

Daimler

Art Collection

Liu Zheng

The Chinese, 1994-2002

30 archive incjet-prints

each 35 x 35 cm, Ed. 18/20

Acquired in 2015

China

Conceptual Art

Photography





At the heart of Liu Zheng's *The Chinese* photographic series, which was created over the space of seven years, is the human being – both the appearance of human beings, and the human being's immediate surroundings, which are like an extension to the cosmos of the individual's identity. Liu Zheng was prompted by his distrust of the highly tendentious official version of history – in a time of radical upheaval and rapid social movement – to create his own history, in the form of images. Liu's development as an artist coincided with the 'New Documentary' generation and its trends: an approach distinguished by a more conceptual, more experimental mode of expression, with the photographer's interest shifted away from formal reporting and toward a more personal and unsparing view of China's population and their living conditions. Liu Zheng has espoused this approach since the mid-1990s, as part of a rigorous artistic strategy. The fragile, decaying, unforgettably displayed, defiant bodies in his photographs are witnesses to shifting power structures. They are like human memorials to China's recent history – and to China's declining ancient traditions, which Liu Zheng's *The Chinese* series protects from being forgotten amid all this rapid change.