

18. Oktober 1977 FULL CIRCLE



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This body of work is conceived in dialogue with Gerhard Richter's *18. Oktober 1977* (1988), a cycle of paintings based on press photographs of the Baader-Meinhof group. As Richter based his paintings on photographs from newspapers, magazine clippings, and other published sources, I went FULL CIRCLE. As Richter appropriated photography for his paintings, I appropriated his paintings for my work.

That puts the paintings a step below in the process of my work, and by the same token, I go full circle to their origins. I am not attempting to compete with Richter's paintings; the medium of painting has very different expressive strengths, and these paintings by Richter hold a special place in contemporary art because they confronted one of Germany's most difficult historical subjects with extraordinary artistic courage. However, bringing the images full circle, back to photography, results in a re-evaluation of Richter's paintings, the issues they raised, and the medium of photography. My photographs do not attempt to add anything to Richter's work, but rather to explore its origins, to deconstruct them to their simplest terms, and to re-depict the source of his inspiration.

The art world saw painters being inspired by photographs, validating photography as art. I attempt to go one step further and use the paintings to inspire my work. The figures one sees in some of the photographs are paper cutouts of me (see Arrest 1 (Festnahme 1) B or Funeral (Beerdigung) B). I could have achieved my purpose with Photoshop. Instead, I intentionally used cruder paper cutouts to bring a freshness to the artificiality of the images in a digital world where photographs are increasingly easy to manipulate and people increasingly distrust what they see.

It is crucial to constantly look at the past with fresh eyes and use it to re-evaluate what is happening politically in the world at any given time. For example, in Youth Portrait (Jugendbildnis), the painting based on the photograph of Ulrike Meinhof's portrait, I attempt to raise questions and open dialogues: Who is she? Why is she being portrayed by a male artist? Who were the Baader-Meinhof group?

Spiros Margaritis

Acknowledgement

This body of work is conceived in dialogue with Gerhard Richter's *18. Oktober 1977* (1988). Gerhard Richter and the referenced artworks are acknowledged with respect. Comparative reproductions of Richter's paintings are included solely as visual references to the accompanying text. Images of Richter's works are reproduced solely for purposes of critical comparison and documentation.

About My Works

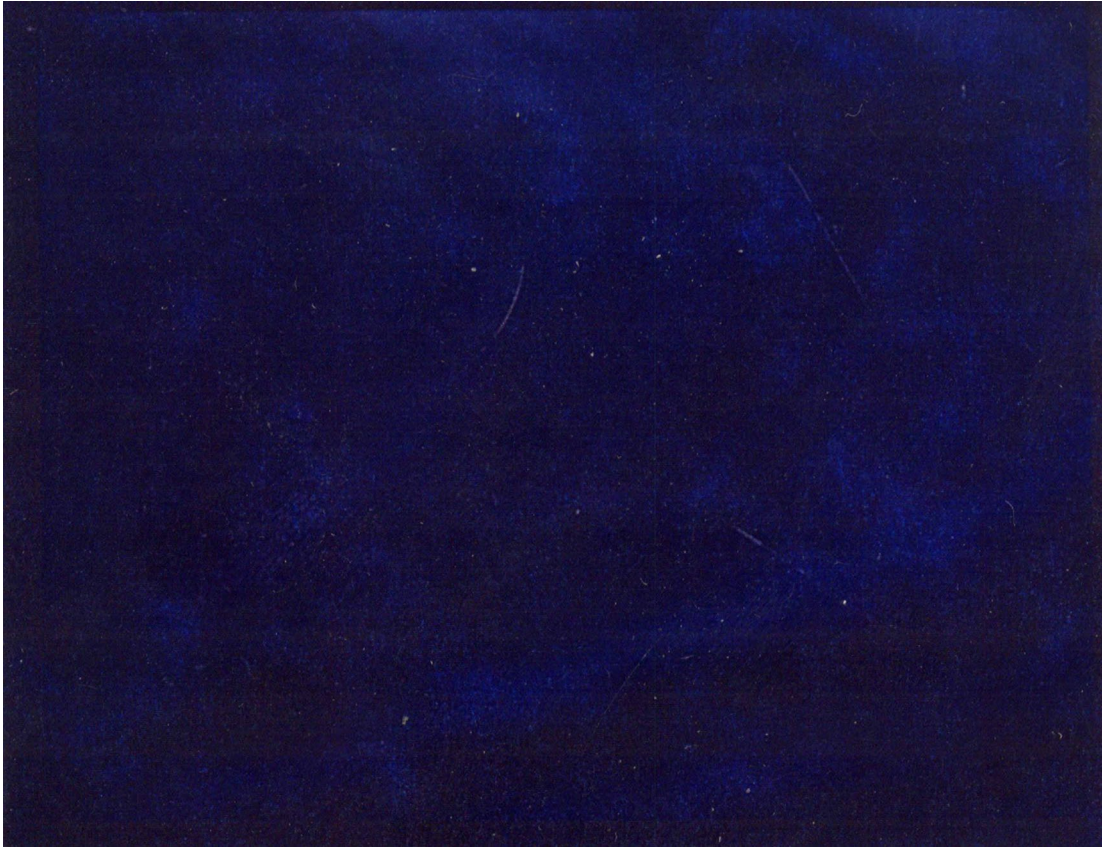
In each of my works, I am the primary material, the sole actor, as well as the historian of the performance. Each of my works consists of at least two images, identical except that I appear in the second and any subsequent images. I have always been inspired by old cinema, and for that reason, I gravitate toward producing my work in a larger-scale format that approaches the big screen of the cinema.

