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Gosbert Gottmann *Freiheit Freedom Воля*

Texts by Gosbert Gottmann, Jaroslav Makarchuk, Marc Peschke

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The tension of war between destruction and the human desire for freedom

Art photographer Gosbert Gottmann reflects on suffering, violence, and war through the experience of the Ukrainian population during the Russian invasion. At its core lies the tension between destruction and the human desire for freedom, safety, and dignity.

Suffering, a central theme in Gottmann's work, is conveyed through abstraction, deformation, and visual disruption. Rather than offering direct representation, faces dissolve, contours blur, and identities are erased.

Between reality and virtuality, a space of resonance emerges that reveals the psychological and structural dimensions of war. A powerful artistic reflection on loss, resilience, and the fragility of freedom, »Freiheit Freedom Воля« is Gottmann's seventh publication with Kehrer Verlag.

From the text *Identity and Distortion: The Boundaries of Being Human* by Marc Peschke:

An image can only represent the complex and often multidimensional aspects of suffering and violence in a limited way. Gottmann's strategy for dealing with this dilemma is abstraction: where traditional photography casts a direct, often shocking gaze on reality, Gottmann's abstractions work with the avoidance of the concrete.

His pictures largely forgo the realistic representation of pain and destruction, but rather refer to something else. As he once said himself, 'For me it's about finding a view through the surface, a view into a deeper layer, beyond familiar images'. Here, photography is an act of seeing and recognizing that reaches deeper,

under the surface of the visible, down to the deepest layers of existence. In the discrepancy and tension between external image and inner reality, in the dialectic between objectivity and subjectivity, lies the captivating allure of these pictures.

Gosbert Gottmann is a visual artist based in Frankfurt, Germany. His work has been exhibited internationally and is held in numerous public and private collections, including the DZ BANK Art Collection. Kehrer Verlag has published several of his monographs, including *Warriors* (2004), *Marathon People* (2010), *Ware Liebe* (2013), *Spectators* (2015), and *Bärenstark* (2016).

Jaroslav Makarchuk is an author born in Ukraine with German roots who has lived in Germany since 2014. After studying architecture at the Technical University of Braunschweig, he decided to pursue a career as a writer. Since the start of the Russian invasion he has worked at the State Office for Migration as a language mediator for Ukrainian refugees.

Marc Peschke is an art historian, journalist, curator, and writer working across art, photography, design, and culture. He was co-founder and co-owner of the photography gallery Kunstadapter in Wiesbaden and Frankfurt am Main, as well as the cultural bar Wakker in Wiesbaden. He also served as co-curator of the art space Atelier Schwab in Wertheim am Main. Since 2022, he has co-curated the Wiesbaden Photography Festival.

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