

## Banks of Fog and Remnants of Walls

My frequent trips to the place where I was born, Bad Polzin/Połczyn Zdrój were prompted by the recollections of my mother. In 1989 shortly after the fall of the Berlin wall she recorded the escape from her homeland in March 1945 as a young mother with her baby. I had decided to retrace these steps. After several journeys the significant obstacles emerge in their geographic, cultural and metaphorical iterations. The foreign language as well as the burden of history brought about tensions that appear to be constitutive: we remain strangers, we get closer.

What is the significance of the place we come from?

This question motivated me to set off in search of first and formative memories. What do images look like that stem from very early impressions, from memories that rise up from deep within, from that place that is at once forming and at the same time giving rise to the well of memories, that were long forgotten? Why do I avoid certain places or look beyond them, while other places call out to me? The snow, the trees and meadows, the horizon, the dilapidated and destroyed houses. The colors, the musty smell of damp wood in the bog. The silence and the background noises; the cold and drafts especially, the whistling of the wind. Images of longing push to the forefront, concealing something incomprehensible, trying to superimpose themselves over a mother's grief, something the child has always experienced as a void, as a feeling occupied by something unspoken. Could images provide a place to this longing?

### Grids and Reflections

With my camera I captured whatever caught my eye. At dawn and dusk the banks of fog rose and sank again. In broad daylight the wide expanse of meadows, the paths leading off into the unknown. The impressions of freedom, standstill and forlornness.

On closer inspection, I recognized something I had initially overlooked: how a sense of violence breaks through, how readily the images take on a menacing look. Suddenly, there were the deep colors of the night, the silhouettes of shadows, the empty window holes, objects of decay in thickets and underbrush.

The repetition of elements in the series give rise to this uncanny sensation while reaffirming preferences, in order to capture those almost existential properties of landscapes that are part of our visual inventory. Might images essentially originate in the activity of our inner eye?

Perhaps there are preverbal layers of forgetting, which come into view through our early, ingenuous susceptibility and perhaps these shape us more deeply: images that show towns with landscapes, figures and traces of human habitation, in a way that leaves a respectful space for what is meaningful and unfathomable. Looking back on these images, they can

come alive for us again, becoming images that contain themselves and, in this duplication, form our memory.

### The Temporary Order of Things

The motifs are arranged in a loose sequence. Other-worldly landscape images both depict and transcend the actual place. As remembered images, interwoven like dreams and realities, they contain stories and are at the same moment mirrored reflections of the yearning they evoke. In this sense, they insert themselves among the few preserved family pictures and those pictures of the inner landscapes, setting off even more the slightly blurred states and shifted perspectives: the characteristics of the fragmented, excerpted quality of memories and invented images.

Varying degrees of alienation and abstraction induce different perceptual categories. Not everything is constructed or contingent. A more or less fluid core of truth however eludes us every time we try to pin it down. It then changes like the sea, which invents nothing but takes on different forms. Just as our consciousness and memory strive to constantly reassure us, to re-orient us and to temporarily establish for us an order of things and of images.

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