I include myself in the images so that I can step into, experience, and explore the spaces depicted in my pictures, and then document my performance in those spaces through photography. All of the spaces I photograph were created for human use and occupation, and my entry into the frame represents the space's humanization, allowing me to express my specific interpretation of how it might be experienced.

In each case where I appear in the work, I try to melt into the worlds I portray, but, simultaneously, my insertion into the space also completely alters the meaning of the image of the unoccupied space. The interpretation of the spaces that I invade changes completely through my presence. I replace the viewer's understanding of the image with my own. I regain control and force the viewer to participate in the story I am telling, reminding them that interactivity is merely an illusion of control. To understand my work, like any work of art, the viewer must suspend that illusion and surrender to my vision.

This is just as in everyday life, where we are forced to deal with constantly changing realities. The entrance of any of us into a space creates a new reality. And each new reality is different from any one that came before it, as no reality can be recreated identically a second time.

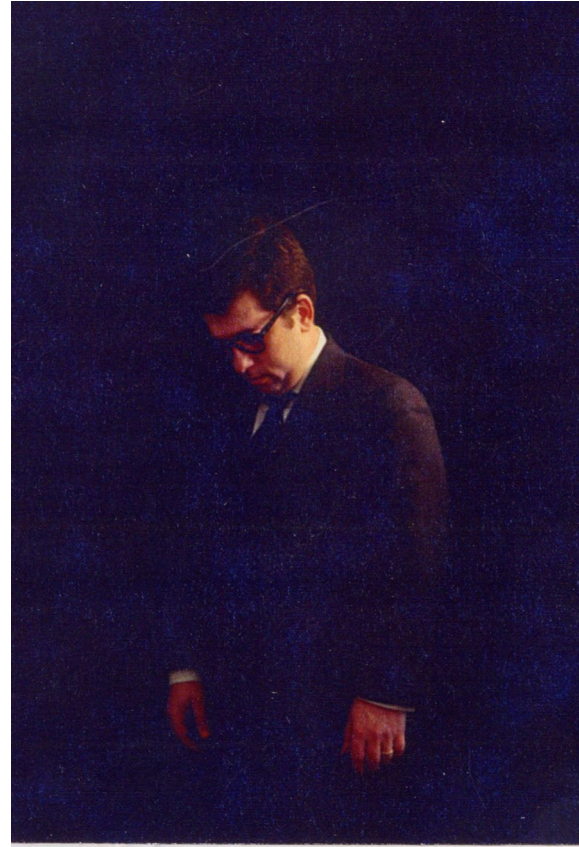
