

Janik Bürgin

Chance and fate. These two components of life affect us all and can hardly be controlled. They shape our everyday life, lead to changes, influence the course of events and guide us to the stage of life we are at in that moment.

Such a sequence of changes is captured photographically by Janik Bürgin in his extensive series *HOLD ON*. Landscapes, portraits, animals, clouds, detail shots, shadow plays - as diverse as the individual photographs in *HOLD ON* may seem in their motifs, they are all the more closely linked in terms of content and are based on and complement each other. In 2019, Janik Bürgin took the first photographs in the series. At the beginning, the focus was on places to which he had a connection and with which he associated a personal experience. The initially landscape-oriented themes expanded over time. As he processed events such as a break-up, meeting new people or making a decision, Bürgin's view expanded. Situations and compositions, places and relationships that might previously have received little photographic attention now became the subject of the photographs. Only through change, a new path can be taken and only through new paths, new perspectives can appear. Bürgin allows himself to be driven and guided by these changes. Nevertheless, the photographs are taken consciously and are not the results of arbitrary shots taken during random strolls with the camera. The camera is used consciously, a certain blurriness is used consciously, a technical imperfection is striven for consciously, analogue and digital photography is used consciously. While the digital camera emphasises the speed of the medium for Bürgin, analogue photography represents a slowing down of the process. The oscillation of speed is reflected in the photographs. It is less a question of which photograph was taken with which camera, but rather of the sense of time that the photographs convey to us. The flying cloud constructs seem to be in eternal retirement, while the compact mountain ranges seem more alive with every glance. Even the absence of colour has a clear meaning. We never see the world as black and white film renders it. It is a non-existential world that is nevertheless our reality and consequently has voids that have to be filled by the photographer as well as us viewers. For even if the photographs are a documentary processing of the course of the photographer's past events, the images are not pure documentation. Janik Bürgin reveals intimate memories, experiences, emotions and allows the viewer not only a glimpse into his world, but also invites them to perceive the photographs from their own perspective and to apply them to their own experiences. In this series, Bürgin not only succeeds in revealing a large piece of his personal reality, but also allows the experience of an individual pictorial experience.

HOLD ON is an exploration of the river of life, from source to estuary. Every unpredictable current, every massive rock, every sudden rainfall guides the flowing water in its course. Chance and fate.

Author: Alessa Widmer, Curator & PhD Candidate in Theory and History of Photography at the University of Zurich

Appears in: *HOLD ON* // K-S 2020/2021, NOA Publishing, 2022