

Passage Fotobibliothek

TRANSFORMATION

Publications by Sputnik Photos and Beat Schweizer

It's been more than a quarter of a century since the Soviet Union formally ceased to exist. Since this momentous historical event, the post-Soviet nations have found themselves in a state of constant change.

Sputnik Photos and Beat Schweizer (CH, *1982) examine the transitional processes in these countries from two distinct standpoints using historical, political, economic and socio-cultural motives. In contrast to the view largely influenced by Western prejudices, they use insider and outsider perspectives to draw an intricate, multilayered picture of developments in the post-communist realm. Even though both positions are located in the field of documentary photography, through a conscious approach to images and text, experimentation with different materials and means of communication, and use of historical, archival and personal images, their publications establish a complex and thoroughly ambivalent relationship to the subject matter. Their work focuses on media-related aspects of presentation and communication of image and text, enabling them to adopt a distinct position within the field of an extended and self-reflective documentary practice.

Founded in 2006, Sputnik Photos is a collective from Central and Eastern Europe made up of the photographers Agnieszka Rayss, Andrej Balco, Jan Brykczynski, Andrei Liankevich, Michal Luczak, Rafal Milach and Adam Panczuk. The group examines sociopolitical processes and sociocultural phenomena that have shaped the region since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Their practice critically addresses the representation of reality and calls for the adoption of a distinctive perspective and attitude within documentary photography. In addition to events, publications and exhibitions, Sputnik Photos conducts workshops with young photographers, publishes books by third parties and its members are also individually active as photographers. Their publications move between classic book formats, magazines, or loosely bound prints that also work as single images.

Beat Schweizer lives and works in Bern, undertaking photographic commissions and pursuing personal documentary projects. His magazines, mostly published in newspaper format with accompanying texts by the writer Urs Mannhart (CH, *1975), are a characteristic feature of his creative means of expression. Schweizer's visual language is augmented by Mannhart's literary reports on the countries and places in question, creating an almost fictive, fantastical narrative. Together with previous publications, Schweizer's latest project *Michailovna hat angerufen (Michailovna called)* will be presented in the form of a book maquette.

The current exhibition in the Passage establishes a dialogue between the diverse perspectives and positions of Sputnik Photos and Beat Schweizer, whose publications juxtapose, contrast and combine the outsider's and the insider's point of view.

02 June to 14 October 2018