

NEW RELEASE 2024



Jessica Backhaus *Plein Soleil*

Text by Christiane Stahl
 Designed by Hannah Feldmeier
 Otabind softcover
 28 x 36 cm
 96 pages
 41 color ills.
 English
 ISBN 978-3-96900-163-9
 Euro 48,00

A colorful study of form and light by one of the most important voices in contemporary photography from Germany

Following her series from the publication *A Trilogy* (2017), Jessica Backhaus embarked on a transformative exploration, shedding the constraints of mimetic photography to delve into the profound depths of abstraction. *Cut Outs* (2021), represented the ultimate breakthrough into a fresh creative phase, introducing an innovative form of abstraction.

In *Plein Soleil*, Backhaus presents a stunning visual symphony where the compositional interplay of color, surface, and form reigns supreme. The images, using a complex visual language, are even more radical and uncompromising than those in the previous project. Through minimalist compilations of reality's set pieces, she crafts images that transcend the ordinary, transporting viewers into vibrant, luminous worlds full of life energy.

Created with the simplest of materials—various colored papers that are rectangular and square, textured surfaces, and glistening sunlight—Backhaus' images exude a captivating allure. The interplay of light and shadow, coupled with her meticulous arrangement of forms, invite audiences to lose themselves in the mesmerizing dance of color and form.

With *Plein Soleil*, Jessica Backhaus explores the photographic possibilities of abstraction. It must be acknowledged that Jessica Backhaus is a talented colorist. She orders compositions as if they were architectural models, striving for the most glowing colors, each complementing the other. She has mastered light and other elements to create these surprising spatial structures. She does not draw with colors; she sculpts them. There is no attempt to simplify here; on the contrary, the autonomy of the color photographed is explored, forever liberated from the constraints of the subject. The colored sheets of paper, treated in

depth, whose complexity we can grasp visually, have a life of their own. Such is the role that the photographer has given herself, to recount to us the infinite vitality of colored vibrations and to encourage an experience of color independent of conventions of any kind.

From the text by **Christiane Stahl**:

» *She leaves herself open to the unknown and creates images that are so light and playfully carefree that they could not have been born out of reason; they are optimistic, bright, luminous, vibrant, and lighthearted, with a life-affirming energy.*

To describe Jessica Backhaus as a photographer rather than as an artist is to miss the point. Plein Soleil shows that her references are not rooted in photography, but rather in music, dance, film and, above all, painting.

There are many sources of inspiration: the small-format, abstract paintings of Etel Adnan, or the American color field painting of Abstract Expressionists such as Mark Rothko, Helen Frankenthaler, or Clyfford Still, which is hardly surprising, especially since she lived in New York for fourteen years and is a US citizen. Her passion for European painting has also left clear traces, particularly the organic forms of Jean Arp and Joan Miró, and the reduction to basic forms and abstract pictorial elements of Bauhaus artists such as Oskar Schlemmer and Wassily Kandinsky. The deep ultramarine blue of Yves Klein forms the basis of everything. «

Jessica Backhaus is considered as one of the most distinguished voices in contemporary photography in Germany today. Her work is exhibited and collected internationally, she lives and works in Berlin.

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