

Press Kit

CONTINENT – In Search of Europe
An exhibition by OSTKREUZ – Agentur der Fotografen and
Akademie der Künste
2 October 2020 – 10 January 2021

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Information

Title	CONTINENT – In Search of Europe An exhibition by OSTKREUZ – Agentur der Fotografen and Akademie der Künste
Venue	Akademie der Künste, Pariser Platz 4, 10117 Berlin
Duration	2 October 2020 – 10 January 2021
Opening Hours	Tue – Sun 11 – 19, Thu 11 – 22, also open on 25/ 26 December 2020 and 1 January 2021; closed on 24 and 31 December 2020
Admission	€ 9/6. Free admission up to 18 years + free admission during the EMOP Opening Days (1 – 4 October 2020)
Time Slot Tickets for Visitors	The purchase of a time slot ticket is recommended. Online at www.adk.de/tickets .
Press Tickets	Journalists with a valid press card are requested to book a free online ticket at www.adk.de/tickets and to present their press card without being asked.
Website	kontinent.ostkreuz.de
Press Conference	Tuesday, 29 September 2020, 11 am with Prof. Jeanine Meerapfel, President of the Akademie der Künste; Dr. Torsten Wöhlert, State Secretary for Culture, Berlin; Moritz van Dülmen, Managing Director of Kulturprojekte Berlin; Barbara Esch Marowski, Director of Haus am Kleistpark / member of EMOP jury; Dr. Johannes Odenthal, Director of Programming, Akademie der Künste; Prof. Linn Schröder, photographer and member of OSTKREUZ – Agentur der Fotografen; Oliver Bätz, Project Manager, EMOP Berlin
Opening	Thursday, 1 October 2020, 12 pm – 12 am As opening of the EMOP Berlin – European Month of Photography 2020
Publication	<i>CONTINENT – In Search of Europe</i> OSTKREUZ – Agentur der Fotografen and Ingo Taubhorn (eds.) in cooperation with the Akademie der Künste, Berlin Hartmann Books, Stuttgart 2020, German/English 448 pages, approx. 200 images, ISBN 978-3-96070-054-8, € 39,90
Creditline	An exhibition by OSTKREUZ – Agentur der Fotografen and Akademie der Künste

Support	The exhibition is supported by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the Senate Department for Culture and Europe and the Society of Friends of the Academy of Arts.
As part of	EMOP Berlin – European Month of Photography 2020 (1 – 31 October 2020)
Media partners	Arte, monopol, taz die Tageszeitung, rbb radioeins
Further Stations	Kunsthalle Erfurt (31 January – 11 April 2020), Deutsche Börse Photography Foundation, Frankfurt a. M. (1 October 2021 – 14 January 2022)

Team

Curator	Ingo Taubhorn
OSTKREUZ-Photographers	Jörg Brüggemann, Espen Eichhöfer, Sibylle Fendt, Johanna-Maria Fritz, Annette Hauschild, Harald Hauswald, Heinrich Holtgreve, Tobias Kruse, Ute Mahler, Werner Mahler, Dawin Meckel, Thomas Meyer, Frank Schinski, Jordis Antonia Schlösser, Ina Schoenenburg, Anne Schönharting, Linn Schröder, Stephanie Steinkopf, Mila Tessaieva, Heinrich Voelkel, Maurice Weiss, Sebastian Wells and Sibylle Bergemann (1941–2010)
Exhibition Management / Project Management	Kathrin Kohle, Laura Benz
Project Management AdK Exhibition „CONTINENT“	Marie Altenhofen, Anja-Christin Remmert
Project Management EMOP Opening Days	Meike Avner
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Exhibition Design / Realisation	Roswitha Kötz
Publication / Editing KUNSTWELTEN /	Nadine Brüggebors Marion Neumann, Martina Krafczyk
Education Programme Communication	Sabine Kolb, Marianne König, Mareike Wenzlau, Rosa Gosch

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The Akademie der Künste is funded by the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media.

Press Release

CONTINENT – In Search of Europe

An exhibition by OSTKREUZ – Agentur der Fotografen and Akademie der Künste

From 2 October 2020 to 10 January 2021 the Akademie der Künste will present *CONTINENT – In Search of Europe*, a thematic joint exhibition put on by all members of OSTKREUZ – Agentur der Fotografen. It inaugurates this year's EMOP Berlin – European Month of Photography 2020 and the EMOP Opening Days, opening on 1 October 2020. The exhibition, held on Pariser Platz, is conceived as an artistic and political statement on the current state of Europe, which it will critically examine in 22 positions.

The OSTKREUZ agency's anniversary exhibition is a declaration of love for Europe. The photographers' projects explore various aspects of coexistence in Europe, shedding light on personal, societal and political phenomena as well as fundamental structures and historical developments. They find access to complex subject matter through their pictures of people and the environment in which they live. At the same time, they put their finger in the wound of this utopia – the cosmopolitan international community we call Europe. The themes of their work range from issues of identity and security to re-nationalisation, migration and integration, call into question our understanding of humanism, democracy and freedom of expression. This variety of perspectives invites the viewer to engage in dynamic and complex reflection and aims to offer fruitful impulses for the current debate on the future of Europe.

From OSTKREUZ's statement about the exhibition: "How will our continent develop; how will its people live together? What role do we have in this, we as the plurality of me? We, the Europeans, we, the Germans, we who think we are progressive and open-minded? And what about those whom we think are not – what about the others?"

