

RECOMMENDED

OLYMPUS FELLOWSHIP 2019 2020

KARLA HIRALDO VOLEAU
TOBIAS KRUSE
MIKA SPERLING

Exhibition period: **September 19 – October 25, 2020**

Opening: **Friday, September 18, 2020, from 4 pm on; Greetings at 7 pm**

Press tour: **Friday, September 18, 2020, 12 noon**

Frankfurt am Main, 18.09.2020 – It is about dating services, about mothers and daughters with different ethnic roots and about the legacy of German history: **Karla Hiraldo Voleau, Tobias Kruse** and **Mika Sperling**, the current winners of the fellowship **recommended**, allow the viewers very personal insights into their private lives. Their works can be seen in the exhibition **RECOMMENDED OLYMPUS FELLOWSHIP** at the Fotografie Forum Frankfurt (FFF) from 19.09.-25.10.2020.

recommended was established in 2017 by **Olympus** together with the **Fotografie Forum Frankfurt**, the **Haus der Photographie/Deichtorhallen Hamburg** and the **Foam Fotografiemuseum Amsterdam**. It is awarded every two years to promote contemporary artistic photography. For one year, the three scholarship holders, supervised by a curator from the participating institutions, work on new projects which are then presented in joint exhibitions.

The works of the second **recommended** year 2019/20 focus on biographical themes such as love, family, origin, migration, tolerance and environment:

Karla Hiraldo Voleau (*1992, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic) approached the dating culture in Japan to examine the mechanisms of modern male-female relationships. She describes gender roles and love stories through poetic documentary images – always with herself as the protagonist. Hiraldo Voleau studied photography at the École de Conde in Paris and at the ECAL in Lausanne. During her fellowship she was mentored by Kim Knoppers, curator at Foam.

Tobias Kruse (*1979, Waren/Müritzk, Germany) confronts his eastern German homeland in the series "Deponie". Starting out from a former toxic waste dump and other polluted places, he traces German-German history with black-and-white photographs – and expresses social moods such as fear, bitterness, resentment, and aggression. Kruse studied graphic design and photography at the Ostkreuz School and is a member of the Ostkreuz Agency of Photographers. He was accompanied through the fellowship by Ingo Taubhorn, curator at Haus der Photographie/Deichtorhallen Hamburg.

Mika Sperling (*1990, Norilsk, Russia) examines the influence of multicultural origin through identity and family relationships in her own family. The focus of her work "Mother Tongue" is on the artist herself, a child of a Russian Mennonite family who grew up in Germany, her Vietnamese mother-in-law, who also lives in Germany, and her daughter, who is now two years old. Using photography and various other media, she describes the rapprochement of cultures through language. Sperling studied communication design at the Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences and Fine Arts at the San Francisco Art Institute. She was mentored by Celina Lunsford, curator and artistic director at the Fotografie Forum Frankfurt.

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The works of the second recommended year were shown in Hamburg from May 2020 and will be exhibited in Amsterdam following the FFF exhibition in Frankfurt.

SPECIAL EVENTS:

Sat, 19.09., 3 pm GALLERY TALK

*with the fellows **Karla Hiraldo Voleau, Tobias Kruse** and **Mika Sperling** as well as **Celina Lunsford**, curator and **recommended** mentor.*

CURATOR'S TOUR with **Celina Lunsford**

*Sun, **04.10.** and **18.10.2020**, 3 pm*

*The recommended Olympus Fellowship 19/20, **PUBLICATION**, including contributions by the curators and the fellows is available at the Fotografie Forum Frankfurt. 84 pages (German/English), 60 images, price: 5 Euro.*

PRESS MATERIAL (Releases and Press Images) for download: www.fffrankfurt.org/press

For further information see www.recommended.photo

Project partner:



recommended

Olympus Fellowship
/ Haus der Photographie Deichtorhallen Hamburg
/ Foam Fotografiemuseum Amsterdam
/ Fotografie Forum Frankfurt

Fotografie Forum Frankfurt is supported by Förderkreis Fotografie Forum Frankfurt e.V., Olympus Deutschland GmbH and the City of Frankfurt

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STADT  FRANKFURT AM MAIN

FOTOGRAFIE FORUM FRANKFURT

The Fotografie Forum Frankfurt (FFF) is one of the leading centres of photography in Europe. As an exhibition space, institution and event forum the FFF deals with all aspects of photography. Since its founding in 1984 it has presented more than 250 exhibitions with historic and contemporary artists. Additionally, the program of the FFF comprises of regular workshops, talks and discussions with internationally renowned photographers, artists and experts. Further information available at www.fffrankfurt.org

RECOMMENDED OLYMPUS FELLOWSHIP ²⁰¹⁹₂₀₂₀

**KARLA HIRALDO VOLEAU
TOBIAS KRUSE
MIKA SPERLING**

It's about dating services, multicultural family life and legacies of German history: Karla Hiraldo Voleau, Tobias Kruse and Mika Sperling, the second year of the recommended fellowship, allow personal insights into their private themes with their artistic projects. From 19.09.–25.10.2020 their works are on view at the Fotografie Forum Frankfurt.

