



“A CORNUCOPIA OF PRESENTATION FORMATS”

INTERVIEW

Fifteen years ago, art historian and curator Josefine Raab launched the newcomer awards challenge *gute aussichten – junge deutsche fotografie*. We talked with her about the project’s development, and new techniques and concepts.

LFI: The situation for photography, particularly newcomer talent, was very different 15 years ago.

JOSEFINE RAAB: As an artist and curator, doing quality work is not enough to guarantee success. Another strategy was needed to ensure young art could be drawn to the attention of the general public. It was time for a fresh breeze to blow through the cultural sector.

LFI: You wanted to change things and launched *gute aussichten*. What was the idea behind it?

RAAB: When launching the *gute aussichten – junge deutsche fotografie* (good prospects – young German photography) newcomer challenge in 2004, my

business partner Stefan Becht, and I wanted to turn the prevailing ‘operating system’ upside down. We wanted to find exhibition venues for barely-established photographers and breakdown hierarchies. It was not common – and it still isn’t today – to exhibit unknown artists, because a lot of preparatory work is required. You also need important fellows, which we found right at the beginning, like Andreas Gursky as juror and Ingo Taubhorn, curator of the sacred Deichtorhallen House of Photography in Hamburg, who made a band of non-names available for us at short notice. That was good luck! And our project became a success. Consequently, we created a model template that other venues are gradually considering. We became a non-profit organisation in 2015.

LFI: What was your biggest success over the years?

RAAB: In 15 years of *gute aussichten*, we have mounted more than 140 exhibitions in 45 locations around the world, laying down the proverbial red carpet for 130 award winners. Another big success is *gute aussichten Deluxe* (good prospects deluxe) launched in 2017 within the framework of German Year in Mexico City. →



Above: Miia Autio, 2016/17 *gute aussichten* winner, from her *Variation of White* series; left: Ute Klein, 2009/10 *gute aussichten* winner, from her *Resonanzgeflechte* series; left page: André Hemstedt, 2010/11 *gute aussichten* winner, from his *Konstruktion von Bewegung* series



Photo left: © André Hemstedt; Photos right: © Ute Klein, © Miia Autio



Bianca Gutberlet (1973–2014),
2004/05 *gute aussichten* winner,
from her *Paris* series

LFI: Once a year, a jury chooses the best works produced for the *gute aussichten* competition by college graduates. What are the criteria for photographers to submit their work?

RAAB: *gute aussichten* is about photographers working artistically. Once a year, we invite colleges in Germany to submit five of their most promising graduation portfolios to our competition. This means that in the end we will have between 100 and 115 projects, of which on average, seven to ten will be honoured.

LFI: An award is just one side. How can photographers get good exhibitions?

RAAB: As always, it is important that photographers have a thorough training that can resist any attempt to optimise studies exclusively towards the imperative of financial success. Students today are expected to network and become international. Commitment, social competence and soft skills are just as important as expertise and professional competence. Their basic knowledge should be as broad as possible, and it does no harm to take a look at other disciplines.

LFI: The genres for *gute aussichten* – *junge deutsche fotografie* are incredibly diverse. What, in your mind, belongs to the photography genre?

RAAB: Photography is a dynamic, lively medium, closely linked in its aesthetic development and applications to technological developments, including analogue or digital camera techniques as well as print and production processes. In its, comparatively speaking, young history photography has repeatedly written really surprising chapters, by questioning and demolishing its own laws, limitations and visual conventions.

LFI: For example?

RAAB: The current 2018/2019 group is a wonderful example of this: three out of

“PHOTOGRAPHY HAS ALWAYS QUESTIONED AND DEMOLISHED VISUAL CONVENTIONS.”



Clockwise from the left: Vanessa Jack,
2006/07 *gute aussichten* winner, from her
Reroofing series; Henning Bode, 2012/13
gute aussichten winner, from his *Die Kinder
des King Cotton* series; Kamil Sobolewski,
2015/16 *gute aussichten* winner, from his
Rattenkönig series



In January 2018, we held a huge exhibition at the Deichtorhallen House of Photography in Hamburg with more than 300 new works on display by winners of awards in the years between 2004 and 2015. Close to 5000 guests came to the vernissage and for the Long Night of Photography, and more than 42 000 photography enthusiasts visited in the four months; a record-setting attendance.

nine photographers are working with novel image production processes. Patrick Knuchel has built a bridge between photography and screen printing; Robert ter Horst produces compositions where he processes film and photographic imagery with mathematical algorithms; Benjamin Kummer operates in the dark room with hand-made models. I very deliberately take a close look at the margins of established photography, and over the years *gute aussichten* has reflected stylistic and aesthetic diversity in this broad field.

LFI: Every year the *gute aussichten* exhibition goes on tour, and the presentation formats seem to be increasingly demanding.

RAAB: A development in the presentation of photographic works currently gaining strength is the ‘installation moment’. Photography is increasingly dominating the entire space, incorporating objects, projections, screens and sounds. It lies on the ground; it’s wallpaper, carpet, or banner; it covers whole façades. On the one hand, there are photographers who have returned to analogue, making one of a kind pieces using classic style passe-partouts and frames; and, on the other, are those who develop digital works for smartphone, fishing the internet for digital snippets and generating works with computer software. Seen from this perspective, *gute aussichten* is a cornucopia of different presentation formats.

INTERVIEW: Carla Susanne Erdmann

JOSEFINE RAAB majored in Art History and is a graduated translator. In 1993 she was assistant to Thomas M. Messer, Dir. Emeritus, Guggenheim Museum New York, for the Antoni Tàpies retrospective at the Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt. From 1995 to 2004 she was an active member of the board of the Nassauischen Kunstvereins (Art Association) in Wiesbaden. In 2004 she founded *gute aussichten* with Stefan Becht.

GUTE AUSSICHTEN 2018/19: Première exhibition at Technical Collections Dresden, until 17 March 2019; Deichtorhallen House of Photography Hamburg, 11 July to 29 September, 2019; further exhibition locations at: www.guteaussichten.org

LEICA ROPE STRAPS

Alles, was für die Berge gemacht wird, muss robust sein. In der jüngsten Zusammenarbeit zwischen Leica und COOPH wurden Bergsteigerseile genommen und daraus Tragriemen entwickelt. Ein Zubehör mit Charakter, um Ihre Kamera sicher und bequem zu transportieren.



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