

Fiasco

a photonovel by Janet Riedel, Katja Pratschke and Gusztáv Hámos

With fragments from Imre Kertész' book

The photonovel FIASCO is based on and named after Kertész' novel. He describes his absurd attempt of a new beginning – after Auschwitz and Buchenwald – in the Budapest of the Stalin area. The photonovel transforms Imre Kertész' literary method into a visual language: by joining fragmentary elements from the past and the present, by finding traces that link experience and remembering.

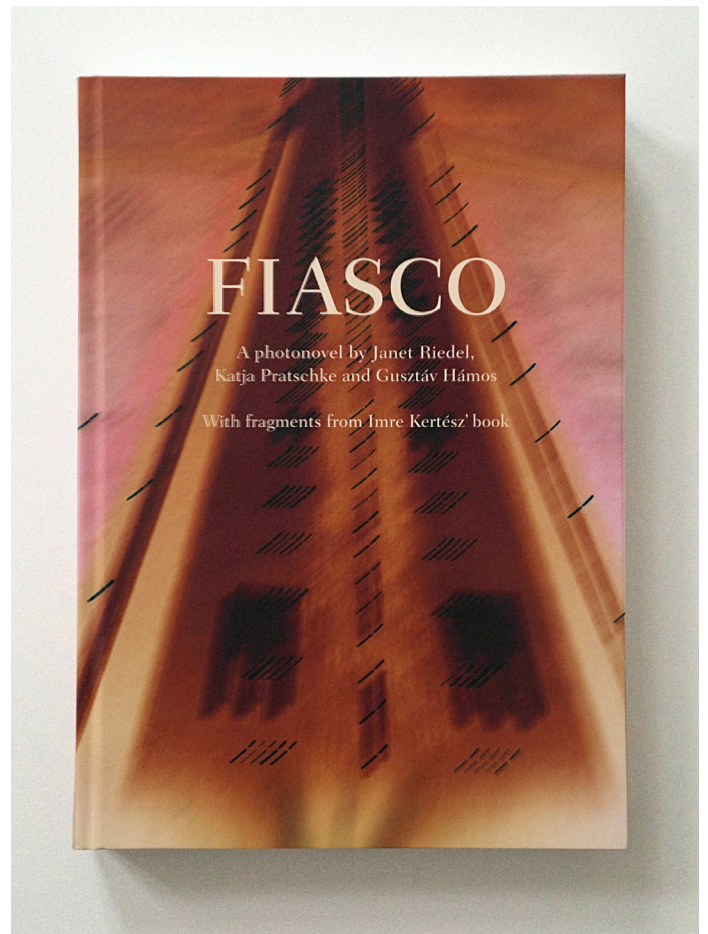
Riedels personal encounter with the winner of the literary Nobel Prize Imre Kertész was the beginning of a deeper involvement with his oeuvre, the main subject of which was totalitarianism and the endless flexibility of man.

From 2008 to 2010 approximately 800 colored medium-format photos were taken. The sequential photos have been taken on the original locations. The remainders of the past systems are rendered via multiple exposures, pictures shown in their ambivalence, mirroring etc. The literary text and the photographs remain independent from one another, however they enter into a dialog and open up space for associations.

The book with its filmic images moves the "reader" to think movement; by flicking through the book, the editing, the montage is effected through the reader's exploration of it.

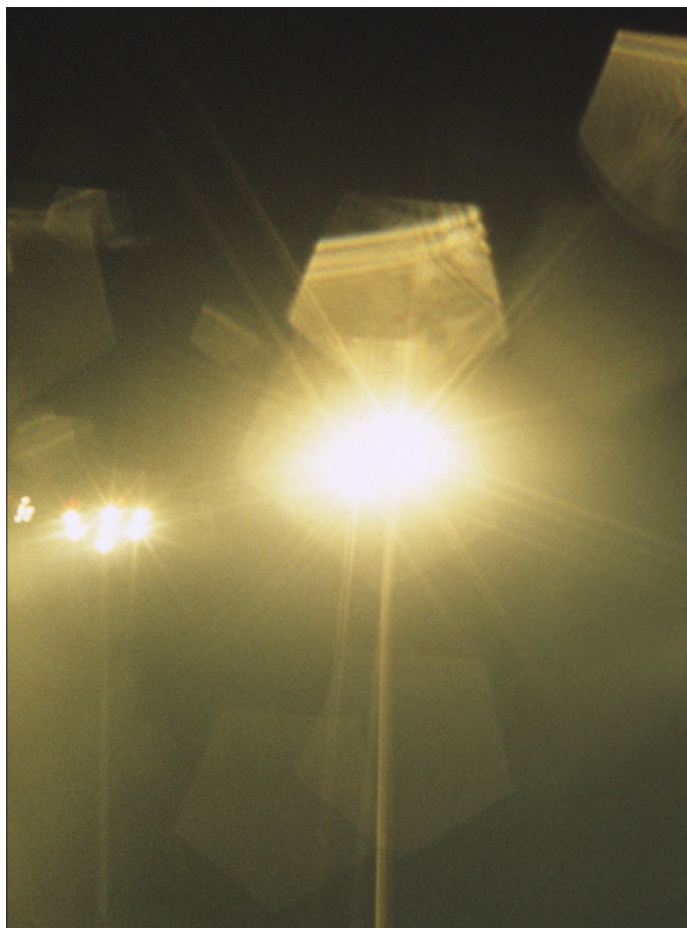
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"With the photonovel Fiasco, an homage to la jetée by Chris Marker is proposed: in a nameless airport in a large, foreign yet familiar city, a man is searching for a way to survive, in a system which has condemned all those people who have not yet lost their belief in the individual and in freedom."

