

ISABELLE GRAEFF**UPHEAVAL, CHANGE, DEVELOPMENT: BREXIT**

The artist and photographer Isabelle Graeff devotes her pictures to existential questions of life; they are on a search for self-determination and identity. Her new series, *Exit*, shifts the focus to an entire country, as the images describe closure, new beginnings, exiting, and arrival.

Berlin, March 2, 2018 – It's been twenty years since the artist Isabelle Graeff began following her mother around with a camera. The resulting series, *My Mother and I*, explored the interconnected relationships between mother and daughter. Exhibited in 2010, this sensitive photographic observation marked a breakthrough for the artist, who was born in Heidelberg in 1977. To this day questions about belonging, heritage, and self-determination continue to leave their mark on Graeff's photographs. However, an entire country has replaced her mother at the center of it all. Graeff moved to England, where she had been a student and knew her way around. Yet, when she began taking pictures in 2015 she found a changed place: a country in crisis, on the edge of Brexit and divided, with the legacy of an epic history, but an uncertain prospect of the future.

"In many of the photographs, the camera seems to glide silently through a world of decay in which the sound has been turned off. One can read 'Exit' as a snapshot of a land in crisis that has decided to leave the European Union, because it believes this is the right path – back to the past glory and autonomy of the Empire," writes the critic Niklas Maak, describing the tone of the series.

When taking photographs, Isabelle Graeff begins as a silent observer of that feeling that seems to fluctuate between upheaval and change, as well as between mystical beauty and romantic nature. Graeff's photographs were taken before the referendum, at a time when Brexit had not yet divided the nation. But *Exit* is more than just an inventory: it also involves Graeff's own confrontation with abandonment, the retreat from an old, familiar life, and the attempt to bid farewell and begin again.



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EXIT

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