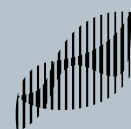


# EEW Art

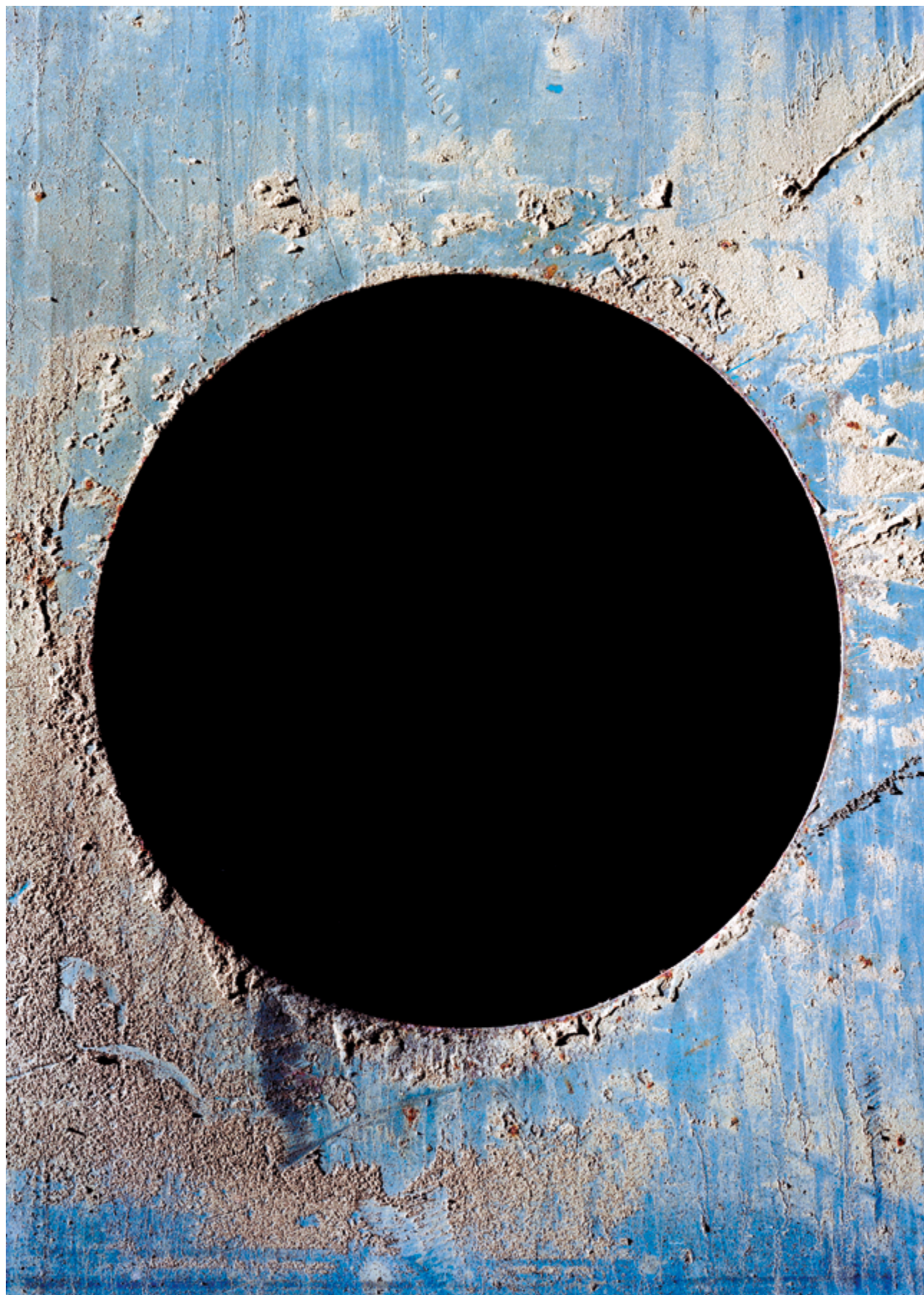
3

Lukas  
Hoffmann



**eew**

Energy from Waste



Lukas Hoffmann

“It is important to me that the eye can jump back and forth between surfaces and depths when one looks at the pictures.”

