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**Peck, Julia ORCID logoORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5134-2471> (2020) Olaf Otto Becker in conversation with Julia Peck. In: Proximity and Distance in Northern Landscape Photography: Contemporary Criticism, Curation and Practice. Transcript Verlag, Bielefeld.**

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## Olaf Otto Becker in conversation with Julia Peck

This interview with Olaf Becker took shape over three conversations in 2018. The first part of the conversation was held at *Northern Light*, with the opportunity for audience Q&A. The conversations have been edited together, and audience questions have been acknowledged.

Julia Peck [JP]: Olaf. Hello.

Olaf Becker [OB]: Hello!

JP: It's a real pleasure to be able to talk to you today about your work, and I thought I would start with a general question. Can you tell us how you became interested in photographing Iceland and Greenland?

OB: I started taking photographs in Iceland after I took photographs in Germany, and the landscape in Germany is shaped by agricultural use, and I was looking for a landscape that was really untouched. I was interested to see landscapes shaped by nature, just by nature, really without any influence by humans and so I started to travel to Iceland for the first time in 1999. I was working on a project about waterfalls in black and white, and I was just interested in the movement of water. I took photographs of waterfalls, one after the other in the way that Bernd and Hilla Becher did with their photographs of industrial buildings. And I took the photographs in black and white with an 8 x 10" camera, and also by a 12 x 20" camera. However, I could not fail to notice that we were shaping the landscape even there.

So I realised that on the one side there is untouched landscape, and on the other side we were shaping the landscape, even where it was before untouched. And so besides the waterfalls I started to take some photographs in colour of power plants, of buildings, and of dams, and hydroelectric power plants, and so on, and when I came home and I looked at my photographs I felt that the photographs of the waterfalls in black and white, looked like they were made centuries ago, and I thought this is not the way I should be working. And I realised that it is more interesting to see the photographs of what is happening now and how we use the landscape to make electricity and things like that. And so I continued going to Iceland and I changed the topic of my work and I was more interested to report the traces of how we shape the landscape in an area where you can still find untouched landscape and where the landscape is used.

I was travelling for four years to Iceland and I took a photograph in 1999 of a glacier and in 2002 I visited this glacier again and I saw there was already a change, that the glacier had retreated, and I asked the people in Iceland, "what has happened with the glacier?" and they said, "it's because of global warming; there are a lot of glaciers, they shrink and everything is melting." And then I thought, well, this then is an interesting issue and so I decided to continue with the next project in Greenland. And I went to Greenland to document the shoreline because if all the glaciers will retreat in Greenland, then the Greenland

shoreline will change first, and then because of the rising water the shores all over the world will change. So I thought I would go to Greenland to work on the project to show what's happening on the west coast; this was the reason that I went to Greenland for the next project, *Broken Line*.

JP: That's a great introduction to your work. Thinking about the fact that you shifted from the idea from an untouched landscape to recording traces of how we shape the landscape, one approach that has been mentioned in the discourse around your work is the idea of documentary, with Gerry Badger (2007: 9) in particular describing your work as lyrical documentary. How do you see your work relating to the documentary traditions?

OB: For me, I'm interested in documenting something I see, something I witness. But I wanted to create pictures in a way that it's not only documentary, for me it is important that you feel something with this image, so the sublime in the landscape is important for me. And it's important to tell a story with a single image, but also to tell a story with a series of images. I'm more interested to find connections between things so at the moment I am working on a European project and I tried to find connections between different countries and landscapes. So I have tried to show with my images relationships between humans and nature.

But there are two important things when I make a picture. Firstly, I'm very interested in the single image. That is, the single image has to be successful and tell a story, but the single image should also be a part of a larger story. And the next thing, is to feel the location, like travelling with a small boat over a period of four or five months, being there and feeling the landscape. The one part is being there and feeling it and then the next part is framing it after I have the feeling that I understand something. And then I have in my mind the whole story that I want to tell and what I want to show finally in my book or in my exhibition. But the single image is always very important for me.

When I take a photograph about melting rivers, on the one hand it's a document about this river in this moment, but on the other hand, because the shape of the river will vary after a few days, it is not important that the image looks exactly like that river, tomorrow or later. You can find thousands of similar rivers every summer on the ice. So, it is a document of an example that is happening a lot.

