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*Jesus and the Cherries by Jessica Backhaus*

Jessica Backhaus is a German photographer who worked in Paris and NY and creates incessantly powerful projects. She is regarded as one of the most distinguished voices in contemporary photography in Germany today. In her great story of Jesus and the Cherries she observes in a surprising way the hidden tension between the presence and the past.

”These photos of homes, of landscapes, and people, speak secretly of departure and loss. Backhaus’ project is already today a “remembrance of things past.” The younger generation will no longer hang crucifixes in their living rooms; they will consign the lace doilies to mothballs and buy their canned cherries at the supermarket. These interiors are “original and authentic. The fascination is not with the nostalgic objects, but instead with this experience of vanishing and slipping away. Occasionally, the photographer finds metaphors for this process, such as when the peeling blue paint on the walls of a house comes into view like the map of an unknown continent, or when she shows us fleeting clouds in the blue of the water’s surface. This attunement to loss and disappearance continually erodes the idyll that Backhaus tries to depict. The hidden tension between present and past, between beauty and transience, is what gives Jesus and the Cherries its special quality. Plans were to publish 160 pictures, and finally 94 were chosen to conjure up Poland’s rural way of life. This book is not a documentation; it is a formally rigorous dramatization, torn between formalism in the tradition of Anselm Adams or Edward Weston, and an elliptical narrative style recalling William Eggleston or Stephen Shore. The conflict between the present time and the theme of transience is echoed in the antagonism between a modernist will to form and a postmodern interest in the social realities depicted.”

*Words: Jessica Backhaus, Thisispaper*  
*Photography: Jessica Backhaus*



Jessica Backhaus: Jesus and the Cherries

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