## Foreword

Bernard M. Kemper (CEO until 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023),  
Timo Poppe (CEO from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2023), Dr. Joachim Manns (COO)

The past year was marked by intense months that repeatedly demanded that society and our company not lose sight of the essentials. When we invited the Swiss photographer Lukas Hoffmann to creatively engage with our company as the third artist in the EEW Art series, many similarities between our activities quickly became apparent. A focus on the essential, a reduction to form or color, defines Hoffmann's work. A leap from the microcosm to the macrocosm characterizes the Swiss photographer's method: Where do I stand? How do I find my scale? How do I find the right moment to take a picture?

Hoffmann photographs things in his immediate surroundings: asphalt, scrub, masonry. He takes pictures in inconspicuous places on the outskirts of residential and industrial areas. People often do not appear in Hoffmann's works, and in the EEW series they only became visible through the traces they have left behind: scratches, cracks, imprints. Snow on steel plates that seem to have been

artfully laid down reveals a poetry in everyday life that comes to light in Hoffmann's quiet, decelerated works and perhaps makes us look at our working environment in a different way.

The pictures are taken in daylight and with a large-format analog camera. This can make the work laborious, depending on the weather, and forces the photographer to proceed in a planned and deliberate manner. Hoffmann spent two days at each of the EEW sites in Heringen in the German state of Hesse, and Premnitz in the state of Brandenburg. In each case, the first day primarily involved a search for the motif and the right light in order to develop a time and lighting plan for the second day when the actual photograph was taken. Hoffmann's works reference time and its duration, but also transience and fleetingness.

EEW is celebrating its 150th anniversary in 2023. Today, we can look back on a transformation process from the

