

NEW RELEASE JULY 2022



Friso Keuris *Tito* *Of an Island's paradise and Disturbed Earth*

Text by Friso Keuris

Designed by Teun van der Heijden, Heijdens Karwei

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Remembering Yugoslavia: an island residence, a war tribunal, and numbered archive photos

This book is about a country that was once called Yugoslavia and was ruled by Josip Broz »Tito«. From the 1950's onwards, Tito spent his summers at Brijuni, a small archipelago along the west coast of the Istrian region of Croatia. This former summer residence embodies the beginning and the end of the Yugoslavian dream, in which Tito firmly believed. His private dwellings, which are still kept in order on a daily basis, are strictly forbidden to the public. Between 2001 and 2017, Dutch photographer Friso Keuris pictured the personnel and the interior of the Tribunal. In 2016, he was free to photograph the idyllic, utopian world of Brijuni. This book also shows images of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. The UN court dealt with the war crimes committed during the civil war from 1991 to 2000.

Friso Keuris (b. 1963) studied at the Royal Academy The Hague (1982–1987) and is an Amsterdam based portraits photographer since 1989. He works in commission for a broad spectrum of leading national and international magazines and companies.

From the text *Poetry and Reality* by **Friso Keuris**:

An island, a few residences, a war tribunal and numbered archive photos. What's the connection? This book is about a country that was once called Yugoslavia and was ruled by a charismatic leader, Josip Broz 'Tito'. He forged six independent republics into a single Communist whole, which he later transformed into a Social-Democratic federation. A bravo for Utopia, though there are doubts about how fitting this metaphor really is. Tito wanted the various population groups within the federation to concern themselves as little as possible with their historical and religious differences. Apart from the occasional moments of unrest, this ideology seemed to work. Brilliant! (...)

This is all in sad contrast to 1991, when the 'Brijuni Agreement' was signed. The agreement put an end to ten days of fighting between Slovenia and Croatia, but also sealed their independence, essentially heralding the end of Yugoslavia. After the death of the 'Marshall', nationalism quickly reared its head and the fighting started. It was the end of Tito's Yugoslavia.

It is 2001, at the International Criminal Court in The Hague, in the Netherlands. From the public benches, I look out at Courtroom 1, visible through an enormous wall of bulletproof glass windows. To the left, sit the defendants and their legal counsel. In the centre, back to the public, sits a witness. Opposite the witness are the judges and ushers, with the prosecutors to the right. I later learn that, to the far right, behind the blacked-out windows, sit the simultaneous interpreters. Far left, also behind glass, is the video recording room. During one session, a black-and-white photograph is shown on television screens. It shows a small truck on its side, half in a river and half on the bank. A macabre image. Especially when it emerges from statements in court that the truck is full of dead bodies. Descriptions of such atrocities committed during this civil war were frequently heard in these courtrooms. (...)

So here we are: an island, a few residences, a war tribunal and numbered archive photos. Together they tell the story of the phenomenon Josip Broz 'Tito' and the destruction of the edifice he built, with a ruinous war as its final act. I continue to be amazed by the shamelessness of malevolent human behaviour. Every war eventually comes down to violence, cruelty and suffering. Deep pain that, many years after the fighting has stopped, remains tangible and not forgotten.

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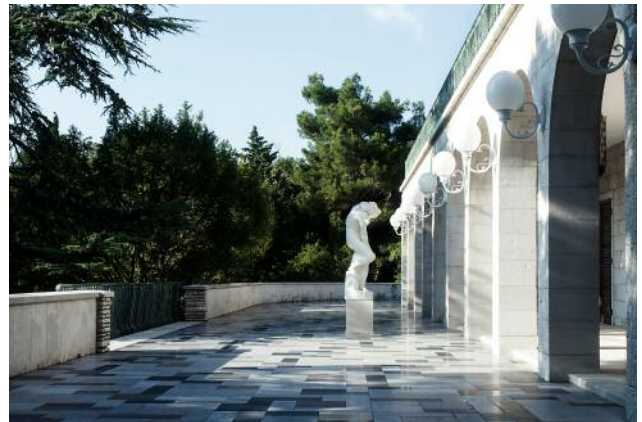
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08_Ratko Mladić in court on monitor in lobby, ICTY..
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Defence 'Tuta'Naletilić & Martinović.
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