Spiros Margaritis



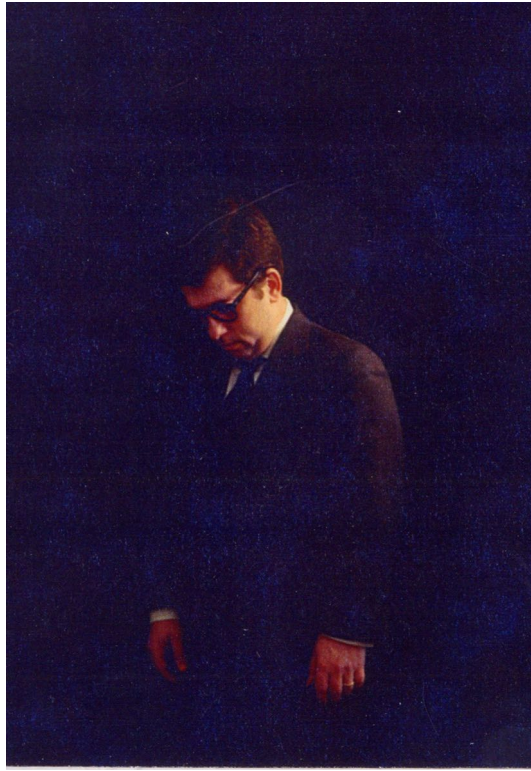
Dead (Tote) A & B



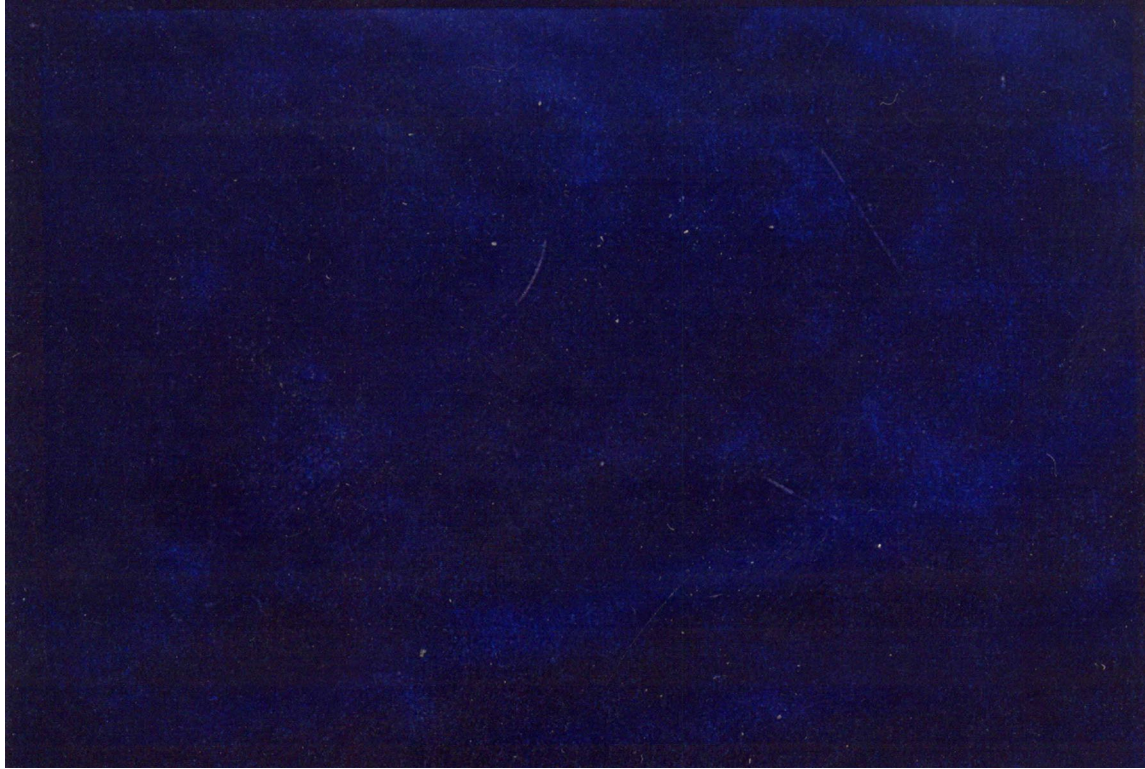
Dead (Tote) A & B



Hanged (Erhängte) A & B



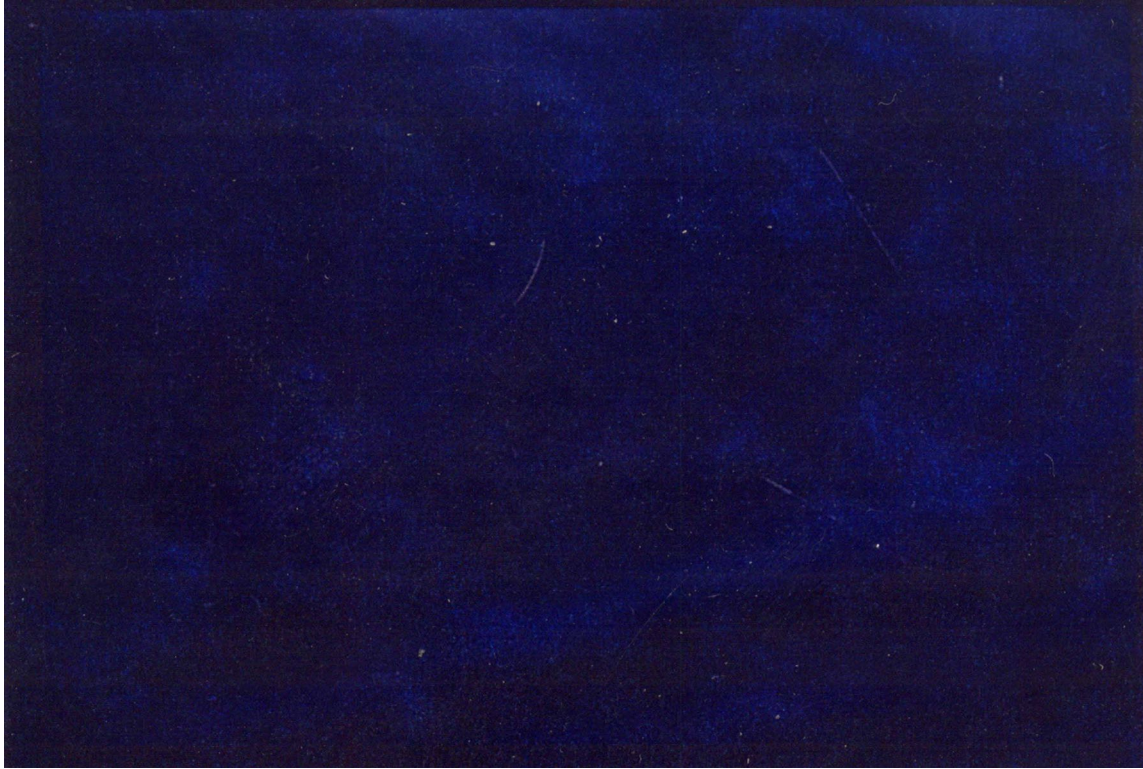
Hanged (Erhängte) A & B



Man Shot Down 1 (Erschossener 1) A & B



Man Shot Down 1 (Erschossener 1) A & B



Man Shot Down 2 (Erschossener 2) A & B



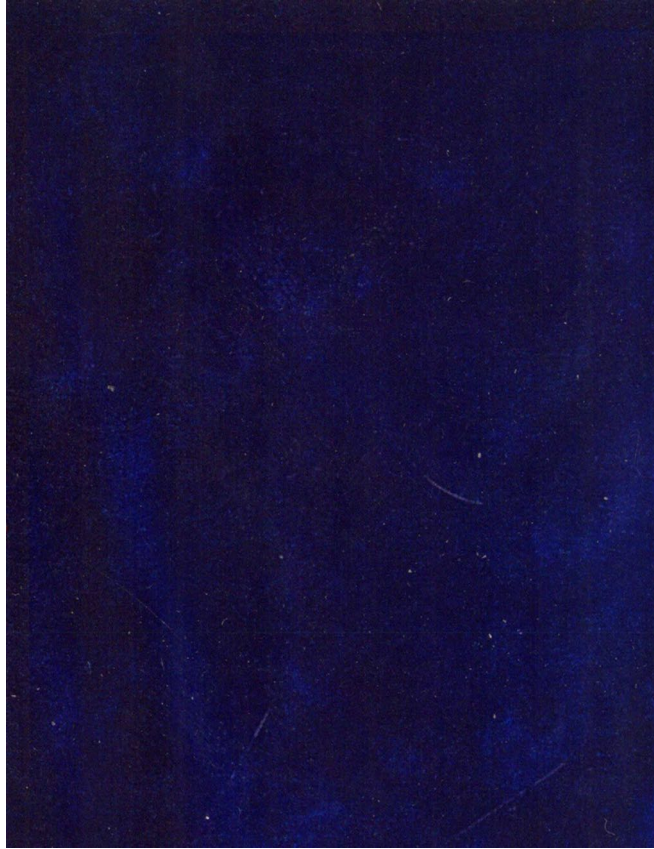
Man Shot Down 2 (Erschossener 2) A & B



Cell (Zelle) A & B



Cell (Zelle) A & B



Confrontation 1 (Gegenüberstellung 1) A & B



Confrontation 1 (Gegenüberstellung 1) A & B



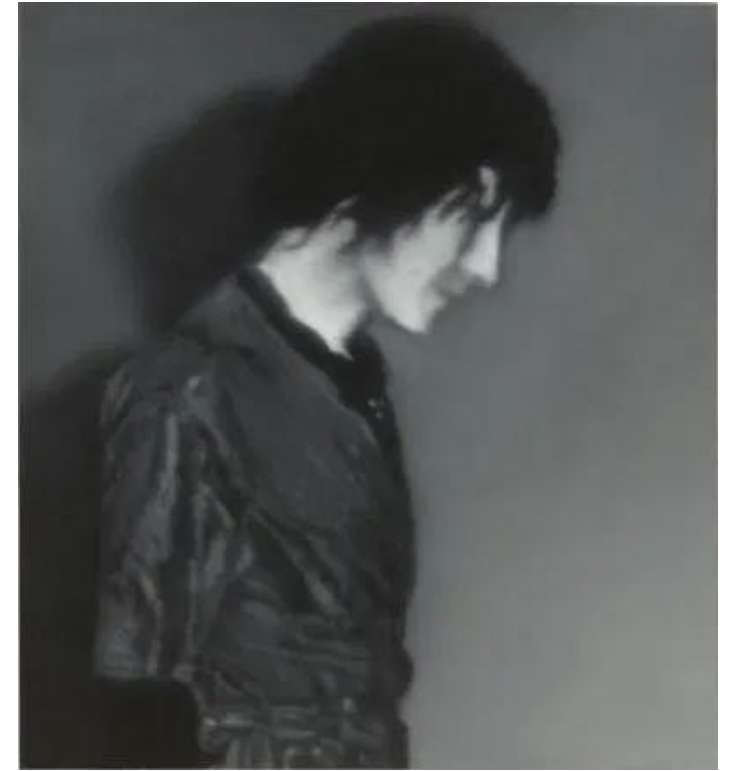
Confrontation 2 (Gegenüberstellung 2) A & B