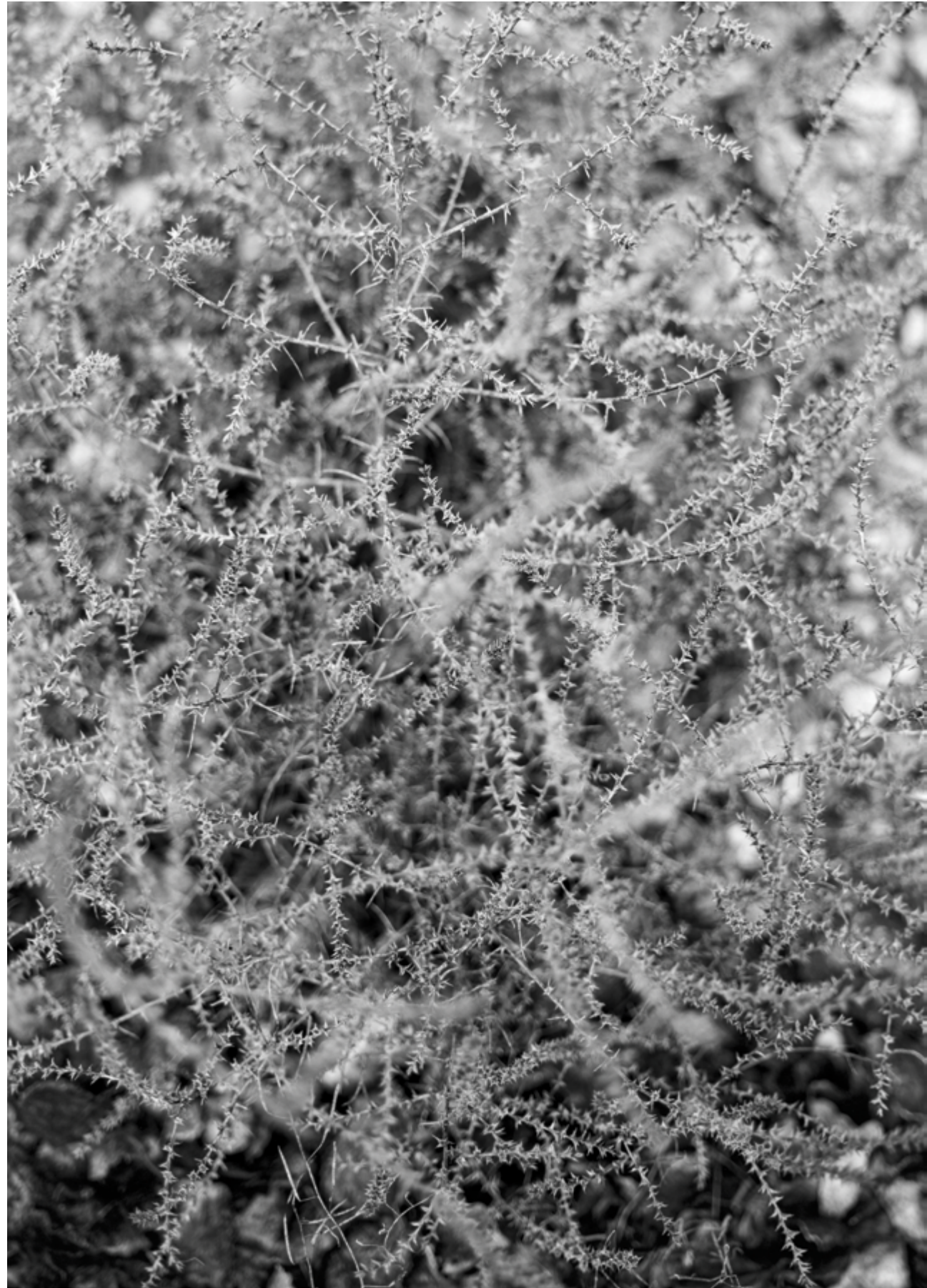
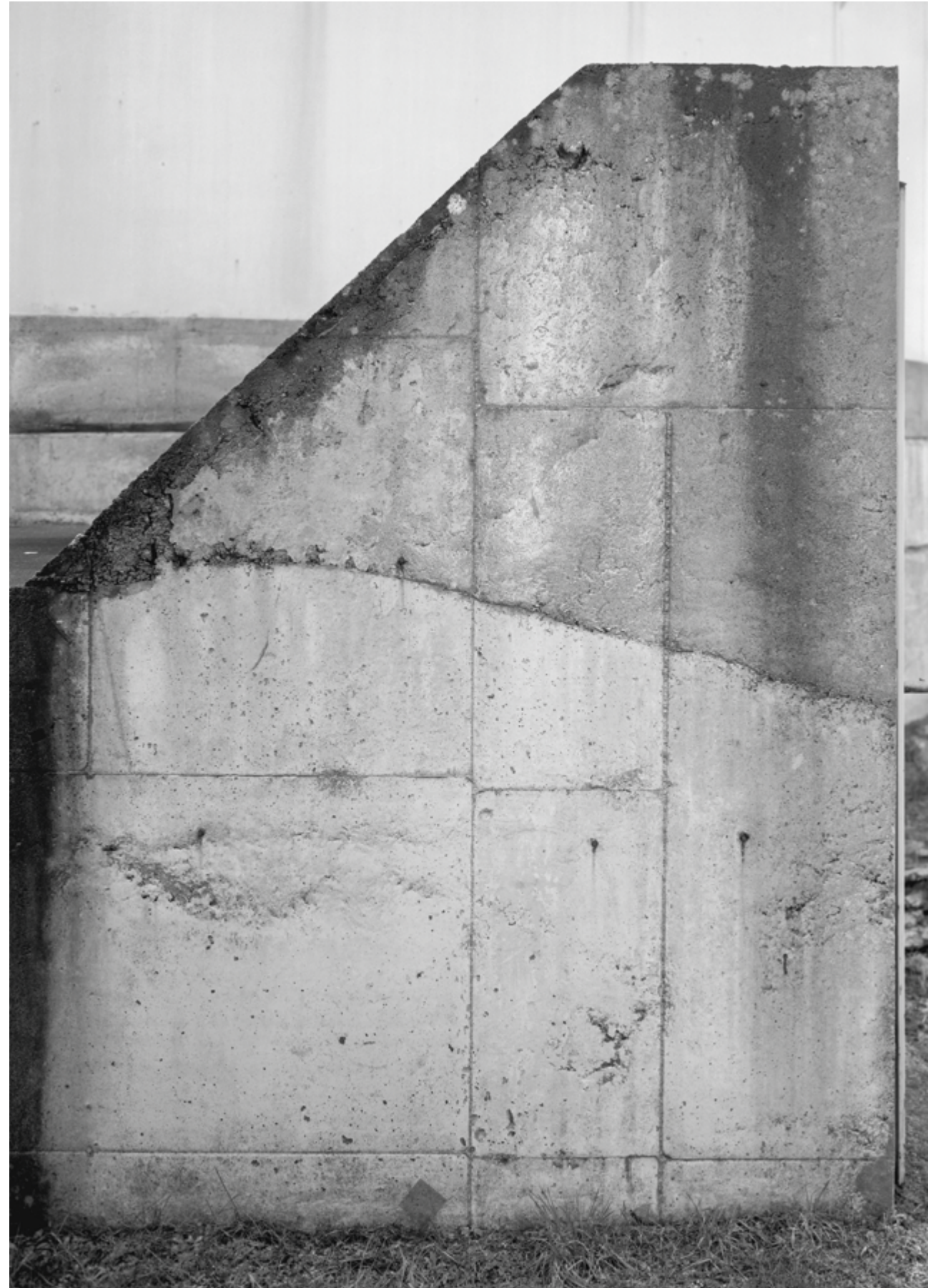
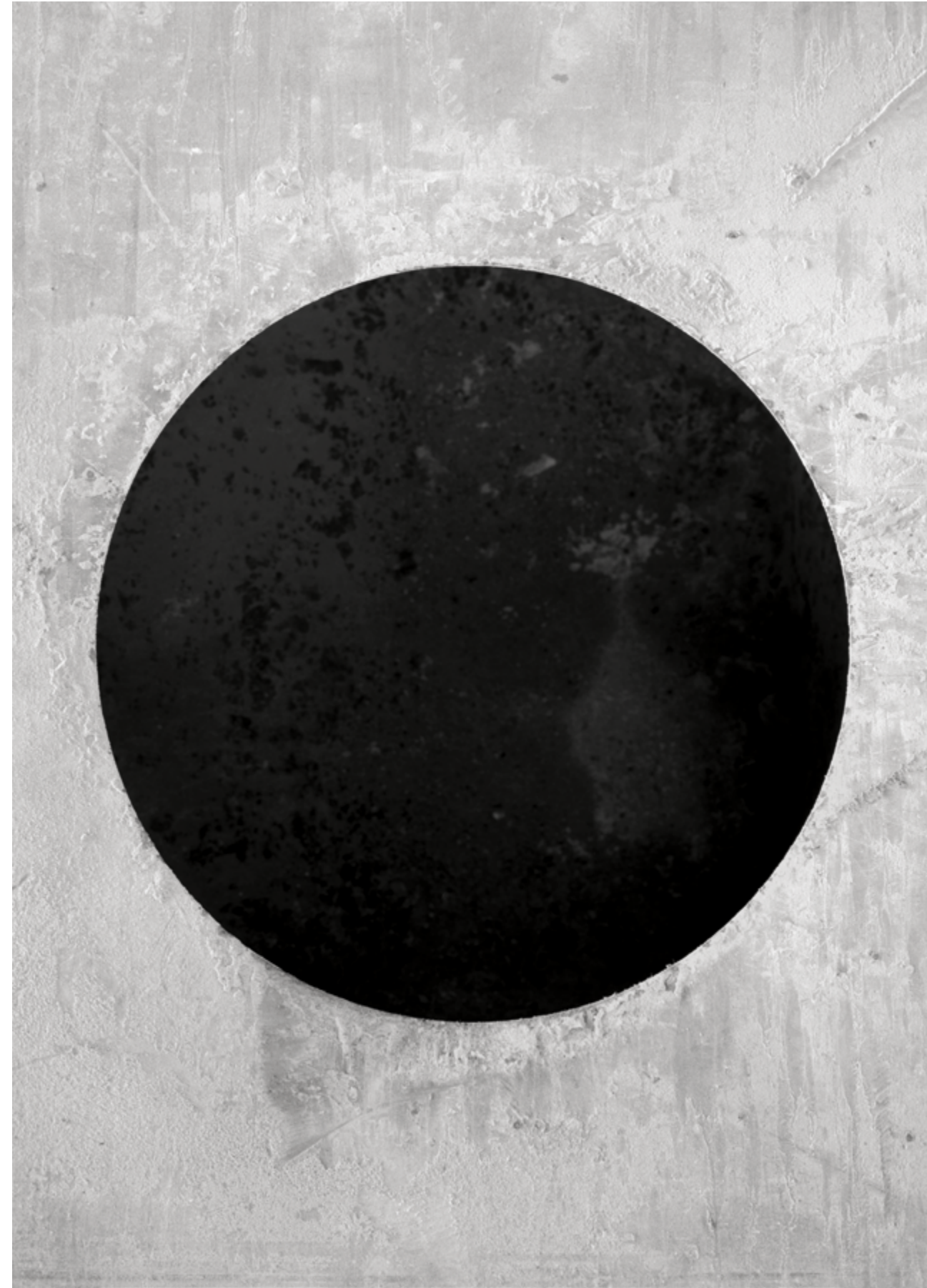
beginnings of the lignite industry to today's thermal waste treatment. The concept of transformation plays an important role for us, just as it does for Lukas Hoffmann, albeit in a different interpretation. Creating access and insights for both sides is important to us: We open our doors to photographers, who in turn give us, who often have less contact with art, new views of our company. In this way, the EEW Art program can always provide new impulses.