JP: *Under the Nordic Light* first came out in 2005 and then you went onto *Broken Line* and *Above Zero*, so what brought you back to Iceland in 2011 and 2012?

OB: The publishers were very interested to republish my book *Under the Nordic Light* and he said it would be good if you can add some new photographs, because we want to have a new edition and I said, "I'm not interested, that project is finished, and I don't want to continue with that." But then after a while, I thought that "why not?" and I decided to travel again to Iceland and when I was there I went to the places where I had already taken photographs in 1999 until 2002, and I thought it was interesting to document some places after a period of 10 years. Sometimes I saw a lot of change and sometimes I saw nothing, no change. And so I visited the same places and I waited for the same light

conditions and I used the same framing of the image. And I even made portraits after 10 or 11 years to show how we experience time.

In the book there is a portrait of two young boys and when I met them the first time they were 14 and 15 and of course 10 years later they were 24 and 25. I took the photograph of them in the same place with their motorbikes and the landscape, ten years apart. And I visited other places where I took photographs of glaciers in 1999 and then ten years later, and you really see the difference with what happened with the ice: there is no ice any more. And I also took photographs of some landscapes in the highlands after 12 years, and you get the feeling that it's just another photograph five minutes later. So, with a lot of these photographs you don't see a change, but at some places you see a very clear change, and the reason is always us: we produce this change in landscape and so this is also the subtitle of the book: *A Journey Through Time*.

For me, it was a great experience to see how change can be different and I had an opening at the museum of photography in Reykjavik [May 2018] about my work in Iceland and Greenland, and I took photographs of these places now, where I had been in 1999 to 2002. And there are definitely changes. Some of the houses that I photographed in 1999 and 2011 are not there anymore. I took a photograph again of the two boys, and they are now 30 and 31 and they have families, and so I decided to include their wives and their children in the picture. I can tell a story about an island, about a period. I have observed something and this is the kind of poetic documentary that I am doing. So, it's not just showing something, I put things in relation to each other.

JP: Of course the big thing that happened between the first episode of your work in Iceland, and the second episode of your work was the 2008 economic crash. How do you think that economic crash affected Iceland and its landscape?

OB: Yes, I took photographs of houses in the construction area and a lot of families were not able to finish building the houses because they ran out of money, and even the workers were not able to pay for the materials for the houses. So I took photographs in 2011 and 2012 of some houses, and there was virtually no difference because the people were not able to continue to build the houses. The funny thing was that in 2011 I took a photograph of one house with no roof, and in 2012 I went again to this place and there was still no roof, and this year I went again to this place. And the house now has a roof and people live in the house, and I knocked on the door and I asked them if I could take a photograph in the place where I had stood before. Now it's their living room, with furniture, and with a young boy preparing himself for an exam at the University. At the moment when I started the project I did not know that would happen. But for me, it is interesting to see and I am curious about change so there are new photographs every time when I come to Iceland and I follow up what is happening there.

JP: Thinking about your interest in human traces and the human relationship with the land, you've also been interested in how indigenous cultures live in the landscape. Can you tell us a bit more about that, especially in relation to the Greenland photographs that you've done.

OB: During my trips in Greenland, I travelled from one settlement to the other, going north on the West coast. When I was there I thought it was interesting for me to take photographs of how the people live now, while there is the global warming and the landscape is changing. I did not want just to show the glaciers, and the mountains, and the shore, because people also live there. They are different from us, but they live now in a similar condition to us. They have TVs, computers, mobile phones, and potato chips. Twenty or thirty years ago they did not have these things. In the summer the Inuit live outside the house so, in the pictures of the houses, you can see there is a table in front of the house and the children play and a lot of things are out of the house that should be inside in the house [fig. 1]. It looks a little bit like a mess there, and it was interesting for me because the tools tell us something about the people. So yes, I realised that it was necessary for me to take photographs of it.



Fig. 1 705 Nuussuaq 07/2006, by Olaf Otto Becker

JP: In Iceland, you photographed a few children who grew up to become adults and you also had, every now and again, a person working in the landscape, but for the Inuit, in Greenland, you didn't do that. You had the houses and the signs of how they live and work, but not the people. Can you tell us why people don't feature in your Greenland photographs?



