

## “UPS AND DOWNS, CLEARLY WITH MORE DOWNS THAN UPS” DEALING WITH DEPRESSION THROUGH ART

**Mental illnesses are omnipresent in our society, and yet their specific symptoms are often mysterious and hard to grasp. The photographer Nora Klein has succeeded in going beyond words to discover a visual method of expressing the emotional world of depressed people. With sensitive portraits and abstract visuals, her project, *Mal gut, mehr schlecht*. (Sometimes good, more bad) makes it possible to see this invisible illness.**

Berlin, February 16, 2017 – “You sit inside your home, looking at all of the things around you, and then the light keeps getting dimmer, you see less and less, until nothing’s left. That’s depression.” Mareike\* is one of nine people suffering from depression who was photographed by Nora Klein for her project *Mal gut, mehr schlecht*. The young photographer (\*1984 in Rostock, Germany) spent more than a year-and-a-half in close, trusting communication with people who’ve experienced depression. The result is an illustrated volume based on many conversations, which explores their world of thoughts and emotions, while drawing a visual portrait of depression.

“It seemed to me as if everyone was talking about depression, but I couldn’t imagine it, and I wanted to change that,” said the artist, explaining her artistic approach. “Of course, it’s an abstract theme, but that’s why it was a challenge. I wanted to do something different than classic narrative photojournalism.” Klein combines portraits of those affected with photos of specific places and abstract images that visualize moods. Notes on conversations and ideas, along with personal documents from sufferers, round out the publication. What Klein now knows: “Depression is multi-layered. A mishmash of ‘losses’: loss of desire, of drive, of emotion. Ups and downs, clearly with more downs than ups.”

According to the Robert Koch Institute, around ten percent of women and six percent of men report that in the past twelve months they have gone through a depression or been in a depressive mood that has been diagnosed by a doctor or therapist. But what does the diagnosis mean to the everyday lives of those affected? What do their friends and family have to say about it? How does their environment react? And what can help them? *Mal gut, mehr schlecht* bridges the gap to these questions, makes it possible for those not suffering from depression to imagine what it must be like, and inspires social debates about it.

Klein’s work has had many supporters. The Town & Country Foundation, the Deutsche Depressionsliga, and the BARMER, for instance, are convinced of the book’s importance. “The topic of depression is of enormous relevance to society. Depression is an illness that hinders everyday life, and burdens family members. Nora Klein’s book is a great project that gives a face to this ordinarily invisible illness.”

Klein’s work will be on display at the Kunsthaus Erfurt from April 7 to 13, 2017. The book launch will be part of the opening on April 7.

\*Name has been changed



**MAL GUT, MEHR SCHLECHT.  
NORA KLEIN**

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German

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Especially in the digital age, Hatje Cantz regards itself an element linking museums, artists, galleries, collectors, and art lovers. Conveying knowledge - in terms of both content and visuals - as well as an enthusiasm for art is always at the heart of our engagement.

In keeping with our ambition to make it possible to experience art beyond the medium of the book, Hatje Cantz has launched the EDITION GERD HATJE as we continue to expand our portfolio of strictly limited, signed editions featuring works on paper, photographic works of art, and art objects.

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