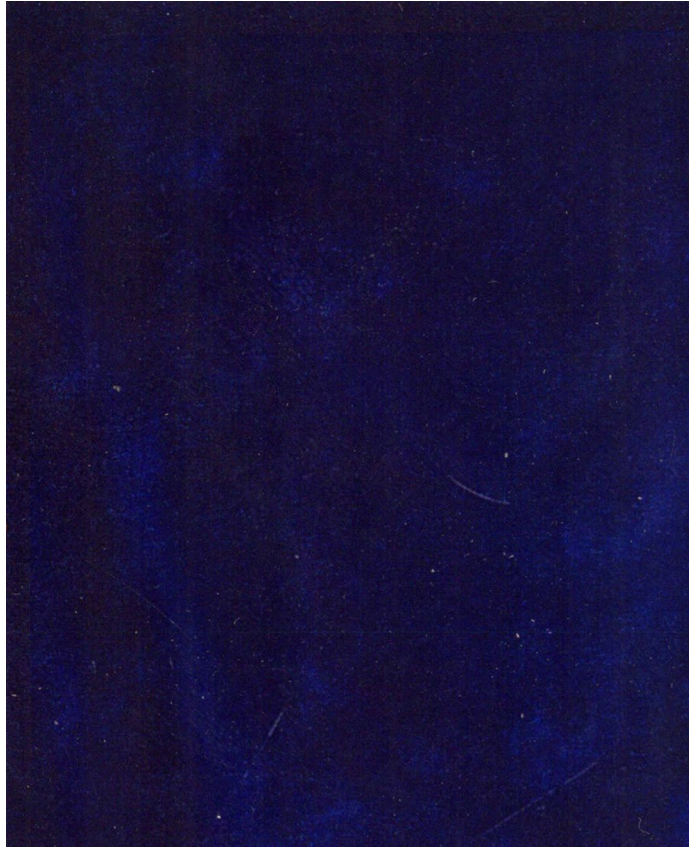
Confrontation 2 (Gegenüberstellung 2) A & B



