



MACHT/POWER MAUER/WALL

TAKING STOCK OF POWER. AN OTHER VIEW OF THE BERLIN WALL.

Exhibition and book by Annett Gröschner and Arwed Messmer

27 May – 21 August 2016 at Haus am Kleistpark, Berlin

The two-volume book will be published by Hatje Cantz Verlag

PRESS INFORMATION, April 21, 2016

Sweeping landscapes in which barbed-wire fences and instable watchtowers seem somehow misplaced, complementing pictures of walled-up windows and hastily erected concrete blockades. In *Taking Stock of Power. An Other View of the Berlin Wall*, Annett Gröschner and Arwed Messmer have now completed their long-standing project on the Wall around West Berlin. They present a complete view of the Berlin Wall looking from the East to the West as it was fifty years ago, in an exhibition at Berlin's Haus am Kleistpark from May 27, 2016, and in a two-volume book totaling 1,328 pages published by Hatje Cantz, which will appear on the same day.

The title *Taking Stock of Power* indicates the methods used by Gröschner and Messmer. They have taken what was left behind by a by-gone and fallen power and is now preserved in archives, and they present it in a new light and from an



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artistic perspective. The basic material is a large number of photographs taken by East German border guards around 1966, which photographer Arwed Messmer has compiled as new panoramas. Author Annett Gröschner has created literary captions for these images, based on material from border troop reports on encounters between people on both sides of the Wall at the time and at the places shown in the photographs.

In 1995, Gröschner and Messmer were looking for pictures of one specific section of the Berlin Wall in the Intermediary Military Archives in Potsdam, when they opened an ordinary-looking box. In it, they found a large number of rolled-up 35 mm films, and could not know at the time that this material was to fascinate them – and give them work to do – for many years to come. They presented the Other View. The Early Berlin Wall in an exhibition and a first prize-winning book in 2011. In 2012 they then discovered a large number of new hitherto unpublished photographs.

Now, Gröschner and Messmer are presenting the entire course of the Wall around West Berlin in a total of 1,059 panoramas and single photographs. Their new exhibition is designed with the provenance of the material in mind – it is presented like a workshop, with many of the photos printed on thin paper and pinned to the gallery wall with needles. In the center of the gallery, there is a reading area similar to an archive reading room. In this exhibition, the strict secrecy that once adhered to the photographs and texts shown here has dissolved. The archive becomes a treasure trove from which artists take their materials, telling stories as alternatives to official history and for a contemporary audience.

The panoramas are supplemented by further edited materials from the Federal Archives. This completes a project of “documentary empathy” (Florian Ebner) which photo critic Gerry Badger saw as “transforming the interpretation of historical facts into a work of art in a creative act.”

The exhibition at Haus am Kleistpark (Grunewaldstrasse 6–7, 10823 Berlin) is presented by the Berlin Tempelhof-Schöneberg district department of Art, Culture and Museums. It opens on the evening of May 26, 2016 and is open Tuesdays to Sundays from 11 am to 6 pm. Entrance is free of charge.

The exhibition is accompanied by a high-quality two-volume book published by Hatje Cantz Verlag. This can be purchased at the exhibition and in bookstores for 98 EUR.

More information: www.inventarisierung-der-macht.de

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