



Photoszene Festival 2016:

## “The State I Am In”

August/September 2016



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## 1.) The Curators



© Katja Stuke and Oliver Sieber, photo: Helga Meister

Photoszene Köln is delighted to announce the curators of the Photoszene Festival 2016: Katja Stuke and Oliver Sieber!

It has always been the aim and wish of the Photoszene team to provide the biennial Photoszene Festival with a stronger curatorial and conceptual framework and, in doing so, to enable concentrated insights into a theme from photographic practice. The decision to entrust the development of a theme to external curators gives rise to a lively and valuable dialogue on photography and, with the choice of Katja Stuke and Oliver Sieber, an examination that reflects the medium at the international level. As photographers, artists, curators, publishers, designers and communicators, Katja Stuke and Oliver Sieber (alias BöhmKobayashi) have developed for the next edition of the Photoszene Festival a theme that works out various aspects and radii of impact of photography. This theme will be activated in the form of exhibitions, the magazine, an Internet presence or a blog.

Further information on Katja Stuke and Oliver Sieber enclosed with the Portfolio, as well as at:

[boehmkobayashi](http://boehmkobayashi)

[www.antifoto.de](http://www.antifoto.de)

## **2.) THE CONCEPT (short)**

Separation into a private and a public sphere is associated with the Liberalism of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century and the notion of the fundamental protection of individual freedom and autonomy against impermissible interventions by the state or by society. The private sphere is meant to create a space of retreat, and one's own four walls are meant to provide a refuge into which we invite only selected persons. Not only concepts of the private, but also behaviours associated therewith, have been changing for some time. There are varying appraisals concerning what is worth protecting or what can be shared with the public. We are continuously able to have a part in the private life of others, to view pictures of it. On smartphones, our own photos blend with photos belonging to

friends and strangers; we view them on the same interface, nothing distinguishes our own memories from those of others.

Photographs shape our everyday life. They are an important component of personal life, of leisure time, and still serve as an information source in addition. Photographs supply information on the political, economic, cultural and social situation, and are independent artistic works whose design and aesthetic merit attract attention. “The State I am In” as the theme-giving focus of Photoszene 2016 gathers together different photographic positions with reference to different aspects: Socio-political issues are to play just as big a role in the selection of photographic positions as the private aspects of “The State I am In”. (Katja Stuke and Oliver Sieber)

### **3.) THE ARTISTIC POSITIONS**

The artistic positions of the “The State I am In” exhibitions range in the field of tension between, on the one hand, questions of one’s own inner security, questions concerning identity and individuality and, on the other hand, the social, political questions of “inner security”.

Among the artists who deal with rather more personal themes is the Japanese photographer **Ryudai Takano**. In his series, “In my Room” he deals with questions concerning sexuality, gender identity and intimacy. He is one of the few Japanese photographers to shoot colour portraits and to make visible in his photographs groups of people who are rather inconspicuous or invisible in Japan.

Ryudai Takano (\* 1963 in Fukui, Japan) lives and works in Tokyo. The series, “In my Room” was created between 2002 and 2005. Ryudai Takano was distinguished with the renowned Kimura Ihei Commemorative Photography Award in 2006.

**Daniel Josefsohn** has portrayed his entire life, his daily routine following a stroke, in his weekly photo column “I’ll be back soon” in ZEITmagazin and reported on some very personal things. How far can one go, when is one still secure when dealing with one’s private life so publicly – and why are more and more people losing their inhibitions as concerns sharing their life in blogs, in front of live webcams, on social networks? We are interested in what might change as a result in society and in our dealings with one another.

Daniel Josefsohn (\* 1961 in Hamburg) lives and works in Berlin. Josefsohn was Creative Director at the Volksbühne Berlin from 2010 until 2013. Following his stroke in 2012 he worked jointly with his life partner Karin Müller on the series, “Am Leben”, which was distinguished with the German LeasAward for best reportage photography.

The American **Jason Lazarus**, for his series, “Too Hard to Keep”, asked people to send him images, to place them at his disposal; images that they no longer wanted to own – because they are associated with sad or painful memories, with embarrassing moments, with thoughts of people whom they perhaps want to forget. The link connecting emotions and memories to photographs interests us in respect of the theme, as does likewise the question concerning the importance and necessity of photographs for thinking about the past.

Jason Lazarus (\* 1975) lives and works as an artist, university teacher, curator and author in Florida, USA. He commenced his long-term project, “Too Hard to Keep” in 2010 and stores it in a digital archive. Lazarus completed his studies in photography at Columbia College Chicago in

2003; starting out from the medium of photography, he performs installation work in space using objects and digital image data.

