

# DOW/N WITH WALLS!

KAI WIEDENHÖFER

WARREN RICHARDSON

TOMMASO RADA

DEIVIDAS BUVYDAS

KRZYSZTOF GOŁUCH

ZUPAGRAFIKA

PHOTO EXHIBITION | 3 – 22 OCTOBER 2019  
NEIMËNSTER | LUXEMBOURG

# MOVIES WITH WALLS

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# Photo exhibition

3 - 22 OCTOBER 2019 / NEIMËNSTER / LUXEMBOURG

ARTIST

KAI **WIEDENHÖFER** / WARREN **RICHARDSON** / TOMMASO **RADA**  
DEIVIDAS **BUIVYDAS** / KRZYSZTOF **GOŁUCH** / ZUPAGRAFIKA

## Down With Walls!

Almost exactly 30 years ago, walls were falling down across Europe and the entire world – two political blocs (and the reality of millions of people living on both sides of those walls) seemed to be merging into one.

The people standing on the Berlin Wall in November 1989 believed that fraternity, solidarity and prosperity were very close at hand.

The transformation was longer and more painful than many had presumed, but the process of opening up the borders continued: the freedom of speech, movement and residence, democratic governments and economic development seemed to pave the way for an increasingly closer unity and

solidarity between countries and between people. Barriers seemed to most people, especially the younger generation, just another ‘thing of the past’.

However, after three decades something seems to have gone wrong in that process. The dream of fraternity and solidarity now appears to be quite unattainable, with new walls emerging in many places, taking the form of physical borders, like in the south of Europe, but also, and especially, of immaterial barriers – between countries, communities, social groups and individuals.

This year’s exhibition, Down with Walls!, features several works of photographers who bring various perspectives to the theme of

barriers, borders and boundaries, and their impact on human (hi)story.

Speaking about walls means, first of all, speaking about the people who have remained on the other side of the wall – the excluded ones. The project of the Australian photographer **Warren Richardson**, *The Plagued Generation*, presents us with three ‘iconic’ personifications of exclusion: the refugee, the homeless and the addict. From their perspective, ‘normal’ society is surrounded by unclimbable, almost ‘impermeable’ walls. The artist allows the viewer to hear their voice and realise what things really look like ‘from the other side’.

**Kai Wiedenhoffer** (Germany), in his three-decade-long project *Confrontier*, presents both the walls which still survive as relics of the past in many places around the world, and those which are being built today. However, far from being an illustration, his work encourages profound reflection on the current state of our societies, which seem to have no better answer to conflicts than building or establishing walls.

**Krzesztof Gołuch** (Poland) in his project *Every Seventh One* looks at the exclusion from a very different viewpoint – that of the disabled people. For them, walls are an indisputable starting point, but the artist, in a very subtle and human-centred way, shows us that there are ways to bring down or at least crack these walls, and that perhaps we need the disabled

to preserve our humanity much more than they need us.

**Tommaso Rada** (Italy) takes us on a journey into the past – to the border areas in South-Eastern Europe, where not much seems to have changed over the past 30, or even 50 years. The borders here seem to be economic rather than political: the divide separates the richer areas from the poorer ones, the centre from the periphery. Everyone is free to cross the border, but how many do it, actually? How many can afford it? How many are curious and motivated enough to do so?

The project *F(L)IGHT* by **Deividas Buivydas** (Lithuania) presents an opposite approach. It shows the Baltic diaspora living in the small town of Boston in Lincolnshire (UK), where tensions between the immigrants and the locals are running high in the wake of Brexit. The walls may not be physical, but they are very real all the same – the sense of oppression on one side is juxtaposed with the sense of isolation on the other.

Finally, the **Zupagrafika** duo (David Navarro and Martyna Sobecka) take us into the architectural universe of socialism – the Eastern European blocks. When built in the 1960s-80s, these blocks symbolised comfort and modernity. Now, they are a symbol of division and social exclusion.

Dariusz Trześniowski  
Radek Lipka

# Kai Wiedenhöfer

PROJECT: **CONFRONTIER**

Kai Wiedenhöfer, born in Germany in 1966, holds a master's degree in Photography and Editorial Design from the Folkwang University of the Arts in Essen, Germany. He also studied Arabic in Damascus, Syria. Since 1989 his work has mainly focused on the Middle East. He received numerous awards, including the Leica Medal of Excellence, the Alexia Grant for World Peace and Cultural Understanding, several World Press Photo Awards. He published four books with Steidl. The first three are Perfect Peace (2002), Wall (2007) and The Book of Destruction (2010), which was presented as a solo exhibition at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris.