Europe is a community thrown together by fate; we cannot simply dissolve it. The word *continent* is derived from the Latin *continere*, which means connected, sticking together. But is this continent a union of individualists who stand in solidarity with one another – or just a bunch of nations? A doomed idea? And what will happen if the concept fails? As much as we sometimes doubt and despair about the particularities of this community: our project is not, has never been, objective. It is dedicated to humanism, to peaceful cooperation."

OSTKREUZ – Agentur der Fotografen was established by seven photographers in 1990, just after the wall fell, in East Berlin, in a Germany that had not yet undergone unification. Today, thirty years later, OSTKREUZ is Germany's most renowned collective of photographers. Its 23 members have received numerous awards for their independent stance and signature styles. Their images have been featured in national and international exhibitions, magazines and journals.

Participating artists: Jörg Brüggemann, Espen Eichhöfer, Sibylle Fendt, Johanna-Maria Fritz, Annette Hauschild, Harald Hauswald, Heinrich Holtgreve, Tobias Kruse, Ute Mahler, Werner Mahler, Dawin Meckel, Thomas Meyer, Frank Schinski, Jordis Antonia Schlösser, Ina Schoenenburg, Anne Schönharting, Linn Schröder, Stephanie Steinkopf, Mila Tessaieva, Heinrich Voelkel, Maurice Weiss, Sebastian Wells and Sibylle Bergemann (1941–2010)

CONTINENT – In Search of Europe is curated by Ingo Taubhorn. A series of 22 podcasts offers an acoustic complement to the exhibited photographs and has been released in July 2020.

The exhibition is supported by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the Senate Department for Culture and Europe and the Society of Friends of the Akademie der Künste.

CONTINENT – In Search of Europe (2 October 2020 – 10 January 2021)
Podcast series on the eponymous exhibition by Ostkreuz – Agentur der Fotografen and Akademie der Künste

For the first time, the renowned photography collective OSTKREUZ – Agentur der Fotografen has produced a **podcast series** to accompany its next group exhibition *CONTINENT – In Search of Europe*. Since July 2020, 22 episodes appear twice a week – on Mondays and Thursdays. In conversation with journalist and author Anja Maier, the photographers reflect on their work in the exhibition, which will be on view at Akademie der Künste am Pariser Platz from 2 October 2020 until 10 January 2021.

CONTINENT – In Search of Europe reflects the 22 OSTKREUZ members' exploration of current aspects of coexistence in Europe. Their photographs shed light on personal, societal and political phenomena. The podcast presents an opportunity to become familiar with the agency's photographers and their positions in advance of and during the exhibition. They offer insight into their approaches to the highly diverse individual projects. In the podcasts, agency members explain how and why they chose a particular photographic theme, what difficulties and opportunities arose in the process, and how this has changed their view of the European continent. What responsibility do photographers have today? What is their stance? What role do they play as individuals and as representatives of their profession – in society, in an exhibition context and in the media as well as in the collective? The OSTKREUZ members not only address their careers and the way they work; these compelling conversations reveal a critical approach to photography that OSTKREUZ has represented for 30 years now.

In the first podcast episode, the curator of the exhibition, Ingo Taubhorn, talks about the collective project's beginnings and conceptual foundation. All podcast episodes are available free of charge as a digital supplementary and educational offering (in German only) through the following streaming services: Spotify, Apple Podcasts, Deezer.

Photographers in the podcast:

Jörg Brüggemann, Espen Eichhöfer, Sibylle Fendt, Johanna-Maria Fritz, Annette Hauschild, Harald Hauswald, Heinrich Holtgreve, Tobias Kruse, Ute Mahler, Werner Mahler, Dawin Meckel, Thomas Meyer, Frank Schinski, Jordis Antonia Schlösser, Ina Schoenenburg, Anne Schönharting, Linn Schröder, Stephanie Steinkopf, Mila Tessaieva, Heinrich Voelkel, Maurice Weiss, Sebastian Wells

Editors: Anja Maier and Thomas Winkler
Production and music: Nicolai Kühling
Recording: studio at *taz*, Die Tageszeitung

Short descriptions of the series in the exhibition

Jörg Brüggemann

EUROVISION, 2017–2020

Jörg Brüggemann has travelled throughout Europe to photograph people exercising their rights to freedom of speech and freedom of peaceful assembly. In his largeformat portraits that run through the entire exhibition space like flags, he lifts the individual out of the crowd, thus turning individuals into representatives and figures with which the viewer can identify. Brüggemann shows Europeans, regardless of whether they are demonstrating for or against the values Europe stands for.

Espen Eichhöfer

Papa, Gerd, and the Northman, 2017–2020

In this work, Espen Eichhöfer focuses on his personal understanding of home by turning to his Norwegian family and his birthplace in the remote forests of Norway. The individual images condense into a narrative about the experience of one's own origins and reflect his doubts about a consistent concept of home. At the same time, they are a reflection on issues such as national belonging and the nationalism that is currently re-emerging in Europe. Eichhöfer grew up on the lower Rhine and lives in Berlin.

Sibylle Fendt

Holzbachtal, nothing, nothing, 2015–2018

Sibylle Fendt portrays male refugees at a remote accommodation facility in the Black Forest. She spent three years going back and forth to the Holzbachtal to accompany the refugees throughout their monotonous days. They risked a great deal to get to Germany. Nature is now the only thing around them that changes. Their hopelessness is reinforced by the lonely silence of the Black Forest and indirectly tells of the enticements and disappointments of the "myth of Europe".