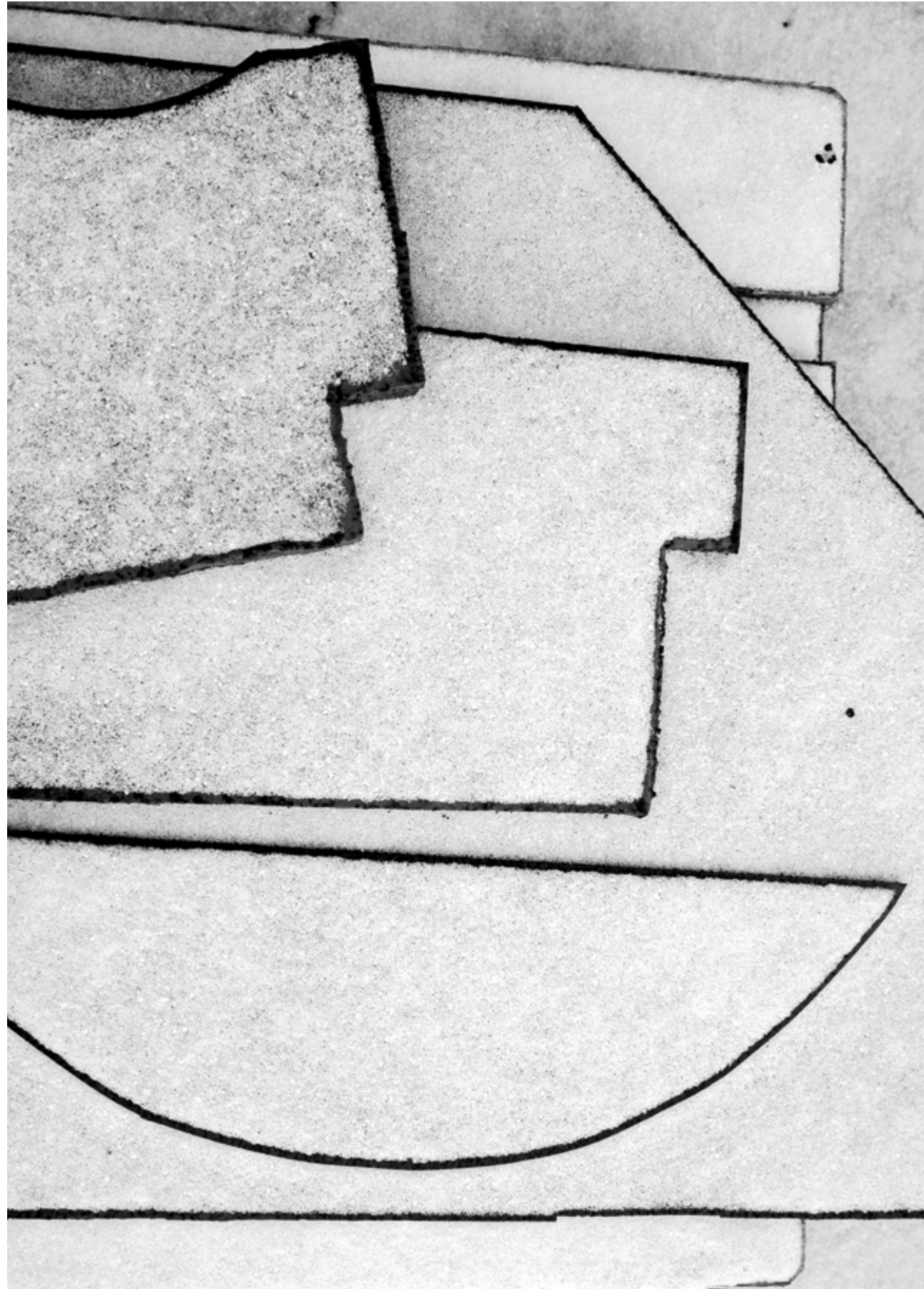
Enjoy the art!



