



NEW RELEASE

Djamilia Grossmann & Tom Licht
Be Hers Be Mine
 A Surrogacy Journey

Text by Anika König
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When longing transcends boundaries: a Swiss couple's surrogacy journey to America

After eight years and numerous failed attempts to get pregnant, a Swiss couple decide to have their baby born by surrogacy. Although it is banned in Switzerland, they ask a woman in the USA to carry their child in her womb.

Tom Licht and Djamilia Grossman, a photographer duo from Zurich, Switzerland, describe the journey of the couple and the reasons behind their decision. They join the parents for the child's birth in Wisconsin, USA, because they are intrigued by the questions their story offers. Surrogacy mirrors a global reality where lines blur between technology, human biology, ethics, and law. The complexity of the topic is reflected in documentary-style sequences, stilllife motifs, portraits, documents, and interviews.

From the essay by Anika König:

Commercial gestational surrogacy—when a woman is paid to carry a child for others to whom she hands it over after birth—is perhaps the most controversial reproductive technology of our time. For many, it seems unimaginable that a woman would arrange to carry a baby for nine months, just to give it away to someone else. This—it is assumed—may only happen under duress, out of financial distress and great desperation of the surrogate. Monetary compensation for a pregnancy also violates our common understanding that children are precious, yet priceless—and for some, this puts surrogacy in line with child-trafficking and sex work.

[...]

On the other hand, surrogacy is a reproductive technology that is extremely diverse, just as the people who are a part of it—and

their individual motivations to pursue this path. It is crucial to critically examine this reproductive technology. But cases as the one presented in this book show that it is indeed possible to successfully carry out surrogacy in a way that is built on a foundation of mutual respect and mutual support.

Quotes from the Swiss couple:

»I had a lot of anger, that was my source of energy. I thought either I'm having a child or I will die.«

»We were afraid of the surrogate. She was a threatening figure because she is the one who is able to get pregnant. Which of course is something I can't.«

»I do have the feeling we are two moms. I think in some way she does have a mother role, because she gave birth to him. It's a psychologically huge achievement that two people are able to do this, have a child together. Two women, actually.«

»We were very worried about all the legal stuff. Our lawyer mentioned there might be problems. We didn't exactly know how we would get him into Switzerland. We had an emergency plan—across the border at night, by car.«

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