Johanna-Maria Fritz

The Most Powerful Witch of Europe, 2018–2020

Johanna-Maria Fritz accompanies Mihaela Minca, the most powerful witch in Romania. This is a traditional profession in Mihaela's family: both her mother and her grandmother were witches. She, her daughters and her daughter-in-law now run a flourishing business. From love spells to enchantments, the witches offer a vast array of services, and they receive inquiries from all over the world via the internet. The skill of a witch is also an expression of female strength in an everyday culture dominated by men.

Annette Hauschild

The Helpers, 2016–2018

Human rights and solidarity – Annette Hauschild travels to the borders of Europe to examine these European ideals in photographs. In situational portraits, the artist focuses on actors who practise these fundamental values in their concrete actions – from Christian and political activists to volunteer refugee workers in the ongoing migration flows into Turkey, Greece, France and Germany. Annette Hauschild creates a monument to them without heroising them.

Harald Hauswald

Railroad Ticket – Tracking the Orient Express, 2018

In 2018, Harald Hauswald used an Interrail ticket for seniors to travel the old route of the legendary Orient Express, much of which runs parallel to the Balkan Route. Starting in London, he took the TGV to Paris and then continued on through Switzerland, Austria, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria to Istanbul. He took more than ten thousand pictures on this trip, all on his camera phone. The mobile phone as a camera-technologically limited, but fast and flexible – became Hauswald's entry ticket to what was for him a new world.

Heinrich Holtgreve

For Unto Every One That Hath Shall Be Given, 2016–2020

In the extreme southwest of Europe there is a place with narrow streets that offers little space for people but plenty for online commerce. To visit Gibraltar one must first pass through the town of La Línea de la Concepción, a kind of Spanish barbican for the British enclave. Even though Gibraltar is a booming magnet for tourism and tax evaders, a third of the people in La Línea are unemployed. In his tableau, Holtgreve shows partly romantic, partly sober, sometimes ironic pictures.

Tobias Kruse

Jaywick, 2016/2020

The former seaside resort of Jaywick was once a summer residence for London workers who had achieved a modest level of wealth. A long social descent followed: In 2015, the British authorities declared Jaywick to be the poorest place in England. The lives of its inhabitants are shaped by crime, drug addiction and social decline. In his series, Tobias Kruse focuses on the fringes of society.

Ute Mahler & Werner Mahler

On the Rivers, 2019–2020

Every river flows into the sea. It is this characteristic that defines the waterways Ute Mahler and Werner Mahler travelled along, some of which are thousands of kilometres long: the Rhine, Danube, Elbe, Volga and Po. Rivers connect and separate, they are transport routes and borders. And every river in Europe also carries memories of wars and crises. Life takes place on the banks, rest or dispersion, defence or exchange.

Dawin Meckel

The Wall, 2017/2018

Money and the neoliberalism that has swept across Europe and around the globe have cultivated the same kind of architecture, the same insignia of power, whether in the City of London or in any other financial quarter in the world. Dawin Meckel shows an urban landscape that blocks any view of the horizon with high walls and facades. The people display a kind of hectic flurry of activity, only stopping for a few seconds to breathe.

Thomas Meyer

Territory, since 2017

Thomas Meyer's pictures open up a broad space for interpretation and associations, unforeseen thoughts and feelings in a time of change, when identities are blurring, and clichés are no longer supportable. His work will not provide any answers and is itself a question.

Frank Schinski

The Right Attitude, since 2017

In his long-term project, *The Right Attitude*, Frank Schinski follows a variety of job application processes in different European countries. He observes participants at job fairs, job interviews, auditions and assessment centres, who fall into what seems to be a firmly defined choreography of imaginary expectations. Schinski focuses on the interactions between the working world and the individual, which determine large portions of the latter's personal life.

Jordis Antonia Schlösser

The Unexpected Generation – New Jewish Life in Eastern Europe, 2016–2018

Jordis Antonia Schlösser went in search of Jewish life in Poland and Ukraine today, where it is experiencing a tentative Renaissance. The few survivors of the Holocaust who did not leave the country during the communist era often kept their Jewish identity a secret out of fear. Only now are increasing numbers of young people discovering their religious and cultural roots. Schlösser's photographs lead the viewer into a mostly unfamiliar world, one everyone thought had been lost.

Ina Schoenenburg

Związki, 2016–2020

In the border region between Germany and Poland on the river Oder, Ina Schoenenburg looks at places that act as reminders of the Second World War, of shifting borders and forced settlements. In atmospheric scenes, she paints the picture of a European landscape of remembrance. She contrasts this with portraits of young people involved in cross-border projects – faces that tell of the promise of a shared future.

Anne Schönharting

The Legacy, since 2017

In her work, Anne Schönharting focuses on the relationship between family and collective heritage and how the colonial past is dealt with. Her great-grandfather's collection from his time on the island of Fernando Póo (now Equatorial Guinea) was preserved in the "African room" of her parents' house near Meißen. In the installation, the artist turns this private space into something to be experienced. The de-contextualisation of the historical objects is emphasised in the photographs by their staging in the Saxon landscape.