Frankfurt am Main, 18.09.2020 – The functions and possibilities of contemporary photography are the focus of the fellowship **recommended**. What role does photography play in sharing information and emotions? What new forms of expression can the medium offer those who work artistically with photography? With such questions in mind, Olympus established the unique fellowship in 2017 together with the **Fotografie Forum Frankfurt**, the **Foam Fotografie-museum Amsterdam** and the **Haus der Photographie/Deichtorhallen Hamburg**. For one year, three fellowship recipients work on an artistic project, closely supervised by the curators of the three participating institutions. The results are then presented in the exhibition **RECOMMENDED OLYMPUS FELLOWSHIP**.

Karla Hiraldo Voleau, Tobias Kruse and Mika Sperling, the three photographic artists of the second **recommended** year, use photography to explore biographical realities. To tell their own stories, about love, family, home and origin, migration and tolerance – with themselves as the main characters, and with sometimes intimate insights into their private lives.

Karla Hiraldo Voleau (*1992, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic) explores the mechanisms of modern relationships using the dating culture in Japan as an example. Under the title “I have nothing to tell you”, she describes gender roles and love stories in poetic documentary images. Through personal and visual dialogues she exchanged ideas with young Japanese people by writing – even scripting sentences on her own skin. Hiraldo Voleau studied photography at the École de Conde in Paris and at the ECAL in Lausanne. During her fellowship she was mentored by Kim Knoppers, curator at Foam.

Tobias Kruse (*1979, Waren/Müritzk, Germany) confronts his eastern German homeland in the series “Deponie”. His starting points are a former toxic waste dump and other historically contaminated places. In black-and-white photographs, Kruse traces burdened German-German history –and displays equally enduring social moods such as fear, bitterness, resentment, and anger. Kruse studied graphic design and photography at the Ostkreuz School and is a member of the Ostkreuz Agency of Photographers. He was accompanied through the fellowship by Ingo Taubhorn, curator at House of Photography/Deichtorhallen Hamburg.

Mika Sperling (*1990, Norilsk, Russia) examines the influence of multicultural origins on identity and family relationships. At the center of her work “Mother Tongue” is the artist herself, who grew up in Germany as the child of a Russian Mennonite family, her Vietnamese mother-in-law, who also lives in Germany, and her two-year-old daughter, who was born in the USA. With

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sound, video, and written objects, Sperling directs our attention to language – as a barrier, but also as a new link for the coexistence of different cultures. Sperling studied communication design at the Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences and Fine Arts at the San Francisco Art Institute. She was mentored by Celina Lunsford, curator and artistic director at the Fotografie Forum Frankfurt.

*All three fellows work photographically with the camera – and at the same time they enlarge the language of the images with additional media vocabulary. A handwritten love letter, a lullaby, a digital chat or linguistic signs on paper or glass. "In this way, human touch is expressed in many different forms," says **recommended** curator Celina Lunsford, "and the personal stories vividly open doors to new viewpoints on existential themes."*

*The works of the second **recommended** year were shown in the Haus der Photographie/ Deichtorhallen Hamburg from May 2020 and will be exhibited in the Foam Fotografiemuseum Amsterdam following the exhibition in the Fotografie Forum Frankfurt.*

Projektpartner:



recommended

Olympus Fellowship
/ Haus der Photographie Deichtorhallen Hamburg
/ Foam Fotografiemuseum Amsterdam
/ Fotografie Forum Frankfurt

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KARLA HIRALDO VOLEAU

*** 1992** *born in Dominican Republic, French Citizen, based in Lausanne*

Education

2018 *Master in Photography, ECAL/University of Art and Design Lausanne, Switzerland*
2016 *Bachelor in Visual Communication, Ecoles de Condé, Paris, France*

Exhibitions (selection)