Kai Wiedenhöfer's fourth book CONFRONTIER was published in 2013 and is dedicated to the

issue of border walls. These photographs were shown as part of the WALLonWALL exhibition on a 364-metre-long stretch of the Berlin Wall. In summer 2016, this show was succeeded by WARonWALL, a project about the war in Syria, which was accompanied by the album Syrian Collateral. In December 2016, Kai Wiedenhöfer received the Carl-von-Ossietzky Medal from the International Human Rights League in Berlin.

## CONFRONTIER

One of the many strands in Kai Wiedenhöfer's documentary work is the issue of walls as symbols and relics of deep divisions and separation in the aftermath of political, economic, religious and ethnic conflicts.

In 1989 he photographed the fall of the Berlin Wall in his hometown and was deeply moved by this first-hand experience of history unfolding. At that time Wiedenhöfer, like many others, believed that this event would mark the end of walls being employed as political tools and dismiss them as anachronistic instruments of division. Thirty years later history proved him wrong: it seems that the policy of building walls has now made a horrific comeback.

In his comprehensive project Confrontier, carried out over a period of 30 years, Wiedenhöfer has documented the walls in Belfast, Ceuta and Melilla, Baghdad, Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory, the Mexican-American border, Cyprus, Korea, the Greek-Macedonian border, the British-French border, as well as the remains of the Iron Curtain.

With his work, the artist substantiates his conviction that walls are not a solution to any of today's political and economic problems, but rather a proof of human weakness and inability to communicate with others:

*"While barriers are a protection they are also a cage, while being shields they are also traps".*





*"I want to show the conflict that is inherent in borders: on the one hand we long for unconditional, absolute boundlessness. Perhaps because the major world religions describe paradise this way, perhaps because economic globalization (our de facto religion) demands it. On the other hand, we feel lost in the boundlessness, and want to separate, distinguish ourselves, our culture, our community. While we may admire charity, we are not ready to share our wealth."*



*"Borders allocate us to places, warn us to stay away. They remind me of jewellery shops with their electronically protected display windows that show us enticing riches that, for most of us, are beyond our reach. Man-made borders run between ideologies, rich and poor, religion and race. Their significance is not just geographic, but operates principally in our minds."*



# Warren Richardson

## PROJECT: THE PLAGUED GENERATION

Warren Richardson is a freelance photojournalist currently based in Eastern Europe. He was born in Australia and undertakes long-term projects that deal with human and environmental issues, as well as assignments for newspapers, magazines and companies. He has lived in Southeast Asia, the UK, the USA and now Hungary.

Richardson is also the World Press Photo winner of 2015 for his photo "Hope for a new life". He also won spot news with the World Press Photo for the refugees crossing the border from Serbia into Hungary, near Horgoš (Serbia) and Röszke (Hungary) in August 2015. Currently Warren Richardson is working on projects tackling with the issue of addictions and homelessness in Norway, in the UK and in Hungary. He lives by the proverb We have not inherited the land from our fathers, we have borrowed it from our children.

### THE PLAGUED GENERATION

In 2016, Warren Richardson won the first prize at the World Press Photo for the year 2015 with a photograph showing a Syrian refugee carrying his little child and trying to cross the border



between Serbia and Hungary at night. Richardson symbolizes what we most appreciate in photojournalism – he is sincere, he empathizes with his subjects and devotes himself entirely to his work. His photographs quite literally take us right to the place where events unfold before our eyes: it is us trying to cross the border, it is us who are hungry and have nowhere to go in the streets of Budapest, it is us who die of overdose in the streets of Oslo.

As Richardson himself says, his intention is to show history in the making. His black and white images are poignant, while his documentary projects rely on paparazzi techniques, which help bring out the simplicity and the strong emotional charge of the artist's work. But his work is not meant only to witness and illustrate. It is a call to the viewers to cross the borders and contribute to change the reality around us.