Linn Schröder

Not Again, Grandma, Mom, 2017–2020

(part of a long-term project *I Also Think Family Pictures*)

The starting point for Linn Schröder's photographs is the memories of her mother-in-law who, as a twelve-year old girl, had to flee Upper Silesia with her family in 1945. Schröder examines the extent to which family relationships are universal and discusses how memories of the past are passed down through generations to the present day. The artist re-enacts the history of flight and expulsion with her own children. The choice of visual language makes it seem almost impossible to date them.

Stephanie Steinkopf

Virpi, 2014–2018

In her long-term project, Stephanie Steinkopf portrays a Finnish woman called Virpi, who suffered burn-out after a successful career as an entrepreneur. No longer able to maintain a "normal" everyday life due to over-work and alcoholism, she lives in relative isolation and only experiences support and warmth through a limited network of relationships. The sensitive portrait also addresses the question of the priorities we shape our lives by today.

Mila Tessaieva

Unfamiliar Memory, since 2016

Mila Tessaieva asked people of different faiths from different regions of her home country – Ukraine – to reconstruct scenes from their family history. The family memories became performances; the performances became photographs that write an alternative history of the twentieth century. They ask: How are experiences remembered, processed and passed down?

Heinrich Voelkel

No Easy Way Out, 2020

During the COVID-19 crisis, Heinrich Voelkel drove along Germany's closed borders. Voelkel's pictures discover a country that has curled up into a ball in order to protect itself from a virus. They show us landscapes painfully devoid of people. The borders marked with signal colours are temporary, and the provisional aspect symbolises efforts to preserve the idea of a united Europe.

Maurice Weiss

Si jamais ils reviennent, since 2015

Maurice Weiss focuses on the collective trauma that links all Europeans. He examines how different generations deal with the legacy of the Second World War. "Si jamais ils reviennent" – in case they ever come back – is what a more than ninety-year-old lady in a small village in the south of France told us, when she explained why she still had an arsenal in her wine cellar. As a young woman, she fought against German Nazis and collaborators during the occupation in World War II.

Sebastian Wells

La Rada di Augusta, 2019–2020

Sebastian Wells looks at the ecological crisis region around the oil refineries in Southeast Sicily and accompanies the inhabitants in their everyday lives. The Augusta-Priolo industrial complex was an economic boon for the region, which had previously relied exclusively on agriculture. Today, the petrochemical plant is a threat to the environment and human health, while at the same time remaining an important employer for the local population.

Sibylle Bergemann

Paris, 1979/1982

Paris is, and always has been, a destination many dream of. Sibylle Bergemann, a cofounder of OSTKREUZ who died in 2010, travelled to the city on the Seine many times: twice before the fall of the Berlin Wall, in 1979 and 1982, and many times after that. She and her fellow photographer friends founded the OSTKREUZ agency in Paris in 1990. Bergemann's Paris is tinged with bitter melancholy, neither magnificent nor loud. It belongs to the people who inhabit the city. "A vision of beautiful sorrow": that is how Bergemann herself described her photographic view of the exterior world, which always alluded to the interior too. Her photographs of Paris are testaments to a truly European woman, a citizen of the world, who was timeless in her longing for boundlessness and affection.

Publication

CONTINENT – In Search of Europe

With the title *CONTINENT – In Search of Europe*, the publication of the same name has been published to accompany the exhibition. As an artistic and political statement, OSTKREUZ – Agentur für Fotografen focuses on presentday Europe and critically examines it in 22 positions. On the occasion of the collective's thirtieth anniversary, the book invites readers to reflect on Europe in a dynamic and complex way through a variety of perspectives.

Kontinent
– Auf der
Suche nach
Europa

Ostkreuz –
Agentur der
Fotografen

CONTINENT – In Search of Europe

OSTKREUZ – Agentur der Fotografen and Ingo Taubhorn (eds.)
in cooperation with Akademie der Künste, Berlin
Hartmann Books, Stuttgart 2020
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Review copy:

Please send request to
Hartmann Books, press@hartmannprojects.com

OSTKREUZ

Statement of the photographers of OSTKREUZ – Agentur der Fotografen from the accompanying publication
CONTINENT – In Search of Europe

OSTKREUZ was started in 1990. The agency was founded in between two different eras: after the fall of the Iron Curtain, but before the reunification of Germany. It was East and West, a collective and a company. And it has remained so to this day.

Back then, Sibylle Bergemann, Ute Mahler, Harald Hauswald, Harf Zimmermann, Jens Röttsch, Thomas Sandberg, and Werner Mahler got together like members of a band, knowing that they could play and wanting to make music together. Everyone with their own instrument, their own abilities, and their own sound – and yet, working together. That, too, has not changed. They also knew that the great freedom that washed over them in those days would also bring great uncertainty with it. Everything, simply everything changed radically, and they wanted to be armed and ready. Knowing from experience that individuality and solidarity are not mutually exclusive, they united. Not all of us were there for the founding, but we are here now, and we will also be there should it ever become an issue again.

Since then, many new paths and opportunities have opened up, while firm beliefs have fragmented. Our perspective has expanded, our photography has continued to develop, and we ourselves have changed. We have grown slowly. New freedoms were added, and with them, new uncertainties. The world has simultaneously become more complex, yet simpler, but it also remains unjust. We carry the knowledge of all humankind in our pockets, but still we have no idea. Infinite multiplicities are oppressively impenetrable. We fail every day to understand the big picture. We see – and we want to understand. So we try to depict it.

