

photo-eye MAGAZINE

Once, Still and Forever

REVIEWED BY SHANE LAVALETTE, PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MARCH 28, 2013

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Jessica Backhaus | **Once, Still & Forever**

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JESSICA BACKHAUS

Kehrer Verlag, Heidelberg, 2013. Hardbound. 88 pp., 55 color illustrations, 9-1/2x11-1/2".



Once, Still & Forever Photographs by Jessica Backhaus Published by Kehrer Verlag, 2013.



Jessica Backhaus' latest monograph *Once, Still & Forever* is a painterly reflection on time, place, and emotion. Those familiar with Backhaus' earlier titles *Jesus and the Cherries*, *What Still Remains*, *One Day in November*, or *I Wanted to See the World* know of her inquiring eye, and will be charmed by her continued exploration of the world's most delicate fragments.

Before I even opened the book I marveled at the opalescent cloth on the cover, which shimmers purple from one direction and green from another. I may have a bit of object lust when in the proximity of deliberately designed photobooks but I found the same sort of magic and wonder present in Backhaus' photographs as I entered the pages. Her abstractions of the everyday are imbued with meaning and emotion in a way that is often difficult to put words to, but always marvelous to view. As Backhaus herself explains it, "My photographs are like a mosaic, a puzzle that evokes the beauty of ordinary moments often ignored, as well as the residue of loves past and memories forgotten."



Once, Still & Forever, by Jessica Backhaus. Published by Kehrer Verlag, 2013.



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A window painted with plants, a reel of weathered twine. The rain soaked rails of a train lead us further. Strange and familiar fruits. Glass bottles, vessels of the past. Refractions, reflections—spaces of silence and of sound, artifacts of darkness and golden light. What is vast becomes small, and what is small becomes vast. Backhaus paints with the layers of the world, finding strokes of beauty in the otherwise mundane. She reminds us of the power of looking and the importance of affection, present in every frame. She reminds us, ultimately, of our own existence.



Once, Still & Forever, by Jessica Backhaus. Published by Kehrer Verlag, 2013.

Returning to her homeland of Germany after spending twenty-two years away was full of mixed emotions, anticipation and uncertainty. In *Once, Still & Forever*, Backhaus exposes the sorrows and joys of human experience through her own. By her side we discover that finding answers takes time, and that hardship can be one of life's greatest gifts. —SHANE LAVALETTE

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SHANE LAVALETTE is a photographer, the Publisher and Editor of *Lay Flat*, as well as the Associate Director of *Light Work*. He currently lives and works in Upstate New York. www.shanelavalette.com

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