DOW N W ITH W ALLS ! / WARREN RICHARDSON



*"This project looks into the world of displaced and addicted people that don't live by the norms of what society expects them to be. It focuses on the epicentre of addiction, depression and trauma, the reasons one becomes homeless and the addictions they take on whilst being on the streets."*

*"We are living in a time where people need to flee their countries to find safety, the hurdles they have faced to the hurdles they need to face within the modern world they now call home. Everything has a domino effect that intertwines on every level, refugees, homelessness, drug addiction depression and trauma, fear is the key aspect to the reason we as humans create borders, barriers and fences."*



# Tommaso Rada

PROJECT: **DOMESTIC BORDERS**

Tommaso Rada was born in Italy in 1979. He is a documentary photographer working on socio-economic issues. Since 2016, he has been based in São Paolo, Brazil. In 2017, he was shortlisted for the Sony World Photography Award in the 'Natural World' category, and in 2018 he was one of the winners of the PDN Photo Annual in the 'Personal Work' category. In several of his projects Tommaso Rada explores the notion of a two-speed Europe, captures the past represented by various artefacts still surviving in many regions of Europe and depicts the socio-economic changes impacting different social groups. His best-known series include Domestic Borders, The Danube Isn't Blue, Forgotten Soldiers and Back to South. Tommaso Rada's photographs have been published in many newspapers and magazines, including Der Spiegel, Expresso, Monocle, Courrier International, the British Journal of Photography and others.

## DOMESTIC BORDERS

Born in Italy, Tommaso Rada considers himself a citizen of Europe. In his photographic project



Domestic Borders, the artist has been exploring the borders of his homeland since 2014.

Back to South, the latest chapter of the project, focuses particularly on the Southern border of EU and countries which would be most severely affected if the policy of a "two-speed Europe" was implemented. By documenting 'left behind' areas, Rada hopes to show the 'challenges of living in a unique space in which time passes at a different pace.'

In the series, images from southern European countries are mixed together, their common denominator being their geographical location and the impact of the most recent economic crisis.

Borders presented in the selection are of economic nature ('forgotten' and vulnerable periphery), but also of historic and cultural one, especially in the photographs taken in the areas close to



the former Iron Curtain. Has life changed so much for their inhabitants after 1989 and then after Bulgaria and Romania had joined the EU? Does freedom of movement result in exchanges, solidarity, sense of belonging or rather new economical borders have replaced the former physical ones? These are just a few of the many questions raised by Rada's project, exploring the meaning of Europe today, especially for inhabitants of the peripheral areas.



# Deividas Buivydas

PROJECT: **F(L)IGHT**

Deividas Buivydas is a Lithuanian photographer living in the UK, where he moved when he was 16. He studied photography at the Westminster University in London. In his work he focuses on the issues of migration and belonging. Most recently he has also explored the most hotly debated political topic in Britain: Brexit. His photographs have been published in many magazines, including Fisheye, Calvert Journal, HUCK, It's Nice That and The British Journal of Photography. He has received prizes from Kodak Alaris, Labyrinth Photographic, Stack, and PYLOT Magazine.

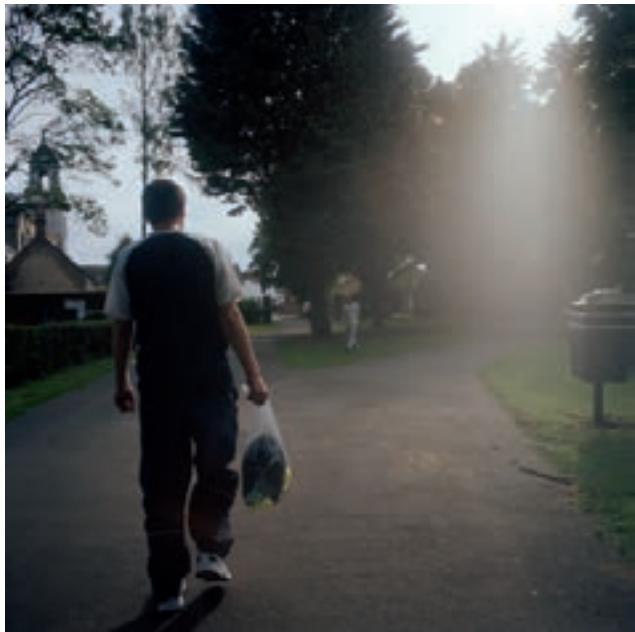
F(L)IGHT is a multi-faceted portrait of the small town of Boston in Lincolnshire (UK), which is said to be the capital of Eastern European immigration in Great Britain, and which after the Brexit referendum was labeled “the face of Brexit”. The project, which started in spring 2016 and whose author is an emigrant himself, is inspired by everyday life and reveals the tensions mounting beneath the surface of the town, the



dissatisfaction and feeling of oppression from the locals, and the isolation that the immigrants experience.

‘I documented the town’s everyday life to convey the sense of loneliness, disconnection, alienation - but also hope,’ the artist says. So, despite the tensions and the uncertainty about the future, the series carries also a message of hope, as ‘LIGHT’ is one of three possible readings of the title.