CONTINENT

One evening, late in the summer of 2015, we sat in the agency's courtyard in the Weissensee quarter of Berlin, eating pizza and drinking wine together. It was the year that many people were seeking refuge in Europe; the year in which, ultimately, a simple decision made by a female politician nurtured the hope that we would all be able to face a more just future together. The refugees arrived via the Balkan Route; they traveled through a region that was still recovering from the terrible war that raged in the 1990s right in our own backyard but was nevertheless far away. Now Syria was knocking at our front door.

We looked back at a financial crisis that had sent the world tumbling into an abyss and ultimately forced us, as a society, to bail out the banks. When it came to Greece, though, it was much more difficult for us.

That night, we talked about Ute Mahler's book *Zusammenleben* (Living Together), which had just been published. We discussed ways to create a picture of coexistence today. In the 1970s and 1980s Ute had used her gentle, loving gaze to try and figure out how it all worked: life in the relationships, the families, and the society of East Germany, a country that ceased to exist thirty years ago, whose fall had turned many of us into migrants. We asked ourselves what the conditions were for coexistence, and we did not find them in Germany. We found them for our selves in Europe.

The idea for this exhibition was born on that night. Since then, nothing about it has changed – except for its topic, which has altered tremendously, because Europe is no longer recognizable.

Less than three months later, on November 12, 2015, we opened our anniversary exhibit in Paris, *25 Years of Ostkreuz*. Afterward we celebrated late into the night on the Canal Saint-Martin. The following evening, Friday, November 13, 2015, the festivities came to a sad end. The Bataclan became the site of a gruesome massacre. There, and in many other places around the city, 130 people died, and hundreds were injured. We had all been near the site of the attack that evening, could have been victims ourselves, and we witnessed this country take a blow to its heart.

Uncertainty and fear suddenly spread, jostling for room with freedom. Attacks in Brussels and Nice followed. And anyone in Germany who had hoped to be safe from this wave of Islamic violence was deprived of this notion a year later, on December 19, 2016, at Breitscheidplatz in Berlin. It was enough to make anyone weep. Ultimately, the fears of a few grew unbearable; all over Europe dams ruptured and nationalist tendencies broke out again. Whether it was the Greeks or the Syrians, foreigners were to blame for our problems – the supposedly weaker ones who dared to ask us for help without crawling on their knees for it, who dared to keep looking us in the eye. Added to the Islamist violence was xenophobic violence, which had actually never gone away completely, but was simply revived thanks to the backing of those who indignantly reject the label of extremism, but still continue to flood the Internet with agitation. Ubiquitous digitalization gave individuals a megaphone – and everybody screams into it. Radicalism became reality; new horrors are always happening, and in between stands the liberal spirit – or what we thought was the liberal spirit – shot full of holes.

We live on the sunny side of this planet. Thousands upon thousands of people have drowned in the Mediterranean in recent years, on the way here, hoping for a future, escaping a life that has no need to flee death. And thus, Europe's bathtub became a mass grave, while we continue to sun ourselves on its edges and happily splash around in it.

Hungary and Poland gradually divorced themselves from the European family, setting up autocratic structures to cut themselves off from the West, without, however, refusing the lavish payments from Brussels. Great Britain, on the other hand, threw in the towel completely. A drama, a trauma, from which Europe will not quickly recover, if at all. Because, after all, that was the whole idea in the first place: England, France, Germany, Italy, and everyone else united. The British – they will be forever missed. The Poles, the Hungarians, the Slovaks – will they remain? What will happen to democracies in France, Italy, Greece? In Germany? What will happen to Turkey, to Russia?

Since that day late in the summer of 2015, we – the twenty-two photographers and staff from our office in Berlin – have been working on this book and this exhibition. Countless images have been produced and entire series tossed aside. We were not able to say everything we wanted to. We trust in your ability to be able to read in between the lines and stories the things that are not articulated there.

At that time, back then, we never would have imagined what Europe would look like five years later, what faults and crises we would face. Certainly, what we least expected is the latest, most current crisis, which has shut down public life everywhere on our continent, limited basic democratic rights, and closed the borders – all of it with broad public approval, because suddenly the virus was there and every thing was a matter of life and death. Once again, uncertainty and fear have become outsized.

How will our continent and the coexistence among its people develop? What role do we have to play – “we” meaning multiples of “I”? We, the Europeans; we, the Germans; we, who think we are progressive and openminded? And what about those who, from our perspective, are not like that – what about them? Europe is a community tied to fate; we cannot simply break up like a meeting, a government, or a band. The word “continent” is derived from the Latin *continere*, which connotes relationships and sticking together. But is this continent an amalgamation of solidly united individualists or just a loose jumble of nations? An idea doomed to failure? What will happen, if the idea does fail? As much as we are sometimes in doubt and despair over everyday life in this community, over shared kitchens and household budgets, our project is not – and never was – objective; it is dedicated to humanism, to peaceful cooperation. It is a declaration of love for Europe.

Berlin, Spring 2020
The photographers of OSTKREUZ – Agentur der Fotografen

The Sensuality of Enlightenment

Text by Johannes Odenthal from the accompanying publication *CONTINENT – In Search of Europe*

OSTKREUZ was born in the utopian space created by the reorganization of Europe in 1990. A few months after the fall of the Iron Curtain and the unification of the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany, a group of seven photographers in a unique, transformational situation made a decision to work together in an agency driven by the momentum of reorganization, disorganization, and the development of potential.