2020 *Foam Talent, Foam Museum Amsterdam, Netherlands*
2019 *Plat(t)form, Fotomuseum Winterthur, Winterthur, Switzerland*
2017 *Collaborate!, Bourse du Travail, Les Rencontres d'Arles, France*
2017 *Augmented Photography, Elac Gallery, Lausanne, Switzerland*
2016 *MAP Photography Festival, Musée Paul Dupuy, Toulouse, France*

Publications (selection)

2019 *Hola Mi Amol, Karla Hiraldo Voleau, Self Publish, Be Happy (SPBH Editions) and ECAL*
2019 *Foam Talent, Foam Magazine*
2019 *Alice Zoo, 'Hola Mi Amol', 1000 Words Magazine*
2018 *Catalogue No. 22, vfg Swiss Young Talent Award of Photography*
2018 *Lucy Bourton, 'ECAL graduate Karla Hiraldo Voleau on voyeurism and the female gaze', It's Nice That*
2017 *Collaborate!, Foam Magazine*

Awards/Scholarships/Residencies (selection)

2019 *Aperture First Photobook Prize shortlist, Paris Photo Fair, USA/France*
2019 *Photobook Publishing grant, Pro Helvetia, Zurich, Switzerland*
2018 *Emerging Photographers grant, Pro Helvetia, Zurich, Switzerland*
2018 *Unseen Dummy Award shortlist, Amsterdam, Netherlands*
2018 *vfg Swiss Young Talent Award of Photography, 3rd prize, Zurich, Switzerland*
2018 *Excellency prize in the fields of Design and Visual Arts, HES-SO Valais-Wallis, Sierre, Switzerland*
2016 *Bourse du Talent, MAP Photography Festival, Toulouse, France*

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Statement Karla Hiraldo Voleau

I HAVE NOTHING TO TELL YOU

"I flew to Tokyo, Japan, in a hurry, like I was fleeing something. I wanted to know more about the current dating culture and where it was heading. Being generally interested in the mechanisms of love, I read about the very surprising, and sometimes intrusive ways the young Japanese people try to connect with each other. I read about the government spending millions to create new ways to date, in order to stop the demographic crisis. So my plan was to get into the night scene, and into the deep corners of the internet, go out there and try out for myself all the different ways you can date.

While meeting young people in Tokyo and Osaka, and getting to know Yuri, Natsuna, Yusuke, Chikuma, Kinu, Tae, and Kazumasa, I felt very emotional. And slowly, I began to unravel my own secrets to my new friends, and to collect theirs. I realized that talking about heartbreak and love was much more shocking for them than talking about dating and sex. It also seemed freeing for all of us, so I started to spend time alone with each new person I met, and to write with them, onto them, onto me, with me. I stopped trying to investigate a whole culture and focused on those I was lucky to meet.

Only, in the meantime, the sensation of feeling lost and disconnected from my surroundings made the obsession I was fleeing away from, grow bigger. This obsession had a name: Martin. I tried to reconnect with him during that time, and was left with barely an answer: he had nothing to tell me.

The title also echoes my own feeling of speechlessness. Many times, my new friends would share past traumas or vivid heartbreaks – suddenly, because they never had the opportunity before. And I wouldn't know what to say, or how to behave, and neither did they. The language barrier made these situations even more silent. But if you might think the difference in language would create a distance between me and my interlocutors, it wasn't like that. In fact, it brought us closer. What felt most natural to me was to use the body as a writing canvas, and so the writing sessions began. Sometimes I felt like everything was "lost in translation". But if we had nothing to tell, we had a lot to feel."

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TOBIAS KRUSE

*** 1979** Germany, based in Berlin

Work Experience

since 2017 Lecturer at the Ostkreuzschule, Berlin, Germany
since 2011 Member of the OSTKREUZ – Agentur der Fotografen, Berlin, Germany
2009–2011 Head of Photography for ‘Dummy’ and ‘Fluter’
since 2008 Freelance photographer

Education

2008–2009 Master Class Prof. Arno Fischer, Ostkreuzschule, Berlin, Germany
2005–2007 Studies at the Ostkreuzschule, Berlin, Germany
1996–2000 Studies of Graphic Design, Grafik + Design-Schule Anklam

Exhibitions (selection)

2019 Tobias Kruse, Material, Robert Morat Galerie, Berlin, Germany
2018 The Class, Ostkreuz: Portraits, Capitis Gallery, Berlin, Germany
2016/2017 Tobias Kruse, Material, 25 Years Ostkreuz, Paris, Marseille, Munich, Rome
2015 Dekalog IV, Guardini Galerie, Berlin, Germany
2013 Ostkreuz: Westwärts, C/O Berlin, Germany

