



NEW RELEASE KEHRER VERLAG

Hanno Steckel & Ashkan Sahihi The Operating Theatre

Edited by Hanno Steckel

Texts by Christoph Amend, Ashkan Sahihi, Hanno Steckel

Designed by Kehrer Design (Loreen Lampe), Hilka Dirks

Hardcover

30 x 31,8 cm

56 pages

20 duotone ills.

English, German

ISBN 978-3-86828-798-1

Euro 35,00

A presentation of surgical skills that goes beyond the medical aspects of this profession

The inspiration of this book originated from the Hospital Drawings by Barbara Hepworth, created in the late 1940s. Following the hospitalization of her daughter, Hepworth produced a series of drawings illustrating surgeons at work in operating theaters. Her drawings focus on the craftsmanship, the skills, the rhythmic movements of the surgeons' hands and are very powerful and full of passion. She said in a lecture: »There is, it seems to me, a close affinity between the work and approach both of physicians and surgeons and painters and sculptors.« At a time when surgeries are calculated in minutes and procedures are forced to be economic, the beauty and the grace of the surgeries are at risk to get lost in perception. That triggered the idea to transform the themes of craftsmanship and surgical skills by photographs to modern times. The result is this photobook, entitled *The Operation Theatre*, created in honour of Hepworth.

»The black and white of the images conveys calmness, the metal of the instruments glistens coolly. It is tidy here, no object extraneous, everything in its place. Is this surgery too beautiful to be true?

We may not be watching a play but we are witnessing — like in countless hospital series and movies — the moment at which the doctor has sweat beads dabbed off his forehead.

Through these images Ashkan Sahihi achieves a rare success: he documents a familiar reality with great precision and enables us to see it through new eyes.«

– from the text by Christoph Amend

Ashkan Sahihi was born in Tehran, Iran, in 1963. He immigrated to Germany with his family in 1970. In 1987, Sahihi moved to New York and began photographing for publications such as *The New York Times Magazine*, *The New Yorker*, *ZEITmagazin*, *GEO*, *Der Spiegel*, *Rolling Stone*, *Vogue*, and *Vice*. Beginning in 1998, he shifted his focus from photojournalism to independent, highly compact, conceptual fine arts series. These include *The Exes Series*, *The Drug Series* and *Women of the IDF*. Sahihi's work is characterized by in-depth explorations. Since 2008, Sahihi has worked in London, Turkey, the Middle East and New York. Sahihi currently lives in Berlin, where he developed the visual anthropological examination *Die Berlinerinnen* and a portfolio of nude portraits called *Beautiful Berlin Boys*, his most recent work.
www.ashkansahihi.com

Hanno Steckel was born in Oldenburg, Germany, in 1972. After having studied medicine in Germany, France and the US, he did his orthopaedic residency in Hamburg, Essen, Potsdam, Goettingen and Berlin. At the University of Muenster, Steckel finished his doctoral thesis in general surgery in 1998. His habilitation thesis was completed at the University of Goettingen in 2008, following his research fellowship at the University of Pittsburgh. In 2012 Steckel was appointed associate professor at the University of Goettingen. Since 2009 he has worked in Berlin as an orthopaedic surgeon, specialized in knee surgery.

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 Fon ++49 (0)6221/649 20-25 | Fax ++49 (0)6221/64920-20
www.kehrerverlag.com | www.artbooksheidelberg.com

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