“The effect of the image arises only conditionally from the objects I photograph. The light and clear definition of the image detail have a more significant influence.”







## Richness of the Barren

Maren Lübcke-Tidow

“EEW Premnitz (Window)” is the title of one of the photographs from the series that Lukas Hoffmann took on the factory grounds of the company EEW in Premnitz and Heringen. The abbreviation of the company and the place where the picture was shot are soberly stated, as is the subject of the image. Intuitively one would like to contradict, because when one views the work belonging to the title one cannot localize it immediately and the motif does not cater to direct identification. Already with the title and this initial entrée into the photo, the artist invites us to examine our habits of seeing and at the same time slows them down. Deceleration of seeing is one of the constants in this photographic work. Only gradually do we “understand” what we see: The image provides a view through a window, its pane fogged with hoarfrost, and through the diffuse area the outlines of the plant with its tall chimney are barely discernible.

“EEW Premnitz (Window)” also shows a classic subject in the

history of photography, or rather, the classic subject: a view from a window. This is an indirect reference to the world’s first preserved photograph, “La cour du domaine du Gras” (View from the Window at Le Gras), taken in 1828 by Joseph Nicéphore Niépce. Since the rediscovery of Nicéphore Niépce’s heliograph, the parable of photography as a “window on the world” has become widely used. However, it would be too shortsighted to call this a kind of program of photography—or, for that matter, of Lukas Hoffmann’s photography. No, we have to take a closer look to understand something of the “world” as shown to us by Lukas Hoffmann with his glimpses through the camera’s viewfinder.

“EEW Premnitz (Window),” due to the way the motif is conceived and how it is realized in the photographic process—from the choice of the image detail in the process of shooting with the camera to the material elaboration in the laboratory—gives an indication that this work involves testing and rethinking the “promise” of photography as a supposedly objectifying imaging process. For the artist constantly holds his images, including this image and the other ones in this series, in a tension between concretion and abstraction.

Photography, as Lukas Hoffmann understands and deploys it, not only opens up access to reality (or the world), but also entails working out access to the image. The decisive momentum in his work is to refrain from completely abandoning what is to be seen pictorially (and from transferring it, say, into total abstraction) and at the same time to always anchor the medium of photography and its possibilities in the image. These two aspects and how they coincide in the pictures are a second constant in Hoffmann’s work. The artist’s reference to the fact that the hybrid manner of appearance of “EEW Premnitz (Window)” reminds him motivationally of the focusing screen of his view camera may confirm this idea of the artist’s working method or intention. Snow on steel plates that seem to have been artfully laid down reveals a poetry in everyday life. “EEW Premnitz (Concrete),” “EEW Heringen (Slag Container),” “EEW Premnitz (Bush),” “EEW Heringen (Claw)” —the sobriety, brittleness, or even hardness of the titles alone make one think of the “work in shades of gray” by the Berlin artist Michael Schmidt. And there is also a nexus between Lukas Hoffmann and the work of this important German photographer in formal terms: A concrete wall pushes into the picture, almost filling it and

blocking the view. The view into the depths of a steel container is virtually pushed back. The prong of an enormous claw stands on the ground with such brutal weight that the traces of the contact are carved into the concrete, causing it to crumble in places. A bush, spidery, impenetrable, forbidding. On the steel walls: the remains of—what? One could now conclude: There is nothing to see. The longer we scan the images with our eyes, the more that is revealed. There is an immense wealth of detail in a sharpness that brings the very last fibers of every single object to the surface of the picture. This richness of detail is due not only to the photographer’s trained eye in the areas he roams and what he finds there, but also to his elaborate work with the analog view camera and its technical possibilities, which the artist knows how to use with great skill. As a wealth of information gradually emerges, the place also opens up increasingly. The view through a window reveals—albeit only dimly—an industrial site. Concrete walls suggest the area is used for business purposes. Steel walls with their traces of wear and tear become synonymous with hard work. It must be the pure mass that is lifted back and forth with a claw in this dimension. The ruderal plant is typical of a site used

for industry in which all of the vegetation that used to be there has been eradicated.