Englishwoman **Louisa Whitton**, for her series, “What about the Heart”, visited the Japanese scientist Hiroshi Ishiguro in his laboratory in Osaka. There, he built true-to-life robots, one of them modelled on himself. The Japanese have a different, less fear-filled way of approaching and dealing with robots. Louisa poses rather emotional questions to this development and Hiroshi Ishiguro’s answers are not always scientifically analytical, either. How do people change, how does their self-assurance change when they are faced with robots? And when will we consider them to be entirely normal in our daily dealings? What will our dealings with them look like in the future?

Louisa Whitton lives and works in London. She commenced her work, “What about the Heart?” in 2011; she graduated with the series from the MA in photography at the London College of Photography in 2015.

The work by **Beate Geissler and Oliver Sann** also deals with machines. For their series about “High-frequency Trading Work Spaces” they were able to take photographs in the offices of American high-speed brokers. In contrast to the robots with a countenance by Louisa Whitton, we see faceless devices that complete transactions almost autonomously and have a highly significant influence on our present-day society and the future. Not planned, initially, was the question concerning censorship: the company whose offices the two artists first had photographed is now attempting to wield influence and control the images.

Beate Geissler (\*1970 in Neuendettelsau) / Oliver Sann (\*1968 in Düsseldorf). Geissler studied at the University of Design in Karlsruhe and Sann at the Academy of Media Arts in Cologne. The artist couple lives and works in Chicago, Illinois, USA, where Geissler holds an Assistant Professorship at the University of Illinois and Sann attends the School of the Art Institute of Chicago as visiting artist. The joint work, “High-frequency Trading Work Spaces” is from 2010.

“Censorship Daily” is the title of the work by Dutch artist **Jan Dirk van der Burg**.

He shows censored newspapers in Iran. The censors’ primary concern are the photographs shown in the foreign newspapers that are sent to Teheran for employees of the foreign consulates – only a handful of explicit details have geometric forms stuck onto them, while texts are generally untouched. A particular, idiosyncratic aesthetic thus arises as a result of the censorship.

Jan Dirk van der Burg (\*1978) lives and works in Amsterdam. Van der Burg works with both the medium of photography and film and produces books. The work, “Censorship Day” was published in book form in 2012.

Again and again, we see tendencies to want to drop out from society. This aspect is dealt with by three completely different positions.

Italian photographer **Francesco Jodice** dealt with youths in Japan who are no longer able to leave their private rooms, their homes. At the same time, “Hikikomiri” are often encouraged by their parents not to alter their behaviour, with a view to keeping the ‘shame’ secret from friends, neighbours and strangers. Though the youths communicate via digital media, on social networks, they also have an immanent fear of leaving their secure, familiar surroundings.

Francesco Jodice (\*1967 in Naples, Italy) lives and works in Milan. He was a founding member of the Italian Multiplicity Group, an international network and experimental architects’ and

artists' forum. Jodice is a professor at the Nuova Accademia Di Belle Arti Milano. The work, "Hikikomiri" is from 2004.

Dutch photographer **Petra Stavast** spent a while living as a tenant with an older, rather unprepossessing woman who spent a certain time living in the Bhagvan sect. In her series, "Ramya" she attempts to bring this woman's two identities into harmony with each other, contrasts her own portraits and photographs with found material – attempts to emphatically trace the past. Why did Ramya want to leave conventional society behind, what did she find in the new community based around sect leader Osho.

Petra Stavast (\* 1977 in Tiel, Netherlands). She commenced the photographic project "Ramya" in 2002, when the photographer moved into Ramya's house and used the camera as a means of communication. Stavast completed the long-term project only after Rayma's death (2012) in 2014.

**Theo Altenberg**, by contrast, himself spent a long time living in Otto Mühl's commune and photographed many things there. What is his insider perspective on a distinctive society, directly from its heart? Why did it fail? What exactly does it take to create a functioning group structure that is right for everyone? And why do so many alternative ideas fail? On this subject, we intend to show on the film programme, among others, "Somewhere to Disappear" about Alex Soth and the feature film, "The Village".

Theo Altenberg (\*1952 in Mönchengladbach). From 1970-73 he studied art at the Werkkunstschule in Krefeld. Altenberg lived in the commune of Otto Muehl from from 1973 until 1990. He lives today as an artist, film-maker and performer in Berlin.