Confrontation 3 (Gegenüberstellung 3) A & B



Confrontation 3 (Gegenüberstellung 3) A & B



Youth Portrait (Jugendbildnis) A & B



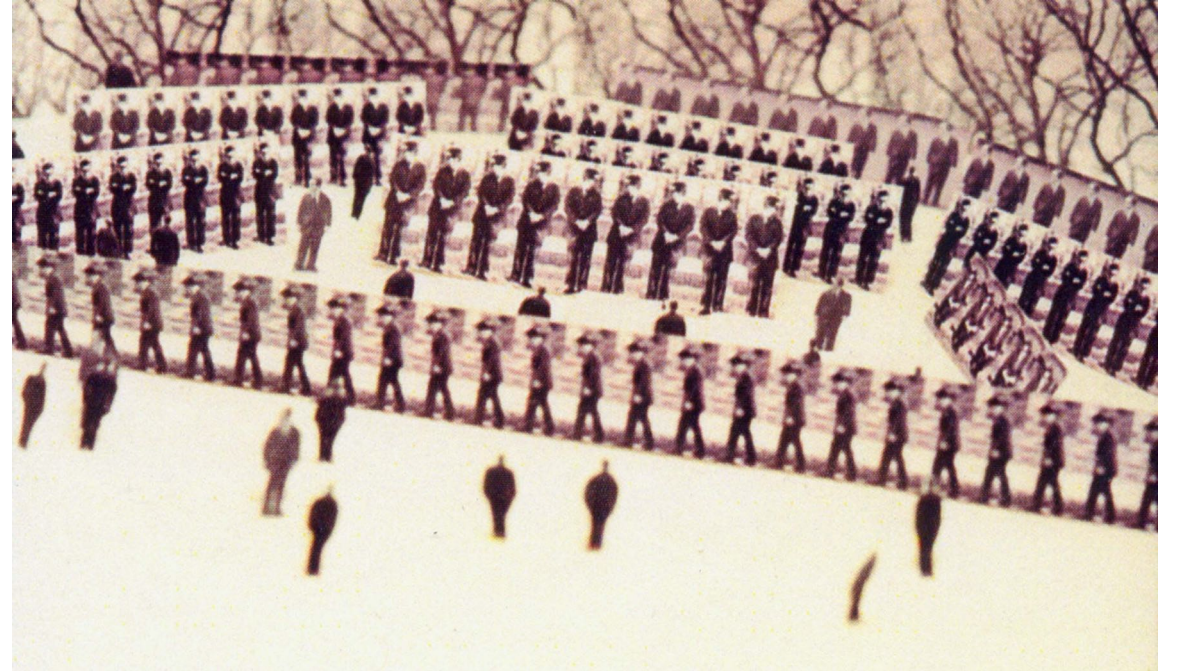
Youth Portrait (Jugendbildnis) A & B



