



NEW RELEASE

Sibylle Fendt
Holzbachtal, nothing, nothing

Text by Sibylle Fendt
Designed by Julia Kuon
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A book about waiting and nothingness in the seclusion of a refugee shelter

Deep in the Black Forest, in the Holzbach Valley, lies the refugee shelter H8, where refugees have lived for over twenty years. The Holzbach Valley is not a place; it is only a road, a stream, in the middle of the forest. The men have nothing to do there except wait, sleep, cook, use their mobile phones. If they are fortunate, after a few months they can attend an integration course in the next larger town. If they are unfortunate, they wait in vain. For three years, Sibylle Fendt regularly visited and portrayed the young men there. For three years, she waited with them and let time pass. For three years, she sat with them in their rooms behind closed curtains while the beautiful Black Forest landscape transpired outside.

»Outside, the beautiful Black Forest scenery was unfolding, so familiar to me, but of complete insignificance to the inhabitants. They built themselves dens, small shelters covered by fabrics, in which they drank tea, smoked and used their mobile phones to keep in touch with relatives and friends, to access their familiar world, and to connect with their desires and dreams. Usually I was welcome, I was often invited to dinner and was allowed to pass the time in their company. Every so often however – possibly in moments when they became too aware of their hopeless situation and felt a sense of shame – they wanted to be alone. To this day I have in a sense remained a stranger and still feel like I am stunned and facing some kind of mystery. I ask myself what I would do if I had to leave home and start all over again in a completely different part of the world. But I'm unable to picture it and the question doesn't help me gain any insight. I ask myself what the guys could do rather than sitting in their hazy dens. I

find the question presumptuous and remain baffled. So I spent time with them and tried to learn to simply let time pass by and find meaning in the here and now or in the nothingness and take pictures that reflect this.«
– from the text by Sibylle Fendt

Sibylle Fendt(*1974) Sibylle Fendt is a member of the Ostkreuz Agency of the Photographers and teaches photography at various universities. Her first photo book *Gärtner's Reise* was first released in 2012; a second edition was published 2019. She lives and works in Berlin.
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Press images



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Lamin is waiting for his friend Mohammed to make their way together to the supermarket 4 km away. © Sibylle Fendt



07 *Mohammed Swaleh, October 2018*
 Mohammed dreams of a career as a footballer. Currently, he is playing on the 1st men's team of TV Gräfenhausen. © Sibylle Fendt



08 *Kitchen window, February 2015*
 As there is no mobile phone reception in the house, the only way to receive calls is to hold the mobile phone out of the window. © Sibylle Fendt



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 Hasib received this robe for the Feast of Breaking the Fast from his parents by mail © Sibylle Fendt



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