

London Independent Photography

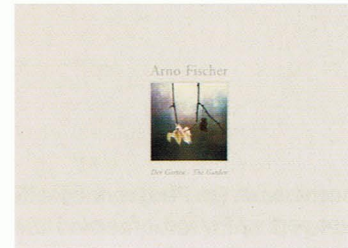
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MARY DUNKIN LEONIE PURCHAS JOHN LEVETT DENNIS TOFF JADE GOUGH JAMES TYE MOIRA LOVELL
GORDANA JOHNSON SAM KIMMINS CINNAMON HEATHCOTE-DRURY JUDIE WALDMANN

Written by Laura Nobel. The Photographers' Gallery Bookshop.

Photobooks: Recommendations



Arno Fischer:

Der Garten / The Garden
Publisher: Hatje Cantz
£35 / £31.50 LIP members

For many of us, a garden is a refuge away from the world and our troubles, where nature can be watched, nurtured and above all enjoyed. Arno Fischer is no exception.

His photographs of East and West Berlin convey his disapproval of the divide, created through the building of the wall. A book due to be published on the aforementioned subject was prohibited just three days after the wall was built. Perhaps this sense of isolation in his own country spurred his move to buy a farmhouse with Sibylle Bergemann and convert it into a place to live and work. They created a haven with a garden, pond and aviaries.

Using an SX 70 Polaroid camera, he took a multitude of photographs of the garden, birds, rocks, flora and fauna and all the incidental things in between. The painterly quality of this camera is perfectly attuned to such a subject – the photographs retain a softness and tonal range hard to duplicate with any other photographic medium. By arranging them into triptychs, he weaves together visual stories and complimentary aesthetics, resulting in a glorious body of work.

These are photographs to spend time with – contemplate the beauty and poetic imagery Fischer captures with verve. Buy it and lose yourself in its pages.



Simon Roberts:

Motherland
Publisher: Chris Boot
£25 / £22.50 LIP members

Travelling across Russia for a year, Simon Roberts covered over 75,000 kilometres and documented over 200 locations. The lives and landscapes of this mammoth landmass have rarely been observed this extensively by Westerners. This epic journey results in a truly fascinating and beautiful book which celebrates both people and landscape, with marvellous texts describing the lives of the people he photographs in their homes, in the street and at work.

Despite Russia's harsh and unforgiving landscape, its people exude a warmth and connection to the land on which they live and work. The importance of one's native home is perfectly expressed in the introduction expressed by a Russian proverb:

*'A person without a motherland
Is like a nightingale without song'.*

Russia has altered dramatically both socially and politically in our lifetime, yet many traditions remain. Roberts' portraits are reminiscent of August Sander's quest to document his fellow Germans in 'Man of the Twentieth Century', and provide a visual catalyst to the debate about contemporary Russian identity at a time of rapid change. His photographs present a wealth of humanity in the most dire of circumstances – a delightful book.



Gillian Laub:

Testimony
Publisher: Aperture
£22 / £19.80 LIP members

The complexities of the Arab - Israeli conflict are well documented by both photographers and journalists. New York based photographer Gillian Laub acknowledges this in a fascinating essay outlining her dilemma and approach to the project. A secular Jew herself, her connection to the region and her personal experiences in talking to Muslims, Jews and Christians result in a deeply personal record of both social and political significance. We are presented not just with insightful portraits but also the testimonies of those photographed – both young and old, and from all sides.

Photographed in their homes and local surroundings, we see the reality of these people's situation, the determination and endurance of spirit of ordinary people under extraordinary circumstances. The often visible scars of war show the incredible strength needed to live there, with family bonds seen as cornerstones of their survival. Young girls Haya and Hanan express their confusion: "The Jews and Arabs fight, even though we are all the same. They fight about nonsense. We hope to have peace between everyone". These personal accounts and powerful portraits are a pertinent reminder of ordinary people so often overshadowed by the media and politicians alike. The book is an inspiring glimpse into, and reassuring document of, the humanity we often fail to acknowledge regarding this unresolved conflict.

Gillian Laub will be giving a free talk at The Photographers' Gallery on Thursday 12th July from 6.30pm followed by a book launch at the Bookshop.

Please note: all prices are correct at time of going to press.

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