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**Berlin, Metropolis of Photography:  
Bernd and Hilla Becher, Shirin Neshat, and the International  
"Photography Festival"**

*Contemporary photography conquers Berlin! This is the slogan the international "Photography Festival" – which is taking place for the first time in the capital – has coined to celebrate its premiere. At the same time, the Museum for Contemporary Art at Hamburger Bahnhof opens the "Art Autumn" with two important exhibitions of the works of the German photographer couple Bernd and Hilla Becher and the Iranian artist Shirin Neshat.*



Jessica Backhaus, Blue Spoon, from Jesus and the cherries, 2001 - 2004

At the boundary of documentation: through mid-November, the [Berlin Photography Festival](#) exhibition *After the Fact* at [Martin-Gropius-Bau](#) is presenting over 30 positions in current photography. And while the works shown primarily address issues of global relevance, the participating photographers are not concerned with merely representing reality. The works, which range from objective report to fictitious narrative, demonstrate links between various conceptual contexts and a proximity to contemporary art. [Jessica Backhaus](#), for instance, worked for over three years on her series *Jesus and the Cherries* from 2001, in which she documented the everyday life of Polish families: their homes, their private spheres, and their hospitality. The sensitive portraits and still lifes of the New York-based artist are juxtaposed with [Jo Voet's](#) sober scenes in the series *Bucuresti underworld* (2002-2005), which portray the life of Romania's poorest population faced with a miserable reality.



Christoph Draeger, Hiroshima, 1999, Courtesy magnus müller berlin



Masaki Hirano, Bunkers 1, Albania, 1999

The festival's series of high-caliber events examines the broadening of documentary possibilities in the photographic media. The ambitious accompanying program offers symposia, a place to discuss, and a number of workshops in which key questions are posed: how can knowledge be gained through photography? How can photographic expression be newly conceived and reformed? And what role do the global media play in it all?