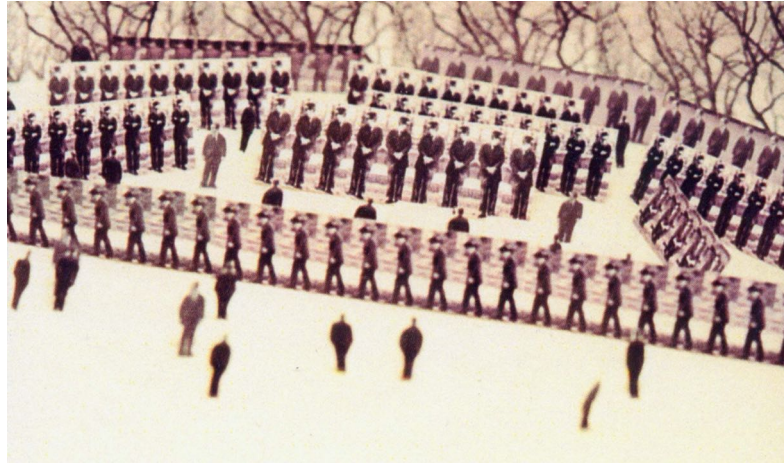
Record Player (Plattenspieler) A & B



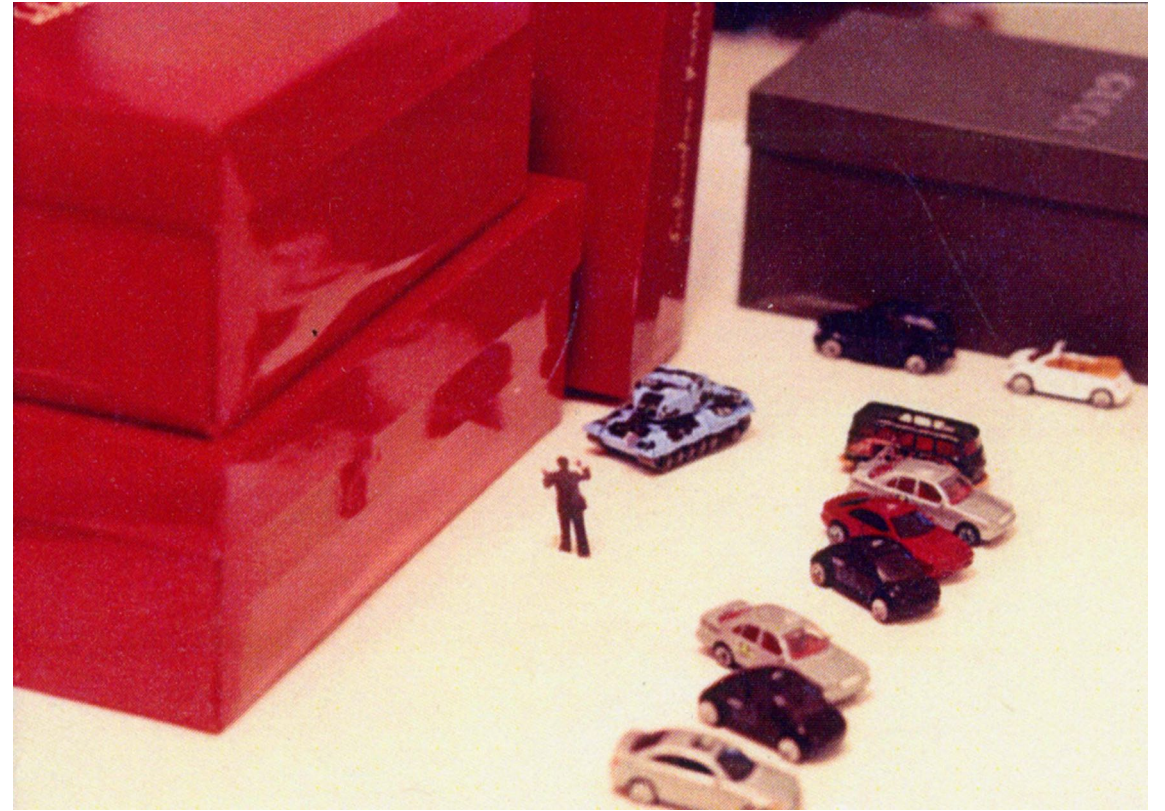
Record Player (Plattenspieler) A & B



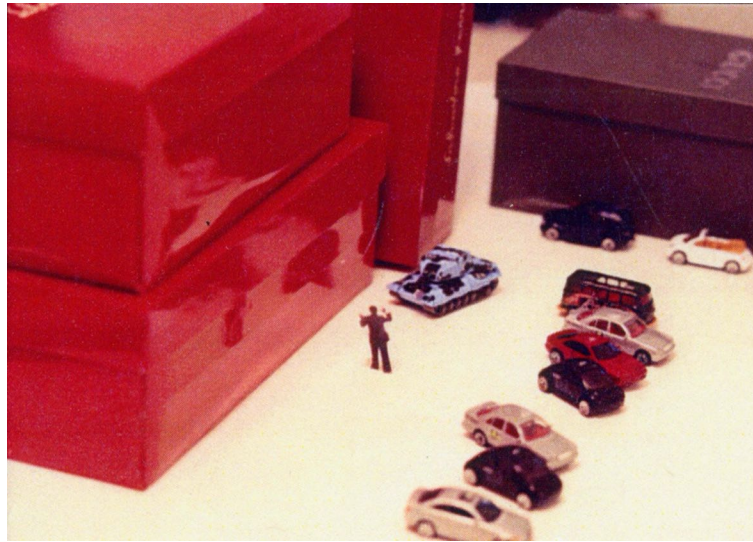