Twenty-five years later, after creating an impressive success story involving numerous international exhibitions, the idea for a new approach to a common theme arose: to explore the consequences of the lasting division and destruction of this utopian space known as Europe. It was the moment in which the wars in Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, and North Africa had led to a previously unknown exodus from those regions of the world toward a sphere of peace and prosperity: Europe. Like combustible accelerants, terrorism and most recently the COVID-19 pandemic have been spurring the erosion of Europe's democratic, humanist foundations. Today we are faced with the unique challenge of opposing nationalist and xenophobic currents in European societies, as well as movements that glorify violence. We seem to be losing the natural social consensus about the fundamentals of human rights, democratic ways of life, and cultural diversity.

The members of OSTKREUZ rise to meet these complex and political conflicts with essays that are as definitive as they are multifaceted, using visual enlightenment to penetrate the nervous system of the European continent. OSTKREUZ's DNA is marked by the convulsions, revolutions, and changes of the past thirty years. In this respect, *CONTINENT* is not just any old theme that the photographers have taken up; rather, it is the existential self-reflection of an artists' community. For this reason, *In Search of Europe* is a project that cannot be completed. It does not provide any answers to the question of what constitutes this continent. But the exploration as such is part of a strategy of awareness, of profound affinity, of critical activity, of emotional empathy. And that is what this show stands for.

The artistic method is the photographic essay, the assertion of auteur photography as the inimitable and uncompromising development of an incorruptible attitude toward history. Driven by a vision of a new beginning, a sense of opening up among multiple cultures and languages, OSTKREUZ has made a declaration of love to Europe. Each one of the twenty-two stories is personal, engaged, never random, and always political. The depth and consistency of the visual research are impressive; it fluctuates between documentation and conceptual art, practicing an opinionated way of thinking in pictures. At the same time, the photographs avoid any kind of spectacular staging. It is the photographers' unerring ability to discern content that shifts the focus to understanding the theme.

The photographers are always bringing up painful subjects. Individual projects are dedicated to tracking cultural memories. They look at Jewish life in Poland from today's point of view and go searching for traces of the 1945 escape from Upper Silesia. We accompany them to the borders of Europe, whether in Gibraltar, along the Balkan Route, or on the river that forms the border between Poland and Germany. In long-term studies we encounter the everyday lack of future perspectives for those seeking asylum, or the survival of Europe's largest minority, the Roma and Sinti. We follow the resistance movements of activists, stop in the centers of political and financial power, and walk the fault lines between rich and poor. We consider personal family stories, individual searches for identity, and the reappraisal of colonial history.

It is precisely this multitude of perspectives, resulting from consistent personal research and positioning, that invites readers to dynamic, complex contemplation, to a humanist avowal of curiosity and justice. One of the major foundations of our society is its trust in artistic research as cultural enlightenment. It is precisely in this sense that the Akademie der Künste in Berlin positions itself as a European artists' society. The current project

of its president, Jeanine Meerapfel, is an alliance of European cultural institutions; it is about consolidating networks, about solidarity and mutual support beyond national or ideological boundaries: this continent's potential is nurtured through a constantly renewing dynamic of criticism and reinvention. In this sense, the cooperation between OSTKREUZ and the Akademie der Künste, Berlin, follows in the footsteps of a visionary collaboration from the year 1990 between Sibylle Bergemann, a founding member of OSTKREUZ, and Heiner Müller, then the president of the Akademie der Künste in East Berlin. Titled *Ein Gespenst verläßt Europa (A Specter Leaves Europe)*, the project read the creation of the Marx-Engels Monument in Berlin against the tide of history, as the deconstruction of a political utopia.

Accompanying Events

Programme of the EMOP Opening Days (1 – 4 October 2020)

Free admission to the CONTINENT exhibition during the Opening Days

Thu, 1 October, 12 pm – 12 am, free admission

Opening with Film Screening

7 pm, **Lounge open**, Bar in club room + terrace

Fri, 2 – Sun 4 Oct, 11 am – 7.30 pm, free admission

Film Screening, Black Box

Photo film series

La Jetée, Chris Marker; *Salut les Cubains*, Agnès Varda; *Tue recht und scheue niemand*, Jutta Brückner; *35 Fotos – Familienalbum einer jungen Frau*, Helke Misselwitz; *Das Warten*, Peter Nestler; *Radfahrer*, Marc Thümmler; *Lange Weile*, Tina Bara; *Wünsdorf*, Elfi Mikesch

Fri, 2 October, 5 pm, € 3

The future of photography education

What does training for contemporary photographers look like? How are important training centres positioned in Europe? What role do the historical schools of photography such as the Düsseldorf, Leipzig or Berlin schools play today? Between documentation, journalism, social media and art, the future of photography is defined above all by the schools. How can the European schools be strengthened and systematically networked?

Panel with Tina Bara, Photographer and Professor of artistic photography, HGB Leipzig (D), Ann-Christin Bertrand, curator and lecturer, ECAL Lausanne (CH), Marta Gili, Director ENSP, Arles (F), Timothy Persons, Gallerist, Persons Project (D), Linn Schröder, OSTKREUZ-Photographer, Professor HAW Hamburg, Ostkreuzschule (D), Frank Schumacher, Head of Photography Department, Lette Verein Berlin (D). Presenter: Susanne Holschbach, Professor of Contemporary Art, HBK Braunschweig and lecturer at the Neue Schule für Fotografie, Berlin (D)

Fri, 2 October, 8 pm, € 3

Photography and the institutions

The initiative for a national institute of photography by the Commissioner for Culture and Media has reignited the debate on a place of photography in Germany. Does photography need its own locations, such as galleries, museums and archives, or is it just one medium among others in the existing arts structures? Or has the space of photography shifted to the digital world as its congenial counterpart?

