Protection) permit #56.4-J-23/19-Ht, filed by Rotznasen Kinder Modelagentur with Bezirksregierung Düsseldorf on September 25, 2019, legal exemption for the employment of children at advertising events (fashion show, fair) and advertising recordings (photo, film) limits labor of children six years and above to a maximum of three hours per day, between 8 a.m. and 10 p.m. These restrictions, while carefully observed during our production, work directly against the time and labour necessitated by the optical conditions of a large-format analogue photographic production.
- 2 The positions of each of the models in relation to the focal plane were as follows: Father: 231 cm from lens. Mother: 159 cm from lens. Son: 105.5 cm from lens. The image was photographed using an Arca Swiss M-series 8x10 camera with a Schneider-Kreuznach Symmar-S 6,8/360 lens. The aperture was set at f16 1/3.
- 3 *Rauhfaser* is a wallcovering which consists of several layers of paper, in which texture-forming wood fibers are incorporated. Its omnipresence in Germany during the Cold War period, and its intersection with politics in a divided nation, is apparent in anything from installation photographs of exhibitions at Berlin's Neue Nationalgalerie and Kölner Kunstmarkt to production stills shot by Holger Meins on the set of Günter Peter Straschek's 1968 film *Ein Western für den SDS*.