OB: In the Greenland photographs, there are photographs of the scientists in the landscape and there are photographs of the tourists visiting the glacier. And I only take photographs of people if they have a connection with the landscape. The tourists in Greenland, for example, they try to understand global warming while they are walking on the ice field but they cannot understand it [fig. 2]. They are looking for something but they are lost in this landscape with their questions about global warming. And the scientists are in the landscape working in the fog, to find out something about the global warming. And this is my experience also with the scientists, they said to me, every time when they return to the ice cap to download the measurements of a whole year, they are surprised about the results because they are different to what they expected. And so the scientists are working in the fog, they are connected to the landscape, but the photographs are not portraits of the people, it is about the relationship of people to the land.



Fig. 2 Point 660, 2, 08/2008, by Olaf Otto Becker

JP: The Inuit, of course, have a relationship to landscape but that will be a very different one to the scientific one, that wasn't something you wanted to photograph?

OB: No.

JP: Do you have a reason? I'm sorry to press you on this point, but do you have a reason for not wanting to photograph that relationship?

OB: I could show the relationship of the Inuit only in that way that I could see, that their lives are outside in the summer. They really enjoy that it is warm and that there is light for 24 hours but when you see the Inuit working they are small dots in the landscape; they are hunting for seals or they are on their fishing boats. It would make sense to take photographs whilst they are hunting but I didn't have a good feeling about showing that. I am more interested in the traces that we leave in the landscape and if a hunter kills a seal there is no trace in the landscape. It is another interesting issue that they kill a seal to eat it, but we go to the supermarket. We lost the relationship between the animal and how we eat it. It's really a great difference if you go fishing and you eat your own fish, or if you buy it in the supermarket. But this is not a topic that I want to represent with my photographs.

JP: Recent work that you've shown in London demonstrates a return to Ilulissat in Greenland. Can you tell me why you've returned to that particular site? Are you undertaking an update to *Broken Line* and *Above Zero*?

OB: I had to return to Ilulissat several times because I was doing some work for *New York Times Magazine* and they sent me there to document the work of NASA and other scientists and I spent some additional days there just to take some new photographs. While I was there I noticed again the beauty of icebergs in water, and this is very rare at the moment, when the water is like a mirror, without movement. And I saw that it is so visually strong, these single icebergs reflected in the sea, they are beautiful sculptures, and they are an answer for what we are doing here on the world. So there is also, in one way, hope. Even if we destroy the world, nature is able to create something beautiful. I decided to do just a series in the way that the Bechers' did, they took photographs of industrial structures and so I thought I would do something similar with these icebergs because they are beautiful and I realised that if you communicate something with beauty the people will place it in their living room, and when they place it in their living room, it will be on their minds.

JP: In the conference we have been talking about the north, and although we have covered different countries, we have focussed a lot on Northern England. You've looked at the far north and the Arctic north, but you've also looked at the idea of the global north as well, and I think this really became telling when you started working in Indonesia on the topic of deforestation. So what led you to switch from the global and Arctic north as a subject, to the global south?

OB: I was interested in the traces we leave here on Earth and even on the ice cap you will not find direct traces of people, you find only indirect traces, like the melting rivers. And in the south, you can see that we directly change the landscape. I visited some areas where deforestation was happening and this was very well organised and within only a few years they cut down a huge area of primary forest [fig. 3]. Then they plant acacia trees for the paper industry, and the acacia trees are harvested every seven years, and they say it's green paper. But nobody is reporting on the deforestation of primary forest before the plantations existed.



Fig. 3 Deforestation of primary forest, Central Kalimantan, Indonesia 03/2012, by Olaf Otto Becker

I went to Borneo, and when I was young, for me, Borneo was always a dream of untouched primary forest, and when I went to Borneo I drove about 2000 kilometres to see what happened with the forest there. I saw palm tree plantations: palm trees planted by big companies, and there were only a few areas with primary forest left, where it was too difficult to plant palm trees. And I was really frustrated to see that, and to see that we need forest resources, but it's more that we want to earn money in a fast way. And I talked to the people there and I realised that the local people are not responsible for the deforestation, the deforestation is well organised by global stock listed companies. And they do it because they can earn money with it, and the responsibility is divided between many people, so that in the end nobody is responsible. And this is going on as long as the politicians will not introduce regulations and strict control. My feeling is that it will go on until the last tree has gone.

JP: One of the things that I'm interested in is that it is easier to depict deforestation than it is to depict glacial retreat and I think this connects to a whole range of tropes that we're very familiar with in environmental photography. Is this a problem that fascinates you as a visual artist?

