

GOSEE LOVES... JESSICA BACKHAUS 'SIX DEGREES OF FREEDOM'. ON OBJECTS FROM CHILDHOOD DAYS, THE ROOTS OF EXISTENCE AND HER PERSONAL CONNECTION TO SEAFARING

“Objects are something very important because they also reveal to us characterization and let us look into a person's soul,” says Jessica Backhaus (born 1970) at the Paris Photo event in November. The work of the photographer with the special knack for detail have been exhibited internationally and can be found in important collections. She has published several illustrated books, the most recent of which in November titled Six Degrees of Freedom. A beautiful book and our GoSee last-minute Christmas present tip! In addition, Jessica presents her personal selection from the book on GoSee.

Jessica Backhaus explores with her latest photographic series 'Six Degrees of Freedom' universal questions of human existence. She deliberately chose objects from her childhood, which she photographed in a minimalistic way for the project. Based on her own biography, she asks about the significance of knowing the roots of our own existence and how it is possible to reevaluate these – for the most part – predetermined roots. Unconsciously at first, then in a more targeted way at some point in her life, the photographer, who grew up in a family of artists, embarked on a search of her own heritage. On this journey, she visited places of her childhood and youth to fill the gaps in her memories. With her photographs she preserves the essence of her search and life's stations in symbols.

We wanted to know how she came up with the unusual name for her project. “‘Six Degrees of Freedom' is a maritime expression used by navigators. Six different movements are all it takes to sail a ship to freedom at sea: forward, backward, left, right, up, and down. My grandfather on my mom's side was a navigator and my book is about heritage, roots, destiny, the search for my biological father and memories, etc. If you work intensively with your past, you must also let go in order to find your own freedom. That's why I found the title so fitting in many ways.”

Our secret favorite is the curtain. “It's an indirect portrait of my parents: both actors, blended with the metaphor of waves and mountains,” the photographer tells us with a blink.

In a talk on [NDR Kultur](#) television, Jessica provides insight into her family history, talks about her relationship with the great photographer Gisèle Freund and describes her impressions of Paris during the Days of Terror. The illustrated book with texts by Caroline von Courten, Lars Mextorf, and Jessica Backhaus was published by Kehrer Publishing.

Jessica Backhaus 'Six Degrees of Freedom'

Authors: Caroline von Courten, Lars Mextorf, Jessica Backhaus

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