

144

2018

Camera Austria

INTERNATIONAL

A/D/LUX

16,- €

CH

18,- sFr

Oliver Laric
Justin Hoffmann
Johanna Jaeger
Jens Asthoff
Lebohang Kganye
Francesco Zanot
Hana Miletic
E.C. Feiss



4 192310 616005 0 0 1 4 4

Discount Killed a Photobook Star: Now, Who's Accountable?

Obituary: Hannes Wanderer (1958–2018)

by Maren Mittentzwey

The last weeks in the life of photobook seller and publisher Hannes Wanderer were fueled by a final outburst of energy in the service of his passion: the second book of the American photographer Mary Frey—*Real Life Dramas*—was in the making, and he was busy preparing her exhibition at the Forum für Fotografie in Cologne. The rediscovery of her work was Hannes's very personal merit and one of a number of extraordinary highlights in his career as a publisher. In general, Hannes was confident about his publishing house Peperoni Books, which he founded in 2004. Things went fairly smoothly considering the difficulties of a tense market. Up to the very end, he successfully stood by his decision to never sell off a single Peperoni book. This was not only an economical decision but was, above all, in line with his convictions, his own expectations, and his respect for the work of the photographers he published.

He obviously had much less influence on the price policies of publishers and players whose photobooks he would offer and recommend at his reputed "home base," 25books, which was his Berlin photobook store established in 2009, complete with showroom, book launches, exhibitions, an attached online store, and a blog with book reviews written by himself. The brutal, irresponsible online price dumping all year long was menacing him as a bookseller, and he'd refer to it frequently as the "downward discount spiral." You'd listen to his pleas and shrug them off helplessly as the situation slowly turned off the lights for him and others.

Hannes was right about a lot of things when it comes to the photobook market. His critical, warning look at the scene was acknowledged by many and belittled by most. More often than not, he was ignored, disinvited, or not invited at all to participate in the ongoing debate. As such, the realization that he—as a local expert—was not invited to a major event in Berlin revolving around the future of the photobook, assembling some of the most prominent representatives of the community, came as a huge disappointment to him in his final days.

A few of his close friends suspected suicide when they first heard about Hannes's death, as his overall pessimism regarding the survival of his bookstore had intensified to a suffocating extent in the last weeks and months. He ultimately died of a heart attack. And thus Hannes's death, in a way, reads like the first human sacrifice on the discount scaffold of the photobook industry. The photobook community is much too small to make up for this kind of loss—consider the knowledge drain—and should start thinking about whether it wants to preserve the few highly specialized bookstores that are left and the expertise that comes with them. We need much more solidarity within the triangle of publishers, bookstores, and end customers in order to ensure maximum visibility of the photobook—which will always remain a niche product with questionable profitability. The current "oversupply" can only be countered by a certain level of quality stan-

dards, consistency in our individual tastes, and some educated preselection—which is done, albeit less and less, by people dealing with photobooks on a daily basis, for the love of it.

Contact Peperoni Books and/or sign up for the newsletter at timeout@peperoni-books.de.

Maren Mittentzwey worked for Steidl and Peperoni Books and is now an editor, translator, and PR coordinator in Berlin (DE).

Obituary: David Goldblatt (1930–2018)

by Christine Frisinghelli

David Goldblatt passed away on June 25, 2018. From the early days of apartheid in the late 1940s to the most recent past, he strove to lend visibility to the social and political structures of his country, South Africa, but also to the changes within society.

"Embedded in the bricks, mud, stone, wood, plastic, cardboard, steel, aluminium and concrete of all the structures in South Africa, are choices we and our forebears have made." In 1983, David Goldblatt already began a comprehensive documentation of the structures that he references in this quote—churches, public buildings, monuments—and ultimately published the material in 1998 under the title *The Structures of Things Then*. These "structures" attest to how power and political persuasion have become inscribed in a landscape and in the built environment; they show the contradictory powers that have shaped South Africa under white rule lasting 350 years.

David Goldblatt was born 1930 in Randfontein. He discovered photography early on: dock workers in Durban and the slag heaps of mines near his hometown were the themes of his first works. He was eighteen years old and had just finished school when the National Party rose to power in 1948, with the first signs of apartheid in public soon to follow. Goldblatt, who himself asserted that he was neither a political man nor an activist, sought to make this unjust system visible. He made an effort to draw attention to the situation in South Africa in international magazines. Yet in these early years of turbulent political strife, he noted: "I recognized that I was neither suited to nor very interested in photographing events. My deepest concern lay in trying to probe with the camera the roots of what was happening rather than reflecting the events that were their outcome" (*Camera Austria International* No. 51–52, p. 61). He developed the form of the image-text essay, which requires long-term work on a certain subject, and he also deemed it necessary to supplement his photographs with texts, which is characteristic for his entire oeuvre.

David Goldblatt elaborated his love for South Africa in these photoessays, for he long failed to consider South Africa a suitable place for living due to the mechanism of suppression exerted by the National Party. In the mid-1960s, his photographic series started to be published in international magazines; and pictures from his project "Some Afrikaners Photographed" were subject to political pressure in South Africa. In collaboration with Nadine Gordimer, he worked on *On the Mines* (1973), which was to become his first book. Not until later was *Some Afrikaners Pho-*

tographed (1975) released. The spectrum of his themes is broad and covers all genres of photography: portraits, in the book *Particulars* (2003), landscapes, such as in *Intersections* (2005), or coverage like the striking series "The Transported of KwaNdebele" (1989).

David Goldblatt put his international reputation on the line for his country, but also for its photographers. In 1989, he founded the Market Photo Workshop under the protective screen of the Market Theatre (one of the few places where racial segregation was not welcomed). With this now internationally renowned school, he wanted to give the young generation—disadvantaged by the segregated school system in South Africa—an opportunity to use photography as a path to social involvement: as a profession, but also as a way of overcoming visual illiteracy.

With the death of David Goldblatt, Camera Austria has lost a friend, teacher, and critical thinker. We enjoyed a long-standing and special relationship with him ever since we first pub-



David Goldblatt, Monuments to the Republic of South Africa (left), the late prime minister, J. G. Strijdom (right), and the headquarters of Volkskas Bank, Pretoria. 25 April 1982, 1982. Silver gelatin print on fibre-based paper. Courtesy: David Goldblatt Legacy Trust and Goodman Gallery. Copyright: David Goldblatt Legacy Trust.

lished excerpts from the work "The Structures of Things Here" in 1994 (*Camera Austria International* No. 46, pp. 23–39). The same year, David Goldblatt was a participant in the Symposium on Photography XV (*Camera Austria International* No. 51–52), and in 1995 he was presented with the Camera Austria Award for Contemporary Photography by the City of Graz. In 2005, we were able to show "Intersections"; and, not least, we developed the exhibition "I am not afraid" in 2007 with the Market Photo Workshop, Johannesburg (*Camera Austria International* No. 100). Unforgettable for us is David's devotion to this project, his generosity as both funder and host.

David Goldblatt was a teacher and mentor for so many: his humanism and his personal modesty, coupled with intellectual integrity and tenacity in his work, are exemplary. We will miss him.

Translation from German: Dawn Michelle d'Atri

Christine Frisinghelli is co-founder of the magazine *Camera Austria International* and was editor-in-chief until 2010. Since 2001 she has been the custodian of the Pierre Bourdieu photo archive. She lives in Graz (AT).