Keynote: Thomas Weski, Curator and Stiftung Fotografie und Medienkunst mit Archiv Michael Schmidt (D)

Panel with Simone Klein, Photography Expertise + Art Advisor (D), Robert Morat, Gallerist Robert Morat Gallery (D), Kito Nedo, freelance journalist (D), Anne Schwanz, Gallerist, Office Impart (D), Thomas Seelig, Head of the Department of Photography, Museum Folkwang (D). Presenter: Johannes Odenthal, Director of Programming, Akademie der Künste (D)

Sat, 3 October, 2 pm, € 3

Photography between art and mass medium

How can photography position itself as an independent medium between art, journalistic documentation and Instagram? A discussion of current aesthetic developments in photography from a curatorial and media theory perspective with Jörg Colberg, editor photoblog Conscientious (USA), Florian Ebner head of the photography department, Centre Pompidou (F), Anika Meier, art historian and freelance author (D), Kathrin Peters, professor of history and theory of visual culture, UdK (D), Ingo Taubhorn, curator, Deichtorhallen (D)

Presenter: Stefanie Diekmann, Professor of Media and Film Studies, Universität Hildesheim (D)

Sat, 3 October, 4 pm, € 3

Artist Talk: Stefanie Moshhammer

With Stefanie Moshhammer, Artist + Photographer (A) and Johann König, Gallerist König Galerie (D)

Sat, 3 October, 7 pm, € 3

On artistic and human rights interventions

In cooperation with the European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights (ECCHR).

Photography and art can do many things: create aesthetic and emotional moments that confuse the senses and the mind, as well as documenting, enlightening, scandalising and raising awareness – perhaps even of structural injustice? Recently, photography in particular has undergone a historical transformation through social media. It has become even easier for people to manipulate photos. Human rights lawyer Wolfgang Kaleck will discuss photography and art as media for investigating human rights violations as well as artistic and legal interventions with his guests on the evening.

With Fred Ritchin, Photographer and International Center of Photography (USA) and Susan Meiselas, Photographer and President Magnum Foundation (USA) (Both connected by video), Rabih Mroué, Performance- and Videoartist (DE / LBN), Christina Varvia, Deputy Director and Lead Researcher Forensic Architecture (GB). Presenter: Wolfgang Kaleck, General Secretary ECCHR (D)

Sun, 4 October, noon, € 3

1990. Recording the new (and the old) era

If one looks at the major political upheavals in Eastern Europe, 1989 is in the foreground. But didn't the real change take place in the following year and decade, when the political course was set and everyday life began to change? What can a look into the archives of photographers show and uncover? Is there a latent image of the past that we can develop today.

Keynote and Presenter: Florian Ebner, Head of the Photography Department, Centre Pompidou (F).

With Anna-Beata Bohdziewicz, Photographer (PL), Ute Mahler, Photographer + Co - founder of OSTKREUZ (D), Arwed Messmer, Photographer (D), Iren Stehli, Photographer (CZ), Jan Wenzel, Publisher, Hrsg. *Das Jahr 1990 freilegen* (D)

Sun, 4 October, 3 pm – 8 pm, free admission

OSTKREUZ – Book talks in the context of the exhibition CONTINENT – In Search of Europe

Six members of the OSTKREUZ agency talk to publisher, bookseller and lecturer Thomas Gust about their photo book projects. With Espen Eichhöfer, Sibylle Fendt, Johanna-Maria Fritz, Annette Hauschild, Ina Schoenenburg, Anne Schönharting, Linn Schröder.

3 pm – 3.30 pm: Linn Schröder

3.30 pm – 4 pm: Anne Schönharting

45 min. Break and Booksigning

4.45 pm – 5.15 pm: Sibylle Fendt

5.15 pm – 5.45 pm: Ina Schoenenburg und Annette Hauschild

45 min. Break and Booksigning

6.3 pm – 7 pm: Espen Eichhöfer

7 pm – 7.30 pm: Johanna-Maria Fritz

Afterwards Booksigning

Special Events

Thu, 12 November 2020, 7 pm, € 6/4

Panel discussion on the exhibition

As contemporary documents, photographs make us aware of the past and shape our perception of history. But what photographic, artistic forms and approaches can be found to look from the present to the past? A discussion about the possibilities and limits of photography as a medium of memory.

With: Dr. Brigitte Kölle (director of the Galerie der Gegenwart at the Hamburger Kunsthalle); Esra Küçük (managing director of the Allianz Kulturstiftung); Anne Schönharting (OSTKREUZ photographer); Maurice Weiss (OSTKREUZ photographer); moderator: Dr. Jürgen Reiche (historian and former director of the Forum of Contemporary History Leipzig)

An event organised by the Ostkreuz-Verein für Fotografie e.V. in cooperation with the Allianz Kulturstiftung.

Thu, 7 January 2021

Staged reading with Falk Richter and ensemble "Ich bin Europa" (I am Europe)

Europe at a crossroads: fear or hope, departure or total dissolution, war or peace? The theatre director and playwright Falk Richter reads excerpts from his texts "Ich bin Europa" (I am Europe) with actors. An evening that deals with the questions of divided societies.