**Nils Petter Löfstedt**, from Sweden, belonged to a group of youths who discovered in Malmö a forgotten underground space beneath a pier and conquered it for themselves. In the work, "The Pier" we can follow the development, see how, for a short time, they found a place to themselves in which they could be together and party, and which in the end was destroyed by the city for bureaucratic lack of ideas and helplessness. Why is it so difficult to take occupancy of places that belong to nobody, without meeting with resistance? Nils Petter Löfstedt (\* 1980 in Hov, Sweden) is a photographer and film-maker and has published two books: "Club 13" and "The Pier".

An entirely different protest is dealt with by the Englishman **Stephen Gill**. For his series, "Off Ground", following the protests and riots in 2011 in his neighbourhood in Hackney/London, he gathered up stones that may have been thrown by demonstrators shortly before. In his studio he rather pragmatically photographed them individually against a grey background and thus drew up an objective inventory. These found items testify to unrest, to the resistance of London's citizens to changes in their city that led to the gentrification of entire city districts in the course of the Olympic Games and illustrated the biases of real estate speculations.

Stephen Gill (\* 1971 in Bristol, United Kingdom). Gill came into contact with photography at an early age via his father. He worked for a photographer in Bristol while still at school. In 1993 he was then accepted at Magnum Photos in London as an associate and later as a full member. He left Magnum Photos in 1997, in order to work as a freelancer; in 2005, he founded Nobody Books. The work, "Off Ground" is from 2011.

Entirely different found items were gathered up by Cologne-based **Allan Gretzki** after the Loveparade disaster in Duisburg in 2010. For the series, “Am Güterbahnhof” he gathered up personal objects such as spectacles, bags, jewellery, shoes or clothing items and, just like Stephen Gill, objectively documented them. The images of this event that we have in our minds cause us, the beholders of the objects, to recall what happened and thus to contemplate this photography in a different way.

Gatherings such as the Loveparade, but also demonstrations, should not be places of insecurity – crowds of people are not meant to be intimidating, but rather to convey a feeling of cohesion.

Allan Gretzki (\*1979 in Siegburg) lives and works in Cologne. He completed his studies 2006–2011 at the Academy of Media Arts in Cologne. The work, “Am Güterbahnhof” was created in 2010 after the Loveparade disaster.

**Günter Karl Bose**, a teacher at the Academy of Fine Arts in Leipzig, has found in his book project, “The Fleck” a very distinctive, aesthetically appealing form of preserving the old flag of the GDR, which he found in an old storage room at the academy and which was meant to be destroyed. He scanned it in close detail: on each double page of the book, beholders discern only a small excerpt. However, the image quickly pieces itself together. The attempt at destroying all visible remembrance of the GDR, which becomes particularly visible in the demolition of the People’s Palace in Berlin and the rebuilding of an old castle, once again poses the question of historiography: The victors are still writing their version of history.

Günter Karl Bose (\* 1951) studied German language and literature and political science at the University of Freiburg. From 1980 until 1995 he was a publisher in Berlin (Brinkmann & Bose). Since 1993 he has been Professor of Typography and head of the Institute of Book Art at the Academy of Fine Arts in Leipzig.

Cologne-based **Max Regenber**g has been documenting large-scale billboards in the streets of European and American cities ever since the 70s. We are particularly interested in the shots that he took of the Benetton campaigns in the 90s. They were controversial, as they thematized subjects such as war, racism or environmental pollution using documentary shots, news images of soldiers or AIDS sufferers. How, in fact, do promotional posters make an impact? In Max Regenber’s photographs, beholders are able to comprehend this very well.

Max Regenber (\*1951 in Bremerhaven). He lives and works in Cologne. Following training to become a promotional photographer, Regenber emigrated to Canada in 1977. Back in Cologne, he worked from 1980 onwards on the long-term study, “The human likeness in advertising in the public space”. At the end of the 80s he again worked as an independent promotional photographer, and since 2000 he has been devoting himself exclusively to his freelance artistic works.

Benetton is also the originator of **Colors Magazine**, which we are going to show in an exhibition of magazines. Topics such as consumerism, addiction, war, disease, globalization, environmental pollution were and are taken up and thematized there by graphic designers and photographers. What is a fashion concern able and permitted to do – what is a global company such as Benetton meant to do and how credible are they?

