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WOLKEN STORES: UNDER THE SHADOW OF THE GDR

It is a light-and-shadow trip in the present – and the past- of unified Germany.

The images, gathered along the way of the ex-internal border between East and West, draft a portrait of the country twenty years after its Reunification.

We discover traces of a disappeared universe and its consequences on the development of today's society: Berlin and its symbols, Sieben Linden the eco-village, or Görlitz the west pensioners' paradise.

In her documentary approach, Chiara Dazi presents a photography which goes beyond stereotypes, is sometimes ironic and always poetic.

The project: ex-GDR 20 years later

The Italian photographer Chiara Dazi left in June 2009 for a trip to discover the new regions of the unified Germany. Together with Prune Antoine, a French journalist in Berlin, they realized a journey with many stops, in order to deliver a complete image of the situation in contemporary eastern German society. To do so they concentrated on different subjects like emigration, ecology and sport. A selection of images of the trip is presented in the exhibition.

GORLITZ

At the polish border, on the river Neisse, Görlitz is the most eastern city of Germany: where the sun is raising the first. Thanks to the richness of its architectural past, considered as a UNESCO world heritage, it is the new beloved tourist destination of West German pensioners many of which decided to move there. Emptied after 1989 and with increasing unemployment rate, the city is today living a re-generation. The seniors found in Görlitz a new, and cheaper, version of the paradise. For even cheaper shopping and petrol, one can cross the river to the polish Zgorzelec.

EBERSBACH

Ebersbach, a small city at the German border with Czech Republic used to be during GDR times a very important textile center. Today most of the factories have disappeared, so did the female workers looking for a job in the West, leaving lonely men behind. Between empty parks and some *Trabant*, left are the sons of the immigrants who came from the friend-lands of the GDR (like Vietnam) and the ancient traditions Like the *Umgebindhäuser* typical houses on which the region is trying to develop tourism and interest.

DRESDEN

Among tradition and modernity today, Dresden was completely destroyed during Second World War, and is now brand new, like its re-built *Frauenkirche*. On the top of the new technologies branch, Dresden is well known as the German Silicon Valley, but it is also the place of controversial projects like the bridge on the Elbe River.

MAGDEBURG

At the GDR time Magdeburg was the city with the best football team of the country. A won Cup Winner's Cup and fall of the Wall later, things have changed. Performances of the players have decreased, but supporters love for the team didn't.

SIEBEN LINDEN

Not far from the *Grünes Band* the line along the ex-internal border, but far away from main streets and big cities, Sieben Linden was founded in 1997 by some *Wessis*.

Gathered in the desolated Mecklenbourg-Vorpommern region, they realized their dream of a 100% ecological village. Around 120 people, among which 80 children, are living there, in contact with nature. Forest kindergarten, straw houses and free love are their secret ingredients for a happy life in a kind of exacerbate spirit of community.

USEDOM

The island of Usedom on the Baltic Sea is shared between Poland and Germany. Exactly on the border used to be a beach which was reserved to the east-German nudists, when the FKK (culture of the free body) was a common phenomenon.

As in 2007 the EU border with Poland opened, and the nice walk along the beach had no more barriers to the path and the sight, some problems started. Some polish authorities didn't like the prudish customs on the other side and an armistice to the "swimsuit-struggle" came when finally a poster was put on the sand, warning families that some ten meters forward a nudist beach is to be found: everyone is free to decide to go on or not.