Nathalie Hénon and Jean-Francois Rettig, Rencontres International



Dismissal Köves awoke to a sound of ringing, or to be more specific, to having to open the door: it seemed that the impatient ringing, which kept on repeating, at times for protracted periods, at times in fitful bursts, must have pulled him out of bed before he had truly woken up, otherwise he would hardly have gone to open the door, given that there was no reason for anyone to be looking for him there.

He was mistaken, though: at the door stood a postman who happened to be looking for "a certain Köves."

In his room, Köves immediately opened the letter: it informed him that the editorial office of the newspaper on which he had been functioning up to that point as a journalist was hereby giving him notice of dismissal, and although, in compliance with the provisions of such and such a labour law, his salary would be paid to him for a further fortnight — "which may be collected at our cashier's desk during business hours on any working day" — they would be making no claims on his services from today's date onwards.

Köves read through the letter with a mixture of confusion, anger, and anxiety. How was this? Did life here begin with a person being dismissed from his job?

[...] The letter had turned him into a journalist, and more specifically a journalist who had been dismissed, so he had to follow up on that clue [...].

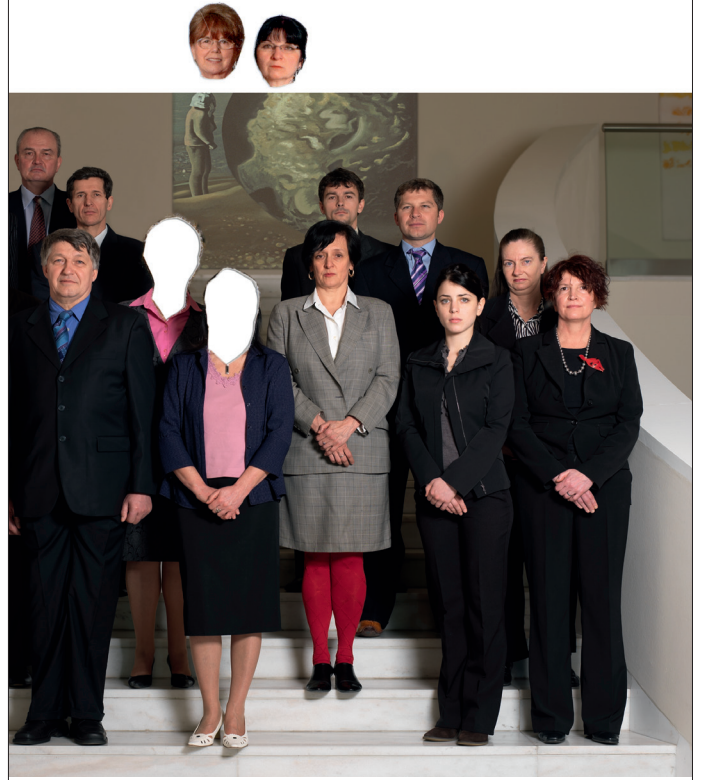


"Life is not a source of faith, after all, life is ... I don't know what, but life is something else..."
 He was soon interrupted:
 "You're not familiar with the life we lead."
 "I'd like to work, and then I shall get to know it," Köves said, in a low voice now, almost longingly.

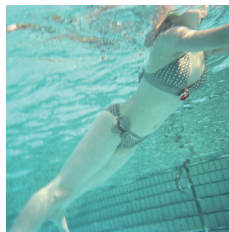


"You'll learn: our factories are waiting with open gates for anyone who wishes to work!" chimed the voice, and Köves lifted his head again: the recognition, like a judgement, filled him with a calm, dull weariness, but in it he somehow regained his keen sense of pride.





Inspired by the manipulated photographs from the Stalist era, the photographic construction of a group portrait was created by means of analogue (pp. 100–101) and digital (pp. 102–103) retouching. In the background on pp. 102–103, *Die Flucht des Sisyphos/The Flight of Sisyphus* (1972) by Wolfgang Mattheuer was added to the image.



Also, there were plenty of people who needed “papers,” said Sziklai. That was how they would come to be working for the Uncrowned: one way or another, he would obtain an official document for them, which stated that they were working for a non-profit company. That way they would not be open to charges of workshyness or sponging [...].