An event organised by the Ostkreuz-Verein für Fotografie e.V. in cooperation with the Allianz Kulturstiftung.

Education Programme KUNSTWELTEN

Guided tours

Regular tours

Thursdays 6 pm, in German

Thursdays 7 pm, in English

Guided tours with OSTKREUZ photographers

Sundays 11 am and noon

Curator's tours with Ingo Taubhorn

Sunday, 4 October 2020, 5 pm

Sunday, 10 January 2021, 5 pm

All tours: € 3 plus exhibition ticket

Special tours in German and English with registration: kunstwelten@adk.de

Education Programme

Photography workshops with OSTKREUZ photographers for pupils from grade 3

Origin/Family and home. Where do I come from?

Management: Espen Eichhöfer

5 + 6 October, 9 am – 1 pm

With pupils from class 5

In search of Europe

Management: Ina Schoenenburg

7 October, 9 am – 1 pm + 8.10., 9 am – 1 pm

With pupils aged 15 and over

We photograph life at Pariser Platz

Management: Jordis Antonia Schlösser

28 + 29 October, 9 am – 1 pm

With pupils of the 3rd + 4th grade

Staged photography

Management: Annette Hauschild

17 + 18 November, 9 am – 1 pm

Up to 12 pupils, age 8 – 13 years

Lens is only the lens

Management: Heinrich Holtgreve

8 – 9 December, 9 am – 1 pm

With pupils from class 4

Dates and further information: www.adk.de/kunstwelten

Press Photos

CONTINENT – In Search of Europe

2 October 2020 – 10 Januar 2021

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CONTINENT – In Search of Europe

Sibylle Fendt

Sezar Krout, 2016, from the series *Holzachtal, nothing, nothing*, 2015–2018

© Sibylle Fendt/OSTKREUZ



CONTINENT – In Search of Europe

Ina Schoenenburg

Young Girl in the encounter and education centre, Trebnitz Castle, 2019, from the series *Związki*, 2016–2020

© Ina Schoenenburg/OSTKREUZ



CONTINENT – In Search of Europe

Linn Schröder

“At Home: Mother Not There.” Kloster Lehnin, 2017, from the series *“Not Again, Grandma, Mom”*, 2017–2020

© Linn Schröder/OSTKREUZ



CONTINENT – In Search of Europe

Heinrich Voelkel

German – Austrian border crossing, Tittmoning, from the series *No Easy Way Out*, 2020

© Heinrich Voelkel/OSTKREUZ

Trimming of the motif is not permitted.

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CONTINENT – In Search of Europe
Jörg Brüggemann
Demonstration commemorating the murdered journalist Ján Kuciak, Bratislava, Slovakia, March 16, 2018, from the series EUROVISION, 2017–2020
© Jörg Brüggemann/OSTKREUZ



CONTINENT – In Search of Europe
Annette Hauschild
Crew monitoring the sea, Mission Lifeline, civilian rescue ship on the Mediterranean, 2017, from the series The Helpers, 2016–2018
© Annette Hauschild/OSTKREUZ



CONTINENT – In Search of Europe
Tobias Kruse
Unknown Passerby, 2016, from the series Jaywick, 2016/2020
© Tobias Kruse/OSTKREUZ

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CONTINENT – In Search of Europe

Mila Tessaieva

"Our families came to Donetsk escaping hunger and war. Many years after, we also had to abandon our homes and run for safety." Natalia and Sergey, Mariupol, 2016, from the series *Unfamiliar Memory*, since 2016

© Mila Tessaieva/OSTKREUZ



CONTINENT – In Search of Europe

Frank Schinski

No Title, from the series *The Right Attitude*, since 2017

© Frank Schinski/OSTKREUZ



CONTINENT – In Search of Europe

Espen Eichhöfer

Bil, from the series *Papa, Gerd and the Northman*, 2017–2020

© Espen Eichhöfer/OSTKREUZ



CONTINENT – In Search of Europe

Jordis Antonia Schlösser

Jewish Community Center, Łódź, 2018, from the series *The Unexpected Generation – New Jewish Life in Eastern Europe*, 2016–2018

© Jordis Antonia Schlösser/OSTKREUZ

Press Photos

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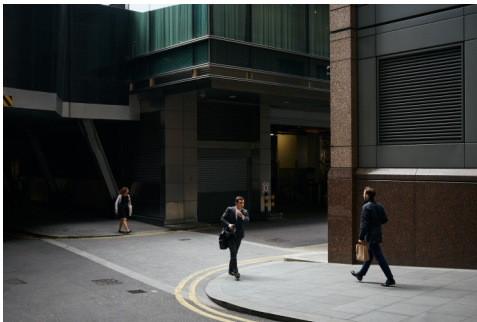


CONTINENT – In Search of Europe

Johanna-Maria Fritz

Cassandra holds up the heart of an ox, 2019, from the series *The Most Powerful Witch of Europe*, 2018–2020

© Johanna-Maria Fritz/OSTKREUZ



CONTINENT – In Search of Europe

Dawin Meckel

Pindar Street, 2017, from the series *The Wall*, 2017/2018

© Dawin Meckel/OSTKREUZ



CONTINENT – In Search of Europe

Ute Mahler and Werner Mahler

The Rhine near Walsum, 2019, from the series *On the Rivers*, 2019–2020

© Ute Mahler und Werner Mahler/OSTKREUZ