



## Media Information

### STAGE FOR PEOPLE AND BODIES

**Being, substance, light, and shadow: for the eighth time THE OPÉRA | Classic & Contemporary Nude Photography returns to show people as they were made—or have made themselves. The current issue focuses on the themes of diversity and pluralism. Thirty-four international photographers have contributed their photographs to this issue, expressing the idea that beauty and value can be found in every form of human life. Its strong body-positive attitude and the multilayered selection of motifs linked to that makes issue VIII a standout in the magazine’s history.**

Bielefeld/Berlin, November 12, 2019 – Anyone on the search for the essence of humankind will discover beauty and ugliness, light and shadow, on the way. “The practice of portraying the human body is as old as humanity itself. It is the observer who, with intention and attitude, turns the nude into an artistic motif. For me the nude photograph is the most immediate form of portraiture, in which nothing stands between the photographer and the person being photographed. Nothing that clothes, veils, or envelops. The nude photograph depicts human beings as they are: big, small, fat, thin, strong, delicate, beautiful, and ugly,” writes THE OPÉRA editor Matthias Straub.

Straub, a resident of Stuttgart, likes people. And their stories. A strongly expressive photo is a wonderful way of telling a story about someone, for it contains the whole story in itself. So, it’s a portrait. And the most direct portrait that can be made of a person is a nude photo.

Wandering through Parisian bookshops in 2011, Straub had to admit that he had neither the budget nor a big enough suitcase to take home all of the photography books he liked, and so the idea of THE OPÉRA was born: “I found lots of beautiful monographs of classic and contemporary nude photographs, but no compendium that united the various positions under this theme. An annual magazine that regularly printed all of the different varieties of the genre made sense to me.”

With this idea in his mind, Straub returned to Stuttgart to discuss it with his friend Xavier Zuber, who was the head dramaturg at the Staatsoper at the time. The two of them agreed that the image had to be in the limelight. And so soon the metaphor for THE OPÉRA was invented: “The body is both stage and play. In opera there are many different artistic approaches toward the essence and nature of humankind, as well as many ways to depict them. From a certain respectful distance, the audience observes an opulent depiction of life, a euphoric one, a reserved one. The solemn and dignified character of the opera seems to me a fitting comparison to the nude. Gustav Freytag’s five-part division of the classic drama, which is often used for many operas, also provided the structure for the book’s five chapters: exposition, complication, peripeteia, retardation, and catastrophe.”

The first motifs and photos were quickly found: “First I wrote to my favorite photographers. Most were happy to find a platform where their work could be seen in an artistic context.” Today Straub receives many unsolicited submissions and is pleased to have more than enough material.

THE OPÉRA is available in photography bookstores, museum shops, and concept stores. It can even be found at MoMA’s PS1 bookstore in New York. Although Straub never had a specific target group in mind, he says, “I’m glad that THE OPÉRA is bought by all kinds of different people, all over the world, and that we get positive feedback from both men and women.”



## **THE OPÉRA**

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### **Editor**

Matthias Straub

### **Text**

Matthias Straub

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## **KERBER VERLAG**

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