Publications (selection)

2018 Tobias Kruse, Material, Kerber Verlag
2015 25 Jahre Ostkreuz, Hatje Cantz Verlag
2012 Ueber Grenzen/On Borders, Hatje Cantz Verlag
2012 24h Berlin, Hatje Cantz Verlag

Awards/Scholarships/Residencies (selection)

2018 Shortlist of Vonovia Award for Photography for best photography series
2015 VG Bild-Kunst grant, Bonn, Germany
2013 Konrad Wolf Prize for photographers of OSTKREUZ, Academy of Arts, Berlin, Germany
2011 VG Bild-Kunst grant, Bonn, Germany
2010 1st prize winner of F/STOP 4th International Photo Festival, Leipzig, Germany
2008 Winner of Student Editorial Series, The New York Photo Awards, New York, USA

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Statement Tobias Kruse

DEPONIE

"This work DEPONIE deals with the question of what happened to the freedom that had suddenly come to us in 1989/90 after the East Germans - my parents' generation - brought down the Wall. After a brief phase of euphoria and hope for a new system, the social structures in the East were destroyed with German reunification. Nothing was like it used to be. The sudden marginalization of the people and their life plans led to brutality and boundless violence in many places. This period resonates still today.

In my work, I try to connect my experiences as a youth in East Germany in the 1990s with my emotions in the context of the German present - faced with the danger of renewed outbreaks of violence, faced with the rampant insecurity, nervousness and fear. My intention was to photograph yesterday and today, past and present simultaneously. The black and white of my images functions as a hinge between the times.

The work was created between May 2019 and January 2020. I drove 8000 kilometers through the five states in the East. In fact, the starting point was the "Schönberg" landfill. The West had been cheaply disposing of its hazardous waste here since May 1979. Later renamed "Ihlenberg," it continues to be the largest toxic waste dump in Europe, located between Schwerin and Lübeck. I grew up in this area. Many millions of tons of toxic waste are still stored there - and to this day, nobody knows exactly how to deal with it.

On the one hand, the landfill serves as a metaphor for the German-German relationship. At the same time, it is also an image for the East, where the slag of German history is piling up in a special way, very real, but also in many people's minds. In particular, the legacies of the two dictatorships play a role - for the country anyway, but also for every individual who is confronted with extremist attitudes.

In this respect, the work is about what still lies buried there, about the hardships of change and about what has already been exposed by it."

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MIKA SPERLING**

MIKA SPERLING

*** 1990** *Russia, based in Hamburg*

Education

2018 *Master of Fine Arts in Studio Art, San Francisco Art Institute, USA*
2015/16 *Studies Photography in the Master of Arts Program, University of Applied Sciences
Bielefeld, Germany*
2015 *Diploma in Communication Design, emphasis: Photography, University of Applied
Sciences Darmstadt*

Exhibitions (selection)

2018 *Before You, Above the Circle, Aggregate Space Gallery, Oakland, USA*
2018 *Before You, Above the Circle, Smith Anderson North Gallery, San Anselmo, USA*
2018 *Before You, Above the Circle, Fort Mason Center for the Arts, San Francisco, USA*
2018 *Brothers and Sisters, SFO Museum, San Francisco, USA*
2017 *Six Sisters, Diego Rivera Gallery, San Francisco, USA*
2017 *Brothers and Sisters, Kunsthalle Emden, Germany*
2015 *Italian Family, Bitume Photofest, Gallipoli, Italy*
2015 *Brothers and Sisters, Days of Photography in Wiesbaden, Germany*

Publications (selection)

2016 *Annette Lager, 'Fromm, fleißig und aus der Zeit gefallen', Spiegel*
2016 *Rachel Lowry, 'Inside a Remote Russian Mennonite Village', Time*
2015 *Bence Jünnemann-Illés, 'Brüder und Schwestern', Süddeutsche Zeitung*
2017 *Michael Günthlein, 'Bloß niemandem reinreden', Chrismon*

Awards / Scholarships / Residencies (selection)

2018 *Headlands Graduate Fellowship, Finalist, Sausalito, USA*
2018 *Critical Mass Finalist, Portland, USA*
2018 *John Collier Award, San Francisco, USA*
2018 *Paul Sack Building Award, 1st Place Color, San Francisco, USA*
2018 *Photo Alliance Award for Service to the Community, San Francisco, USA*
2018 *Clyde & Community Art Awards, San Francisco, USA*
2018 *Anne Bremer Memorial Library, 35th Artist's Book Contest Prize, San Francisco, USA*
2017 *DAAD Scholarship for MFA at SFAI*
2016 *Fulbright Scholarship for studies in the US*
2016 *SFAI Fellowship for MFA studies*
2016 *1st Prize Winner of the European Photography Award*
2015 *One of 50 LensCulture Emerging Talents*
2015 *Nominated for the Joop Swart Masterclass, organized by World Press Photo*
2013 *In the top ten at the Competition for Young Designers, Frankfurt Book Fair*