## **THE LIST OF ARTISTS**

Ryudai Takano (Japan) “In my Room”

Daniel Josefsohn (Berlin) “I’ll be back soon”

Jason Lazarus (USA) “Too Hard to Keep”

Luisa Whitton (London) “What about the Heart”

Geissler / Sann (German, based Chicago) “High-frequency Trading Work Spaces”

Jan Dirk van der Burg (NL) “Censorship Daily”

Francesco Jodice (I) “Hikikomiri”

Petra Stavast (NL) “Ramya”

Theo Altenberg (Berlin) “Otto Mühls AA-Kommune”

Nils Petter Lövfstedt (Sweden) “The Pier”

Stephen Gill (GB) “Off Ground”

Allan Gretzki (Cologne) “Am Güterbahnhof”

Günter Karl Bose (Leipzig) “The Fleck”

Max Regenber (Cologne) “Benetton”

Colors Magazine (Italy)

## **4.) FILM PROGRAMME**

On the film programme of Filmforum NRW at Museum Ludwig, besides “Somewhere to Disappear” by Alec Soth, the following films are to be shown:

“Photojournalist Kikujiro Fukushima” about the Japanese photographer, more than 90 years old, who has documented almost all protests and disasters in Japan since Hiroshima.

The name-giving film, “Die innere Sicherheit” by Christian Petzold, about a family who was caught up in the terror story of the Rote Armee Faktion, and whose daughter is now old enough to have her own desires and needs, and so causes new problems for her parents on the run.

“Der Radfahrer”, a short documentary about the Ostkreuz photographer Harald Hauswald, who was monitored by the Stasi in East Berlin.

“Die Lügen der Sieger” by Christoph Hochhäusler, about politics and lobbying.

“The Conversation” by Francis Ford Coppola, an impressive film on the topic of surveillance.

“The Village” by M. Night Shyamalan, about a community that opted for an almost medieval way of living out of fear of present-day society.

## **5.) THE EXHIBITION VENUES / PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS**

Forum für Fotografie  
Schönhauser Str. 8 50968  
Cologne  
<http://www.forum-fotografie.info/>

Michael Horbach Stiftung  
Wormser Str. 23 50677  
Cologne  
<http://www.michael-horbach-stiftung.de/>

Altes Pfandhaus  
Kartäuserwall 20 50678  
Cologne  
<http://www.altes-pfandhaus.de/>

Kunsthaus Rhenania  
Bayenstraße 28 50678  
Cologne  
<http://www.kunsthhaus-rhenania.de/>

St. Gertrud, Kirche und Kultur  
Krefelder Str. 57 50670  
Cologne  
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/St-Gertrud-Kirche-und-Kultur/1796048183954008?fref=ts>

Bruch&Dallas  
Ebertplatzpassage 50668  
Cologne  
<http://www.bruchunddallas.de/>

Tiefgarage Ebertplatz  
Laden 7



Ebertplatz 0 50668  
Cologne  
<http://tiefgarage.org/>

Gold und Beton  
Ebertplatzpassagen | Cologne  
<http://goldundbeton.de/wordpress/>

King Georg, Ebertplatz  
Sudermanstraße 2 50670  
Cologne  
<http://www.kinggeorg.de/>

Filmforum NRW e.V. im  
Museum Ludwig  
Esther Rossenbach, Projektkoordination  
Bischofsgartenstr. 1 50667  
Cologne  
<http://www.filmforumnrw.de/>

## **6. Facts and Figures**

### **When:**

The next **Photoszene Festival** will take place in **August/September 2016** with a kick-off on 19 August, exhibition runs in August and September, and a main events week during Photokina from **20-25 September 2016**.

### **Where:**

The exhibitions, self-curated for the first time, that make up the nimbus of the Photoszene Festival 2016 will be put on in two of Cologne's urban areas:

**Cologne's South City** with the Forum für Fotografie, the Michael-Horbach-Stiftung, the Altes Pfandhaus and Kunsthaus Rhenania.

**Cologne's New Town** with art spaces on Ebertplatz: Tiefgarage, Bruch und Dallas, Gold und Beton, Kirche St. Gertrud and King Georg as events venue.

Additionally, we are planning an accompanying series of films at Filmforum NRW at Museum Ludwig, as well as a Portfolio Review at the Photographische Sammlung/SK Stiftung Kultur.

In 2016 too, again in parallel with Photokina, the Photoszene Festival will be calling on galleries and exhibition venues in Cologne to exhibit photography. In this way, similarly to well-known formats in Arles, Brighton or Hamburg, the curated programme will be contextualized by a lively photography scene.