

PRESS INFORMATION

From 21 March for the first time at the House of Photography /
Deichtorhallen Hamburg

**House of Photography / Deichtorhallen Hamburg, Foam
Fotografiemuseum Amsterdam and Fotografie Forum
Frankfurt present the second edition of the
*recommended Olympus Fellowship***

Hamburg, 20 February 2020 – In just a few weeks works by Karla Hiraldo Voleau, Tobias Kruse and Mika Sperling, the winners of the second *recommended Olympus Fellowship*, will be presented to the public for the first time in a group exhibition. The first stop will be Hamburg, where the photographs will be on view from 21 March to 14 June 2020 at the House of Photography / Deichtorhallen Hamburg. From 8 August to 27 September 2020 the show then continues on to the Fotografie Forum Frankfurt, and then from 15 January to 11 April 2021 to Foam Fotografiemuseum Amsterdam. The three artists, who were unanimously selected by the photography curators at the three institutions for the second round of the fellowship, have been working on their new photo series since 2019 with the assistance of the three curators, made possible by the support of Olympus.

Tobias Kruse, born in Mecklenburg in 1979, has dedicated his photographic project to the feelings of fear, anger and aggression that still pervade society in eastern Germany today, reminding him of the mood there during his youth in the 1990s after the fall of the Wall. For his landscape and portrait photographs made at 25 locations in eastern Germany, he worked for the first time in black-and-white in order to “cross-fade” present and past. The title of the work, “Deponie” (landfill), refers to its point of departure, the Ihlenberg hazardous waste facility near Schwerin, where companies in former West Germany and also Western Europe disposed of their toxic waste. It was never possible to clarify in full the actual dangers posed by the landfill. Today the contamination is neatly covered up and nearly invisible – and yet it is still slumbering there just below the surface. For his project, Kruse travelled to places that have personal, political or historical links with both the past and the current situation.

“I find Kruse’s view of Germany remarkable. As an artist, Tobias Kruse allows himself to venture a one-sided view. He’s not looking for balance. There is no Happy End. He thus lifts the veil that attempts to hide where eastern Germany is drifting today through hollow nationalism, isolation and

the destruction of the landscape. The way he succeeds at conveying this coherently in a dense sequence of 40 images both surprised and impressed me,” says Ingo Taubhorn, chief curator at the House of Photography / Deichtorhallen Hamburg.

Karla Hiraldo Voleau, born in 1992 in the Dominican Republic and raised in France, shows in her work “I Have Nothing to Tell You” her exchanges with young people in Japan as they divulge their secrets and share their personal experiences with love. New types of dating services for Japanese women had made her curious about the dating culture there. The artist explores in her work the broad cultural differences she encountered between herself and the Japanese young people she met, especially in terms of love relationships and in relation to her own personal love story and emotions. Despite the language barrier, she was able to share intimate secrets on the rooftops of Tokyo by encouraging her new acquaintances to write on her and each other’s skin. “I admire how Karla Hiraldo Voleau has managed to translate her personal uncertainties and difficulties into a work that speaks a universal language. She explores a new level of communication, how to find comfort in contact with others, and how to share feelings of love and loss,” says Kim Knoppers, curator at Foam Fotografiemuseum Amsterdam.

Mika Sperling was born in 1990 in Norilsk, Russia, moved to Germany at the age of three, today lives in Hamburg, and studied in the USA, where her two-year-old daughter was born. In her work “Mother Tongue” the artist reflects in particular on her relationship with her Vietnamese mother-in-law, who likewise lives in Germany. Sperling’s is interested mainly in the influence of different cultural backgrounds on interpersonal relationships – in particular on family togetherness and the communication between the three generations of women: mother-in-law, daughter-in-law and granddaughter. Language plays a key role here, as it often proves to be a cultural barrier in this family structure. Russian, for example, which as her mother tongue forms an essential part of Sperling’s identity, is a language she must learn anew if she is to pass it on to her daughter as part of her identity. Her daughter, on the other hand, may one day become a link in the multilingual family, as she is also learning English, German and Vietnamese. Sperling has used both photography and video in her recommended project, with the addition of audio recordings. “For me it is remarkable how Mika Sperling exposes her multicultural background and its influence on her family life layer by layer and visualizes it in pictures. We see very intimate moments of a very personal story. And yet the artist does not want to reveal to us any one universal truth. Instead, her unique artistic vision creates space for our own emotions and for questioning our own personal relationships,” says Celina Lunsford, artistic director of the Fotografie Forum Frankfurt.

recommended was initiated in 2017 as a fellowship for up-and-coming artistic photographers, in cooperation with the House of Photography / Deichtorhallen Hamburg, Foam Fotografiemuseum Amsterdam and Fotografie Forum Frankfurt. The fellowship is being offered for the second time in 2019/2020. The fellows are *recommended* by the photography curators at the three art institutions and selected unanimously by them. Each curator personally accompanies one of the fellows for the duration of the two-year fellowship. Olympus supports the fellows financially and by providing camera equipment. The aim of the fellowship is to provide effective support for artists whom the curators consider noteworthy at a crucial point in their careers, thereby promoting contemporary artistic photography.

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