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Statement Mika Sperling

MOTHER TONGUE

"In Mother Tongue I use photography, writing and video to search for similarities between my family and my husband's family. The evolving bond with my daughter and the changing relationship with my mother-in-law and my own mother are documented in this way. My husband's family has roots in Vietnam and mine are in Russia. Both families have lived in Germany for decades. My mother spoke exclusively Russian with me until I answered her only in German. It felt like I was waking up to a different reality, one in which Russian was no longer useful. With the birth of our daughter, I decided to pick up the pieces of my original mother tongue – the language that had escaped my mind for years before I started to revive its words. Even though my Russian is handicapped and broken, I still find it to be a great part of me. A part I want to share with my daughter. It fascinates me how our cultures come closer together and create new traditions, and yet my main concern is to find my own place within all of it. As the fear of stigma had driven me in our early years of partnership, the fear of alienation from myself started to grow.

Regarding the relationship between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, I can best describe the challenges most of us experience is the struggle to be close to a stranger and the lack of a positive image. In many cases, it is difficult to define something you do not have a clear picture of. Looking at the women's role within our two original cultures, I see how I was longing for role models that could promise me a flourishing future.

The arrival of our child enabled more closeness between the families. The cooking sounds of both mothers triggered a feeling of security in me. The language of taste is basically quite universal and overcomes many cultural differences. Perhaps it is a better way to communicate our wishes and an easier way to give love to each other.

For the current project I flew to Vietnam with my daughter, husband and mother-in-law. We said our farewell to the grandmother who had returned to her motherland after her husband's passing and had now also left this world. On the trip, my mother-in-law taught me how to pray to Buddha for those who had deceased.

For a long time I thought one reason for the attraction between my partner and me was because of our mutual fascination for other cultures. Today I see it more as a combination of familiarity and the exotic that pulled us towards each other. Many habits that our migrant families inherited are similar. Both left their cultural environment to take a leap into the unknown. In one case it was fleeing from the Vietnam War, in the other the hope for a better future in the homeland of our ancestors."

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Press Tour: **Friday, September 18, 2020, 12 noon**



Her Curlers. From the series “Mother Tongue”, 2019

© Mika Sperling, 2020



Son. From the series “Mother Tongue”, 2019

© Mika Sperling, 2020



Touch. From the series “Mother Tongue”, 2019

© Mika Sperling, 2020



Growth Chart. From the series “Mother Tongue”, 2019

© Mika Sperling, 2020

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Family Tree. From the series “Mother Tongue“, 2019

© Mika Sperling, 2020



DEPONIE #023, 2019

© Tobias Kruse, 2020



DEPONIE #004, 2019

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DEPONIE #010, 2019

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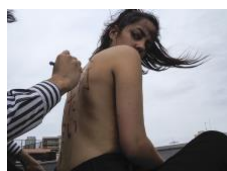
DEPONIE #013, 2019

© Tobias Kruse, 2020



DEPONIE #024, 2019

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**Yusuke Has Nothing to Tell to Anyone VI. From the series
“I Have Nothing to Tell You”, 2019**

© Karla Hiraldo Voleau, 2020



**The Twin Sisters. From the series “I Have Nothing to Tell
You”, 2019**

© Karla Hiraldo Voleau, 2020

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The Grain of Sand. From the series “I Have Nothing to Tell You”, 2019

© Karla Hiraldo Voleau, 2020



Kazumasa in Ueno Park. From the series “I Have Nothing to Tell You”, 2019

© Karla Hiraldo Voleau, 2020



Finding Rooftops II. From the series “I Have Nothing to Tell You”, 2019

© Karla Hiraldo Voleau, 2020



recommended-Fellows and Curators 2019/2020.

left to right front: Kim Knoppers (Curator, Foam), Celina Lunsford (Curator, FFF), Karla Hiraldo Voleau (Fellow), Mika Sperling (Fellow), Tobias Kruse (Fellow).

left to right back: Juliane Hüppe (Olympus), Olaf Kreuter (Olympus), Ingo Taubhorn (Curator, Deichtorhallen Hamburg).

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