

A danse macabre, a fever dream

Benita Suchodrev went through her archive, something the lockdowns during the Corona pandemic gave her the opportunity to do. The result is now a new photobook, titled *Find Me Paradise*, and, to put it bluntly: **the book and the photographs it contains are a knockout.**

With this book, Suchodrev has truly **found her way to herself**. Before this, she had made good, coherent photobooks, such as the one documenting the social and economic decline of the north of England through the example of the seaside resort of Blackpool—a book I praised in Fotolot, although I had the feeling that she could have gone even further and left behind the recognizable points of orientation in photographic history, such as Anders Petersen, Bruce Gilden, or Daido Moriyama. She has now succeeded in doing precisely that with *Find Me Paradise*.

The fact that the book's density also owes something to Suchodrev's intense engagement with both the obvious and the more obscure aspects of Berlin nightlife (with an undeniable affinity to the photographs of Miron Zownir), at a time when Berlin briefly became a globally acknowledged "place to be," is an interesting detail, but not a decisive one. Individual motifs—a dead deer in the grass, a carousel in the clouded twilight, a half-naked woman tied to an iron bar—come together in a sequence that could have unfolded this way, or in an entirely different way. That the Rilke quotation "For beauty is nothing but the beginning of terror" was chosen as the book's motto is no coincidence: **The book is a danse macabre, a fever dream, a cold withdrawal, a photographic memorandum, woven from ecstasy and routine, human follies and triumphs.**

"**Shooting**" is usually too grandiose a term, and simply too sexy, for what ultimately constitutes the output of a photographic intervention. For Suchodrev's photographs, however, it is an almost perfect word: the pressing of the shutter release, through which a bullet is literally fired at the subject, whether that subject is a living person or a lifeless object—a bullet born of **insatiable curiosity**, ignited by the spark of optimistic greed, the desire to temporarily take possession of something and transform it into something else. And then, **the silence after the shot**: restless exhaustion, because there is no way to bring it to an end, and, like a junkie, one soon finds oneself with no alternative but to go searching for the next photographic high.

Few books are ones you enjoy returning to again and again. The chances that Benita Suchodrev's *Find Me Paradise* will henceforth be one of those fortunate few are by no means small.