

22. March 2023

Education and culture

## **Artist behind the camera**

**Fritz Pitz was born in Bocholt one hundred years ago.  
Remembrance of one of the town's most famous personalities.**

Friedrich Julius Otto Pitz, Fritz Pitz for short, achieved great fame in his passion as a photographer and painter. He had world-class personalities in front of his lens. These days mark the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of Pitz, who was born in Bocholt. Remembering one of Bocholt's most famous personalities.

Fritz Pitz (\* Bocholt 19.3.1923, † ibid. 1.2.2006) sought expression: in the eyes and faces of his subjects, in spatial effects, in the depth of shadow or in the focus of daylight. He wanted to see the people he photographed and show them as they are. He wanted to capture their truth and the individual. Pitz's artist portraits remain in the memory, are simple, black and white, unobtrusive and yet they do not let the viewer go. But they do not only invite him or her, they literally force him or her to engage. Through direct eye contact with the portrayed, large-format prints, a daylight atmosphere composed with mirrors, his works are remarkably expressive. Nothing is really accidental and yet his portraits and studio shots in particular seem completely authentic and momentary.

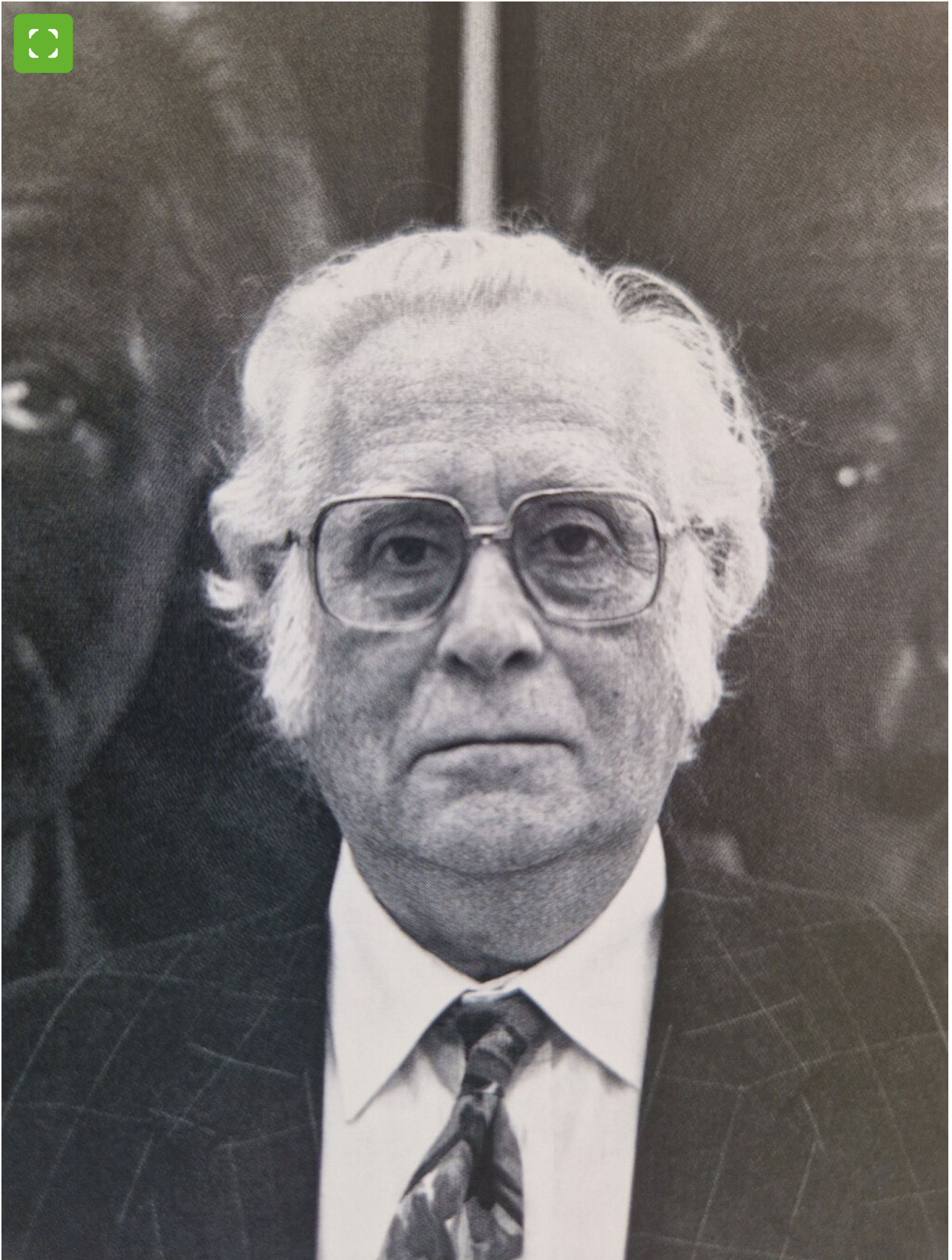
This type of photography, on which he increasingly focused after attending the School of Crafts in Weimar, made Fritz Pitz world famous. In the course of his life, he photographed many outstanding personalities, including Salvadore Dali, Joseph Beuys, Henry Moore and Willy Brandt. Since 1948, his artistic photographs have been repeatedly presented in Germany and at international solo exhibitions as well as participations in exhibitions such as in Copenhagen (1955), Lisbon (1957), at the 3rd World Photographic-Contest in Pakistan (1959/60), Versailles (1965), in the Louvre in Paris (1970), in the Museum Ludwig in Cologne (1991/92) as well as in the Cobra-Museum for Modern Art in Amstelveen (1998). At various exhibitions he received first prizes for the best portrait several times.

Fritz Pitz belonged to the Royal Photographic Society (RPS) of Great Britain from 1955. Here he was also awarded the title "A.R.P.S." in 1961. In addition, Fritz Pitz had been a member of the Club of International Photographers since 1960 and a full member of the German Society for Photography since 1978, before he was appointed a member of the International Academy of Fine and Applied Arts in Altenberg in 1981. Finally, in 1990, he was admitted for life to the Free German Academy of Sciences and Arts in Bonn. In 1976, Fritz Pitz had accepted a teaching position at the Dortmund University of Applied Sciences and Arts in the design department and five years later received the title of professor. In 1988, the Museum Ludwig of the City of Cologne and Bocholt City Museum published an illustrated book with some of his well-known artist portraits. In 1962, he received the Golden Joseph Petzval Medal in Budapest.

But it was not only photography that accompanied him. The medium of painting and the question of the overlap of both techniques also remained part of his life for many decades. As early as the end of the 1950s, he experimented with so-called photographic images. He used emulsions of chemicals to create structures and forms on large-format gelatine plates. These works represent a bridge between photography and painting and allowed Pitz to give free rein to his creativity. While this creativity was only possible to a limited extent in his photography, he was now able to be completely free of motif and scenery. And it is precisely this freedom that can also be observed in his painting: Abstract forms, surreal motifs and high-contrast colouring show an artist in process. Pitz did not allow himself to be pinned down - he allowed himself to become involved in the process of painting.

Fritz Pitz ran his photographic studio in Bismarckstraße until the end. Pitz always had an ambivalent relationship with his home town, but nevertheless lived here until his death in

2006. The city of Bocholt honoured him in 1983 with the bronze city plaque and in 1998 with the award of the ring of honour of his home town. In addition, his collected photographic and artistic works were published again in 2006 in illustrated books.



*The city of Bocholt remembers the well-known photographer Fritz Pitz, who was born in Bocholt one hundred years ago.*

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