

SECOND EDITION

Sibylle Fendt

Gärtners Reise (Gärtner's Voyage)

Texts by Sibylle Fendt, Zoltán Jókay

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They had spent their entire life together traveling around Europe in a mobile home. In summer 2008, Lothar Gärtner decided to venture on one last journey with his wife, Elke. Two years earlier, Elke has been diagnosed with dementia. Lothar wanted to care for her in their home for as long as possible, to accompany her on her way.

Sibylle Fendt initially photographed Lothar and Elke at home before joining the couple on their last journey through Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, all the way to St. Petersburg. In discreet and yet intimate photographs, Fendt tells a love story of growing apart, finding each other again, and then disappearing. The photographs, though taken on the road, are not documents of the trip but symbols for a journey into unknown territory.

Sibylle Fendt (b. 1974) studied photography at Fachhochschule Bielefeld and with Wolfgang Tillmans at Städelschule in Frankfurt am Main, Germany. Since 2002 she works as a freelancer and teaches at the famous Ostkreuzschule for Photography and Design in Berlin. For her work she has received numerous awards, e.g. the Kodak-Nachwuchs-Förderpreis organized by Kodak; the Wüstenrot Award for documentary photography; the Vattenfall Photo Award.

In photography projects that are often developed over several years, Sibylle Fendt likes to focus on people who are at a dead-end or a fork in the road of their life stories.

And so the two Gärtners set out on their last journey together. Courageous indeed, but also upsetting. / Husband and mobile home become the last anchors of stability in this woman's life. / He holds her tight. And long after she has lost the ability to speak, she writes down a simple sentence on a notepad. A note that is presumably addressed to him. The sentence is repeated three times:

I want you to be.

We rarely hear about the kind of love that is evident in these pictures. It is very well observed whilst avoiding sentimentality. It has an element of everyday love about it, but at the same time it is also something very special. And that is when we think, this is how things might be and this is real.

– Zoltán Jókay

Exhibition

CRAZY – Living with mental illness
f³ – freiraum für fotografie, Berlin
15.02. - 22.04.2019

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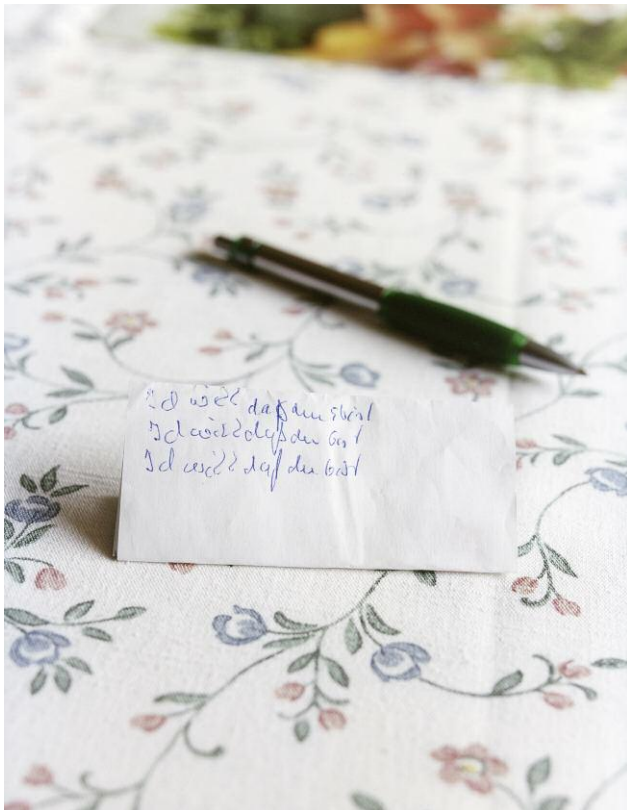
6. Inside Camper © Sibylle Fendt



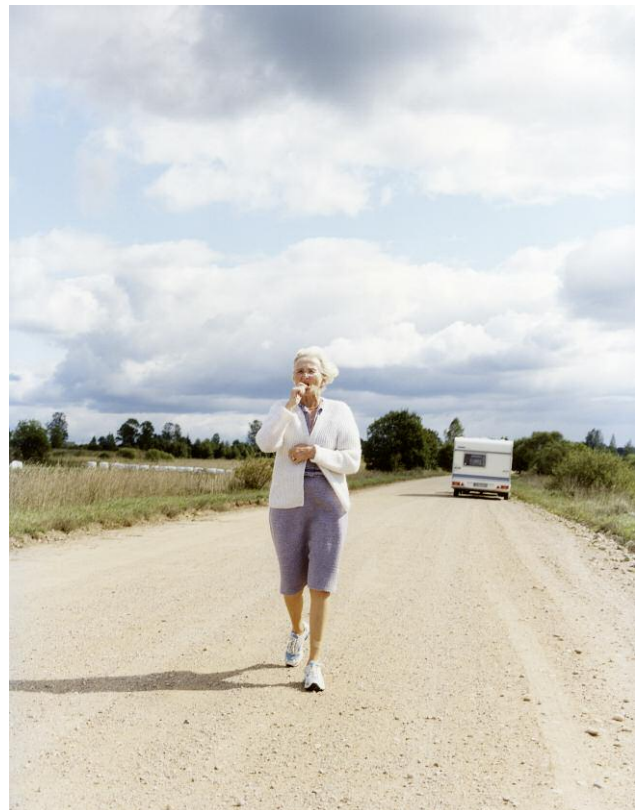
7. Camping site in the national park Ankstaitijos, Lithuania © Sibylle Fendt



8. Hermitage, Saint Petersburg, Russia © Sibylle Fendt



9. I want you to be © Sibylle Fendt



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