OB: There were a lot of reasons to work on the retreating glaciers. One is that the change that I can show can be very beautiful but when you show deforestation it



can look like a battlefield. It can be also interesting, and you can see a lot of things and it is something that you are not used to seeing. It is because we are surprised about what you can see there, we can see trees cut down, lying around. In the book *Reading the Landscape*, there are three chapters, and in the first chapter I show untouched primary forest because we can only miss things that we came to know, and in the second chapter I show deforestation of primary forest and in the third chapter I show how we use nature now in mega cities. Trees are now decorating business buildings, and in Singapore I photographed artificial trees in a botanical garden. They put plants from all over the world in one large garden and they teach the people how nature can be, but this is not nature if you put plants together from all over the world. And the same plants that I found in Indonesia, in this area where I took the photographs of deforestation, you can find some of these plants now in China in new megacities. They use it for their gardens, and they do not care if these plants will not survive long in these strange surroundings. So, in the third chapter it was important for me to show that we have already lost the connection to nature when we use plants in megacities.

JP: Do you receive feedback from your viewers of your images in relation to climate change and changing human behaviour? And if not, what are you hoping for when people look at your work?

OB: When I do the work I always think about that. I have the feeling that this is important for me, but I am also concerned about whether it will be important for somebody else. And if I have the feeling that something I want to say could also be interesting for other people then I take the photograph. And I am very happy when I am at an opening and people tell me something about what they feel when they are looking at my images and they experience exactly what I felt when I took the photograph. And then I'm really happy about that. If I choose a topic I always think, it has to be relevant to me, but not only to me, to all of us.

JP: You've previously talked about travelling to places and how this contributes to global warming. And, in *Reading the Landscape*, in the text that you wrote, you acknowledge that the way you live, and many of us live, is part of the global economy. And I was wondering is this something that you find frustrating, or do you feel you're negotiating this in a creative way?

OB: Yes, in one way it's very frustrating because I don't know how to change it. And, as I said, we are part of a system and even if you don't want to be part of the system, you are part of the system. If you buy something you already participate in the system and if you plug in your computer to get electricity, you are part of the system, and if you fill your car with petrol, you are part of the system, if you listen to the radio you are part of the system, so you cannot avoid it. You cannot leave the system. We have to understand that even small steps are important and I already observe in the whole world everywhere that the consciousness about environment is different to 10 or 20 years ago. Everybody who is educated wants to change something. But we have the problem that the capitalistic system wants to earn money, and they don't care about responsibility. There are a lot of problems we have to solve together but we are not able to communicate because we have different cultures, we have different languages, we have different

possibilities of understanding because we have different educations. We have different problems. Some people in the world have the problem of not having sufficient food or a place to sleep, but we don't have this problem.

Audience: Your photographic practice uses a large format camera, and I'm wondering whether you have a strong sense of connection with the pioneer photographers.

OB: Yes. At the beginning, the 8 x 10 camera was the only camera I could use when I wanted to show a lot of details. Now it has changed. We can use digital cameras and we can use stitching techniques so that you can use 80 photographs, and stitch all of them into one very high-resolution picture, and you can get a higher resolution picture than you can get with 8 x 10 camera. But the other thing with an 8 x 10 camera is that you put the camera on a tripod, and you have to work slowly, you have to think about what you are doing, and this is a good way to work.

And now I have changed, and I don't use the 8 x 10 any more, I use a digital camera. So sometimes I shoot 100 photographs, each with 40 or 50 million pixels and stitch these images together to make one image with a very high resolution. When you stitch together 80 photographs you have to imagine the image before it is made. And so I see the landscape like a painter. I really enjoy spending time in museums to study how the painters captured landscape: how they get the depth in the landscape, how they make a composition and the use of light. I try to find the position in the landscape where I get the depth of the picture. And then, light is also very important for landscape photographs. Sometimes I am at a position where I would take a photograph, but the light is not good. Then I have to return to that place when the light is in the condition that I want to have it and sometimes I wait, two, three hours in one place, just to get the right light, or I return another day. I remember a lot of great moments when I was just waiting for the right light for the picture.

JP: I'm really fascinated by the fact that you're stitching images together or using masks, especially when you're photographing landscapes that have a lot of people in them. You must be photographing lots of sections of the image more than once, so of course you can choose whether a tourist is present or not in that particular area.

