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Ulrike Crespo ICELAND

Texts by Halldór Guðmundsson, Matthias Wagner K

Designed by Harald Pridgar

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Breath-taking images of the rough beauty in the Atlantic Ocean

With her *Iceland* series, Ulrike Crespo takes on an extraordinary landscape, which has inspired countless travel and art photographers since the 19th century. And yet she succeeds in producing images that depict the breath-taking wealth of colors and forms of this wild island in a completely new way, often in nearly abstract details: turquoise-blue icebergs, black volcanic sand, white foaming waterfalls, mossy green boulders, and sulphur-yellow gravel deserts.

From the text by Halldór Guðmundsson:

And Crespo demonstrates her extremely sharp eye for light, reflections and unusual perspectives in the next series of photos, also above water, but this time of the frozen kind – glaciers, snow and icebergs in melting lagoons. We see not only the pure, deep blue of the thousand-year-old ice, ice which is, in fact, colourless but never looks that way to us, but also the glaciers stained black by ash and sand, many of which could disappear in only a few decades.

Something else presented to the viewer is the monotonous, uninviting grey of the lifeless rocks on the high plateaus. However, the photographer's gaze repeatedly shifts back to the unusual brown, red and yellow tones of the geothermal regions, and thus to the green life in the middle of this high tundra, be it the deep green of the moss or the bright green of the grass that grows along the rivers, defying the hard winter in the centre of the country to grow back every summer, unlike the moss, which take centuries to recover from the slightest damage.

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Many of these photos were taken in the region in which all these natural elements come together, the region known in Icelandic as »Að fjallabaki,« »behind the mountains.«

Time and time again Crespo succeeds in showing new (even to Icelanders) parts of this, the most beautiful part of Iceland, in revealing unusual correlations and changing our perspective on those clichéd photos in the many books on Iceland and even taking us under the rainbow. The name could therefore even become symbolic of this book – it takes its readers behind Iceland's mountains.

It is nature that is our real treasure, even if we do not boast any natural resources: the kind of nature that is to be found in the pictures of this book with its almost deserted landscapes – the black rocks, the grey water and the bright green, that barely-living, just-surviving green. A harsh, unyielding kind of nature with just a hint of life, one that draws us to it over and over again.

Tourism in Iceland has tripled over the past decade. And suddenly there is something to that closing idea from the 50-year-old documentary film. When we come back from our next trip will our country, its nature, its emptiness still be there? Or will it have disappeared? I certainly hope not, but if it has gone, then it is good to have such unique documents as this photo book.

For further details, press images, permissions and review copies, please contact the publisher's press office:

Barbara Karpf, barbara.karpf@kehrerverlag.com or
Kathrin Szymikowski, kathrin.szymikowski@kehrerverlag.com
Kehrer Verlag, Wieblingen Weg 21, 69123 Heidelberg, Germany
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Author's Biographies

Ulrike Crespo

(born in 1950 in Fulda)

After completing high school in Darmstadt, in the 1970s Ulrike Crespo studied French, Art History and Archaeology in Lausanne and Geneva, Switzerland. After returning to Germany in the 1980s, she studied Psychology in Frankfurt/Main and gained a licence to practice as a psychotherapist. Since the 1990s she has closely concerned herself with photography. Ulrike Crespo lives and works in Frankfurt/Main, Germany, Vienna, Austria, and West Cork, Ireland.

Further publications by Ulrike Crespo:

Twilight, 2011 (German Photo Book Prize – Nominated 2012)

Ephemere, 2012

Cold Landscape, 2013

Nachtblüten, 2013

Unter der Haut des Wassers, 2014 (German Photo Book Prize – Nominated 2015)

Rainflowers, 2015

www.ulrike-crespo-photography.com

Halldór Guðmundsson

(born in 1956 in Reykjavík)

Halldór Guðmundsson studied in Reykjavík and Copenhagen, graduating with a Master's in Comparative Literature in 1984. He then worked as the director of Mál og menning, Iceland's largest publishing house, from 1984 onwards, and thereafter for Edda publishers, until 2003.

