



THE WALL

Press Release (July 27, 2017)

Exhibition at Galerie Podbielski Contemporary, September 14 – November 11, 2017
(Opening September 14, 2017, 7 pm)

Curated by Dr. Christiane Stahl, Director Alfred Ehrhardt Foundation, Berlin

Between the United States and Mexico, North and South Korea, Israel and the Palestinian territories, the Spanish enclave Melilla and Morocco, Northern and Southern Cyprus, and along the so-called Balkan Route—more than ever before, today barbed wire fences, solid barriers, and high-tech surveillance equipment secures kilometers of cement walls along the borders between countries who are not capable of solving their political, religious, ethnic, and financial differences in another way. Europe is increasingly walling itself shut. If before 1990 inhabitants of the Eastern Block risked their lives to escape to Istanbul by crossing the border between Bulgaria and Turkey, today the border of the EU and Turkey is secured on Bulgaria's side to keep out "illegal migrants" and ultimately completely shut down the Balkan Route.

Often these barriers are euphemistically deemed necessary for "protection." The government of the German Democratic Republic did not use the "anti-fascist wall of protection" to shield their citizens against threats from the West but to imprison its entire people. This wall came down almost three decades ago, in the night from November 9 to 10, 1989. The traces of the past have largely disappeared but photography remains. It shows the incomparable rhapsodies of joy with which the unified people embraced and the immense changes that accompanied the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Founded seven years ago, Galerie Podbielski Contemporary places a programmatic emphasis on photography and artists who convey their geopolitical perspectives on the Balkans, the Near East, Italy, and Germany through a transcultural viewpoint. Pierre André Podbielski's biography plays no small role in the thematic orientation of the gallery. As the son of Prussian and Polish Jews who fled their countries, he was born in Switzerland, has an Australian passport, studied in France, and lives in Italy. In short, he is a citizen of the world. Also through his gallery program he is committed to fighting for a tolerant and liberal worldview that spans borders in its approach to people and countries.

The exhibition is organized in two segments. Contemporary positions occupy the front area of the gallery, with "guest appearances" by Kai Wiedenhöfer, whose work **CONFRONTIER**, a project that extended over many years and has received multiple awards, serves as the centerpiece; Edmund Clark with his series **The Mountains of Majeed** on the US soldiers enclosed behind cement walls during the "Operation Enduring Freedom" in Afghanistan. These positions are complemented by the photographs of two gallery artists: Ohad Matalon with works from his series **Across a Dark Land** dealing with Israel's border policies and by Francesco Jodice from **I have seen this Place before**.



The second part of the exhibition takes up the back part of the gallery with a highly diverse range of historical views focusing on the building and demolition of the Berlin Wall. Works for the exhibition include photographs by: Sibylle Bergemann, Arno Fischer, Ulrich Wüst, Ute Mahler, Harf Zimmermann, Rudi Meisel, Gundula Schulze Eldowy, Karl-Ludwig Lange, Wilfried Bauer, Jörn Vanhöfen, Christoph Bangert, Giovanni Chiaramonte, Mario Dondero, Sebastião Salgado, Raymond Depardon, Larry Towell and Thomas Hoepker.

The exhibition is being produced in cooperation with the Flowers Gallery London; Galleria Contrasto Milan; Kicken Berlin; Johanna Breede Photokunst Berlin; Camera Work Berlin; Galerie Loock Berlin; Galerie Kuckei+Kuckei Berlin and Magnum Paris.

With kind support by