OB: Yes, right. I have been creating a picture of the Giant's Causeway, and it is an area that attracts thousands of tourists. The interesting thing was, I need to have areas in the picture where there is nobody, but at this place, thousands of people come every day. At every square meter you can take a photograph of people during the day, but to create a picture it is good to have some places where there is nobody. And so I can decide which parts of the picture are filled with people and which are not. But every person that is in the picture, has been exactly in that place, so I did not place the person there, they have been there, exactly in that position.

With this process I have the ability to tell stories. Some groups are acting in a special way and some people take photographs like selfies, and other people they pose for a photograph. Other people are just there, sitting, looking around

or waiting to leave. So there are hundreds of small stories in the picture and I can control it, but it's challenging and it's not a picture I can finish quickly. So I work on the picture, then it comes to a point where I think I don't like it any more so I stop it, and one month later I work again on the picture I realise that when I do it this way, the image will become better.

JP: The images that are really fascinating from that point of view are the images of Point 660 in Greenland [fig. 2] because, for me, they're gently humorous. The people are arranged so beautifully over the glacier tongue and it really says something about the performance of being a tourist, and the performance of photography. Combined with the information that the tourists spend very little time there, just...

OB: 20 minutes.

JP: 20 minutes! Which I find incredible as they've travelled so far to spend only 20 minutes in this landscape.

OB: Yes, it's just coming to the point, and then that's it. And so this is a very stupid way to observe something. So, they just go to the point and take a photograph and that's it, and then they leave. It's a way of consuming landscape.

JP: So is that particular image a composite image?

OB: The funny thing is the *New York Times* wanted to publish this image and I sent them the file and then they realised that the image was manipulated and they wouldn't publish it. I explained that I had ten negatives, each 8" x10" and only 20 minutes to make the shot. I did not know what would happen when the tourists arrived and I tried to find the best place for my camera because once it is in position, I cannot move it. So I took altogether 10 photographs from the same place but with different arrangements of the people, and the final version was a combination of three images. But the *New York Times* said they could not publish it, and I offered to do a rescan just of one negative and then they published it.

And then, at the end I thought, there was no need for a manipulation because the one photograph [fig. 2], the one where the couple is in the foreground, this image is much more strange than the invented image and I so I feel, sometimes, it is better not to alter a picture. And when you change it, you really have to do it very well because it's so complicated. It's very difficult, because I have a problem with inventing something, and this was the reason that I stopped painting.

JP: This is really fascinating, because earlier you talked about the Iceland project and the second version, the subtitle of which is *A Journey Through Time*. To find out that your images are composites that are obviously made over time makes some of your images a journey through time.

OB: Yes. So there is one image in *Under the Nordic Light '60 Minutes Dettifoss'* [fig. 4] where you see tourists, and I took that photograph over 60 minutes. And 60 minutes is exactly the time that people stand there before they go to the next location. So the photograph '60 Minutes Dettifoss' is a composition of that which happened during 60 minutes at that place.



Fig. 4 60 Minutes Dettifoss, by Olaf Otto Becker

JP: I can see time is particularly important in *Under the Nordic Light*, but across the different bodies of work you've made I think you treat time as something that's incredibly complex and it's not just about objective changes that can be detected through visual change. In *Under the Nordic Light*, you're creating a disciplined record that captures both human time and geological time, but in *Reading the landscape* time is different. You set the scene of the time of the primary forest, its creation and continued existence, but then there is also the time of the accelerated modernity of the forest, where the forest is being destroyed and used for resources; this latter time is different because the pace of change is faster. So, I was thinking about how in *Under the Nordic Light* and *Reading the Landscape* what you're doing is moving from a slower understanding of time, geological time, then human and social time, to a faster time through modernity and accelerated consumption. I was wondering whether that's something that you've given much thought to?

OB: Yes, this is right. When I took photographs, when I came to the same place in *Under the Nordic Light* after ten years I could not see any change. And then I get the feeling that the second photograph, taken ten years later, shows the same area just one day later. With the photographs of waves on the beach in one way I was joking with time because I came to the same place where the waves come every minute, again and again, and I came to the same place with the same

framing and of course you cannot expect something else other than what you can see five minutes later.