Michael Schmidt, too, repeatedly scattered images of details into his series of works and thus obstructed the view of “the whole” (What should or could this “whole” be?). Even just a crack in the road offered him enough information and functioned as a “good picture” in the force field of his other photographs, with which he combined his close-ups. To be sure, Schmidt was always concerned with making social and/or political reality visible. This is not Hoffmann’s aim. It is true that all his pictures refer to the urban sphere or to a space reclaimed with the settlement of industry. Far from a documentary photographic approach, however, he devotes himself in his search for images primarily to details, even if they are entire walls of buildings! Or even just a fine layer of snow on cutout steel plates, as in “EEW Heringen (Steel Plates).” With them he creates tilting moments of seeing. Our eyes are always repositioning themselves as we contemplate his photos. While his pictorial spaces, which he often reinterprets flatly, initially appear as abstract formal structures, the next moment they become real and “something” becomes visible. If we keep our eyes on

the picture, the next moment they transform into something else: The tremendous formal-aesthetic stringency has pushed itself forward (now, at the latest) and proves to be permanent. In turn, diverse references to art open up, ranging from photographic modernism (such as New Objectivity), to postwar modernism (such as Informel), to the present (such as a documentary photographic approach like that of Michael Schmidt). Lukas Hoffmann’s photographs are his stubborn companions, which he finds in the spaces he visits and presents openly, enabling us to see in them anything we are inclined to see. The surface barrenness of his work in (mostly) black and white turns out to be a treasure trove of visual riches.

Maren Lübcke-Tidow is an author, curator and artistic director of the European Month of Photography (EMOP Berlin), 2023.

Lukas Hoffmann

(\*1981 in Zug, Switzerland) studied fine arts at the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris and has been working with the medium of photography ever since. His works have been shown in numerous solo and group exhibitions, at photo festivals and fairs. They are included in private and public collections at home and abroad—most recently, the Centre Pompidou in Paris purchased works by the artist. He has been awarded prizes and scholarships for his work. Lukas Hoffmann lives and works in Berlin.

## EEW Energy from Waste

EEW Energy from Waste (EEW) is one of the leading companies in Europe in the field of thermal treatment of waste and sewage sludge. EEW is already making an important contribution towards protecting the climate and resources and is a key player in the circular economy. Our corporate group currently operates 17 sites that can process around 5 million tons of waste per year. The more than 1,400 employees at our plants ensure that the energy stored in waste is utilized, the volume of waste is reduced, the hazards caused by waste are eliminated safely and without negative impact, and that scrap metals and compound materials are recycled. Moreover, we efficiently utilize the energy contained in waste to generate process steam for industrial plants, district heating for residential areas and environmentally sustainable electricity. In line with our vision for the future,

we have set ourselves the goal of becoming climate neutral by 2030 and climate positive by 2040. A key measure in addition to carbon reduction will be carbon capture at our facilities. The captured carbon will be partly stored underground or utilized as a valuable feedstock for chemical products in a carbon-neutral economy of the future.

## Imprint

This publication appears on the occasion of the third commission within the framework of EEW Art, 2022/23

Edited by  
EEW Energy from Waste GmbH,  
Helmstedt 2023

Design:  
StudioKrimm

Project management:  
Julia Rosenbaum, Helena Wassermann

Production:  
H. Heenemann GmbH & Co. KG

With special thanks to:  
Lukas Hoffmann, Maren Lübke-Tidow

Photo credits:  
EEW Heringen (Slag Container IV), 2022, C-Print, 86,5 x 61,5 cm; EEW Heringen (Ground), 2022, C-Print, 175 x 125 cm; EEW Heringen (Claw); EEW Heringen (Steel Plates); EEW Premnitz (Container); EEW Premnitz (Window); EEW Premnitz (Concrete); EEW Heringen (Slag Container); EEW Premnitz (H); EEW Premnitz (Steel), 2022/23, gelatin silver prints, 67 x 48 cm, EEW Art Collection, © Lukas Hoffmann

[www.eew-energyfromwaste.com](http://www.eew-energyfromwaste.com)



# EEW Art

With a focus on sustainability, EEW launched an art program in 2020 that offers photographers the opportunity to explore a freely chosen aspect of the company each year. By commissioning works, EEW supports artists in creating a new series of work, which is subsequently included in the sustainability reporting and permanently exhibited at selected sites as part of the company collection. The program is accompanied by a publication.