Last, but not least, this sociological and personal reflection explores broader questions that go far beyond Boston. What makes a country? Why live in a continuous rhetoric of ‘us’ and ‘them’? What creates the feeling of home?



# Krzysztof Gołuch

PROJECT: **EVERY SEVENTH ONE**



Krzysztof Gołuch is a Polish documentary photographer born in Ruda Śląska, currently based in Knurów, Poland. His work focuses on social relations and human work. He graduated from the Faculty of Pedagogy and Psychology. His vision as a photographer has been largely shaped by the time he spent as

a student at the Institute of Creative Photography of the Silesian University of Opava (Czech Republic), where he is currently enrolled in a PhD programme. He has received awards in several photography competitions, both in Poland and abroad. Krzysztof Gołuch is a member of the Association of Polish Art Photographers. His book Every Seventh One documents the lives of people with various disabilities.

## EVERY SEVENTH ONE

“Every seventh person is disabled.  
But what does this mean, exactly?  
That the disabled are what we wouldn’t like to  
be?  
That they are what we, luckily, are not?  
Doomed to be taken care of by others who must  
guide, feed, or dress them...?”



What can a disabled person give others in exchange for the help they receive? Themselves?

Disability is not a matter of choice: it is a matter of chance. Whether we become disabled as a result of an accident, illness, or old age is not for us to decide... After all, FATE could have chosen any of the six other persons, the sixth or the eighth one rather than THE SEVENTH ONE. But it has chosen us – the seventh ones. From now on, we will eat, drink, breathe, wake up, and fall asleep with the help of those who make these things possible for us. Otherwise we would be perfect and self-sufficient. We aren't. Fate will never allow it. It will put another person's arm under our own and make us rest on it. It will undermine our self-worth, saying that we will not survive without it. We will take this helping hand, and from that moment on we will learn what closeness means – with all the disruption it causes others, all the burden, and all the time it requires.

They say disabled people are lonely. That is not true! Disabled people would not survive on their own!

What do you think? Is every seventh one of us the chosen one or the doomed one, the close one or the lonely one?

Do the six of us need the seventh one? Does the seventh one need the other six?"

Michał Szalast





D O W N   W I T H   W A L L S !   /   K R Z Y S Z T O F   G O Ł U C H

# Zupagrafika

PROJECT: EASTERN BLOCKS

Zupagrafika is a joint project by David Navarro and Martyna Sobecka, an independent publisher and design studio founded in 2012 and based in Poznań, Poland.

For almost a decade now, David and Martyna have been documenting post-war modernist landmarks and different types of prefabricated panel constructions scattered around Europe. The photography archive built up in the course of this research and shown in the book Eastern Blocks (2019) has provided a significant

frame of reference for their architectural publications. Since 2012, Zupagrafika has designed, illustrated and published interactive books and kits celebrating modernist and brutalist architecture of the former Eastern Bloc and beyond, including: Brutal London (2015), Brutal East (2017), Brutal Britain (2018), Eastern Blocks (2019) and Panelki (2019).





## EASTERN BLOCKS

The Eastern Blocks project takes us on a photographic journey through the concrete suburbs of the former Eastern Bloc to the districts which, after the Second World War, became a construction site for huge housing estates. It reveals the “harsh beauty” of the architecture behind the Iron Curtain and shows true architectural uniqueness, exemplified by the Soviet flying saucers, houses “on chicken legs” or hammer-shaped monoliths. The perception of the monumental “sleeping districts” of Moscow, the Plattenbauten of East Berlin, Warsaw’s modernist housing estates, Kiev’s Brezhnevki, which are home to the majority of inhabitants of those cities, has changed considerably over the past few years.

When built in the 1960s-80s, these blocks were a symbol of comfort and modernity, a symbol of success of the socialist societies. Now, they are a symbol of division (spatial barriers which split the cities apart) and of social exclusion (most inhabitants would not choose to live in them if they had other options).



12<sup>th</sup>

# Central and Eastern European Film Festival

LUXEMBOURG, 3–22 OCTOBER 2019

**KAI WIEDENHÖFER**

[www.kaiwiedenhoefer.com](http://www.kaiwiedenhoefer.com)

**WARREN RICHARDSON**

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**TOMMASO RADA**

[www.radatommaso.com](http://www.radatommaso.com)

**DEIVIDAS BUIVYDAS**

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THE TEAM:

**Dariusz Trześniowski** (curator) / **Radek Lipka** (coordination)

**Jiří Vlášek** (graphic design) / **Marta Miller** (proofreading)

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