In other areas I revisited the same place ten years later and there is no change, and then you have the photographs of houses that disappear over a period of ten years. And then you see the big change with these glaciers over a period of ten years. So, this for me, shows that some changes can happen very fast and the cause for that can be our activities, but if you have a volcano and there is an explosion of the volcano, or another disaster then even the Earth or nature can change things within minutes and it does not need the time of ten years to change something. So, I am fascinated that change can happen fast and it can happen over a long period and everything is related to our observation and the time we have to undertake the observation. And with the rainforest, of course, it seems to be always the same and we see the beauty of primary rainforest, but the change of the primary rainforest happens every day. But for us, if you only look casually, you don't see many changes, yet there are thousands and millions of changes everyday in a rainforest. But what we can see very easily is the disappearance of the rainforest. The rainforest may have changed everyday but this does not destroy the rainforest, and this is less relevant for us, and the relevant change of a rainforest is that there is no rainforest anymore. But when we destroy the rainforest, there is an end of something that had been in development for million of years and now this development of this part of nature has come to an end.

JP: I also want to ask you about time and memory. In *Under the Nordic Light* you reported feeling unsettled when, after a period of ten years, there were no changes. I was wondering if you had ever continued to think about how unsettling it can be to come back to a place and see the absence of change.

OB: For me it was a strange feeling when I came to a place and there was no change, because I experienced, during ten years, a lot of change. And then when I come to the landscape and I see there is no change, then I question, where is the time that I have experienced? It was very strange for me to experience that. Normally, you would expect if you experience a lot of change in your life you will be able to see external change, and when I come to a place and after ten years I can't see any change, then the experience of how I feel time is passing is disturbed. It is very difficult to experience this, and then I can say I feel doubt about our measurement of time, so the measurement of time is always to do with our lifetime and with our experiences and if we would live in a world without any changes we would lose, very probably, all orientation in time. If there are not a lot of changes we have the feeling, probably, that everything is very long lasting and when we have a lot of changes, then life is full of experiences and probably it seems a very long life. So, these are things that I'm thinking when I'm returning to locations again and again. It's also stranger for me when I return to Iceland when I see the two boys with their families and I am a witness of their lives, even though they are not my family.

JP: You're probably very familiar with the word 'uncanny' and I wondered whether you ever thought that the lack of change could be an uncanny experience? I'll relate it to a specific image in *Under the Nordic Light*, a pair of



images that you made around Dyrafjörður Bay. You took two photographs of a coastal area, nine years apart, and they are both taken in glorious sunlight. And in the captions for these images you said “How am I to perceive a panorama when I know that the left half was photographed early in the morning in 2002 and the right half at the same time of day in 2011? Purely as a matter of outward appearances the two linked images could have been taken on the same day but as soon as I know, however, that there are nine years between, I begin to question my sense of time for the moment of observation” (Becker 2011: 155). And I guess the thing about the uncanny is the notion of repetition. Something that is uncanny is meant to be deeply familiar to us but at the same time there is something about it that is very unsettling.

OB: Yes, this is very strange. When I think about the differences in the diptych, where the left side was made in 2002 and the right side was made in 2011 and there was the same weather, and there was the same level of tide in the water, you come to doubt what you see and what you can recognise, so you question whether you can trust your sense of observation. But on the other hand I waited for the same weather conditions and I knew I could not expect vast change, so I was prepared that I would find something like that. But for me, the images are an important part of the book because I want to question whether we can trust our observation. I can say all my observations are made during my period of time and I would probably need more time than the time that is available to me. For me, the doubt in my own observation, and the doubt that a reader of my book will also feel, is necessary because we have a limitation to observe something completely. So we can only observe that what we are able to observe with our senses. And all the things that I look at are limited by the possibilities of my observation.

So, my framing is limited by my lifetime and I am curious about my experience of seeing how things change during my lifetime but during my lifetime a lot of people are also here on this Earth, so it is a story that belongs to me, and all the other people who are around me, and who are interested in what is happening, such as climate change, and deforestation, and so on. I am documenting something about our time, about my limited time here on Earth. I am fascinated to come to know what is happening around me, and in Iceland, over a period of twenty or thirty years. I don't know how long I will be allowed to continue with this work because the work will finish with my death. But during this period I can represent something through the observation of one lifetime, and this also shows a limitation of what we can be aware of.

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With grateful thanks to Olaf Becker for his generosity and for permission to reproduce his photographs.

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