Halldór Guðmundsson has authored several books, including a biography of Icelandic Nobel Prize winner Halldór Laxness, for which he was awarded the Icelandic Literary Prize for best non-fiction in 2004. He managed the project *Fabulous Iceland – Guest of Honour of the Frankfurt Book Fair 2011* from 2008 through to 2011. He was appointed director of Harpa Concert Hall and Conference Centre in June 2012. Halldór Guðmundsson has been appointed project manager of *Norway – Guest of Honour of the Frankfurt Book Fair 2019* and will assume this role in March 2017.

Matthias Wagner K

(born in 1961 in Jena)

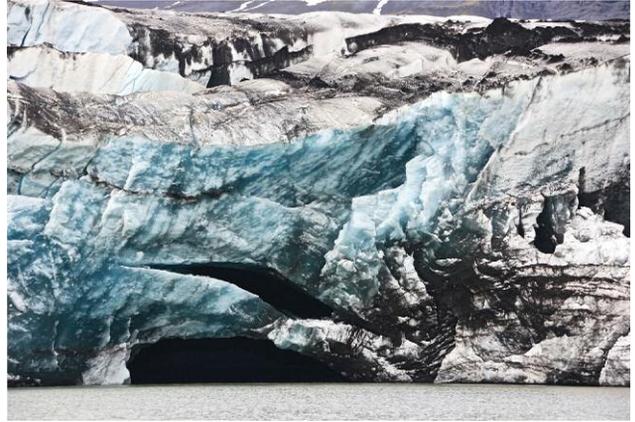
Matthias Wagner K's interest in the presentation of art and culture started with theatre and the visual arts. He curated exhibitions on the cultural history of light and is considered a specialist in Nordic culture. In 2005 he directed the Cologne Festival on *Images of Iceland* and in 2009 was appointed artistic director of the very first Nordic Fashion Biennale. From 2006 to 2012 he was curator to the Nordic Embassies in Berlin. In 2008 the Republic of Iceland made him chief curator for its *Legendary Iceland* art and culture programme, which accompanied the country's presentation as guest of honour at the Frankfurt Book Fair 2011. Since 2012 Matthias Wagner K has been director for the Museum Angewandte Kunst in Frankfurt/Main where he has been driving its realignment since spring 2013.

In 2007 the author arranged to embark on a hike with writer Thor Vilhjálmsson from Þorlákshöfn to Þingvellir, through Hveravellir – the thermal springs region – across the highlands, along Vatnajökull to Jökulsárlón lagoon. Thor died on 4 March 2011, before the trip could come about. His novel *The Grey Moss Glows* (published in the UK as *Justice Undone*) received the Nordic Council Literature prize, and he was honoured with the Swiss Academy Nordic Prize for his lifetime achievement. The text excerpts included in this imaginary travel journal are taken from *The Grey Moss Glows*.

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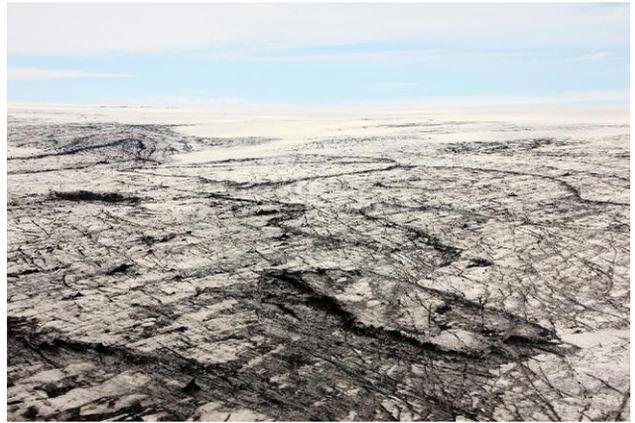
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