Funeral (Beerdigung) A & B



Funeral (Beerdigung) A & B



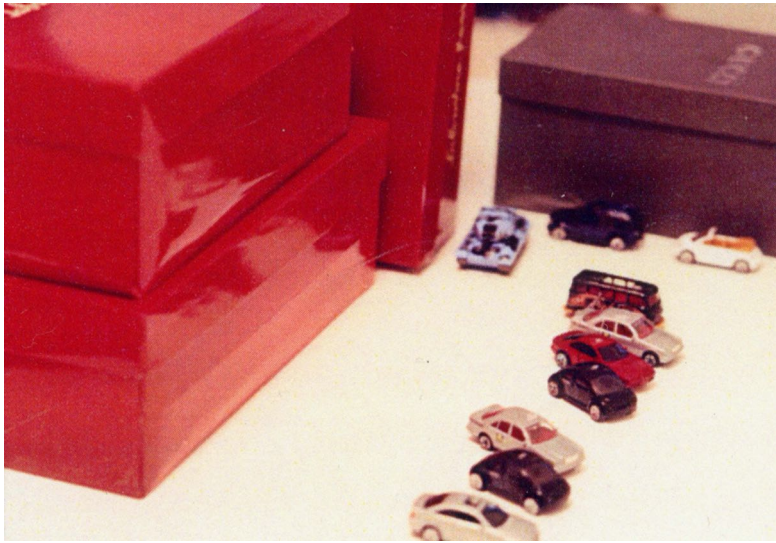
Arrest 1 (Festnahme 1) A & B



Arrest 1 (Festnahme 1) A & B



Arrest 2 (Festnahme 2) A & B



Arrest 2 (Festnahme 2) A & B