

Tanja Birkner **Halbe Stunde**

Portraits from the borderline of society

This volume is about people who live on the edge of society: young prostitutes from Romania or Bulgaria who want to escape the poverty of their homelands; homosexuals who work as escorts; a self-confident dominatrix. Prostitution is a reality, yet clichés and myths make it difficult to have an unprejudiced view of people who prostitute themselves. The photographer Tanja Birkner has succeeded in portraying these women and men without exposing them to voyeurism. In respectful portraits she shows people working in hotels, at the bar, or on the street. Many conversations took place in private atmospheres, in cafes, while walking, or in the subjects' own apartments. Those portrayed here are also given voice, unfiltered and unadorned. The images and original words combine to provide a balanced view behind the façades of social exclusion and exploitation.

Tanja Birkner, born in 1971, lives and works in Hamburg. She has made a name for herself with themes critical of society, including her portrait series *Mit und ohne Kopftuch* (With and without a Headscarf).

Starting in fall 2015 a traveling exhibition is planned, with venues in Lübeck, Berlin, Hamburg, and Kiel.

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