

Dyba & Lach - HOW TO REJUVENATE AN EAGLE



"Within the top layer, intricately woven for strangers, the roles were allocated, lines were delivered at the correct times, the mechanical movements and places all performed their roles without a hitch, as if everyone was taking part in a school play for the Pope's visit. Stolen glances, trembling hands, twitches of the masks. To grasp this truth, which peers and then trickles in a narrow dribble from the very centre of the pupil and lasts for a split second. To connect to the inside and feel possessed by the capsheaf dance."

16,000 kilometres, over 70 interviews, three and a half years traveling through Poland - Poland of tribes, an imposing patchwork of history, cultures and myths, fascinating and lost, trapped in time.

"How to Rejuvenate an Eagle" resulted from three and a half years of work and over seventy interviews of photographer Adam Lach and the author Dyba Lach with Poles and Polish citizens.

"We wanted to find out what people's lives really look like, what they believe in, what unites them. In 2017, as a writer-photographer reporting team, we set out to explore and understand our country, its complexity and ambiguity. We traveled 16 000 km in three years. In our journey we were looking for an answer to a question of what shapes Polish identity today. We faced Polish stereotypes rooted in the culture and everyday life. We talked to people, asked about what being a Pole means to them, what is the meaning of community, belonging and strangeness. We have observed that reality is much more complex than TV stories, Facebook feeds and common beliefs."

Adam Lach

"We have also been trying to understand the concept of border, searching for the meaning of the term and trying to find out if it even truly matters in the joined-up world of today, in a member country of the European Union. Because of Polish history, we are very familiar with this term. Borders were changed throughout the ages, the most acute changes appeared in 19th and 20th centuries, because of international agreements, wars, partitions. Today, to the borders we have already known, a new one, tangible, has been added - 1.5 meter sanitary rigor. It appeared just when our journey was coming to an end. Over the three years of our work we found out that borders are quite easy to determine, but very hard to get rid of. They last for many years, remain even after such tragic events as II World War, Holocaust, resettlement, Communism.. We realised Poland is a patchwork of societies, religions, nationalities, views, a collection of tribes. For hundreds of years, Poland was an open, diverse,

multi-faith country, a mixture of cultures. This has not changed. It is something we need to be reminded of. Yet it seems quite difficult with the society trapped in time.”

Dyba Lach

Book launch (Polish version) will be held on 30th of June 2020 in Warsaw, then on 3th of July in Krakow as a part of Krakow Photomonth 2020. English version available in the middle of July 2020.

This work was already seen and appreciated i.a. on prestigious competition Grand Press Photo 2020.



Adam Lach is a documentarist and visual artist. He has done assignments for the *New York Times*, *Le Monde*, the *Guardian*, *GEO*, and *Newsweek*. He has won Pictures of the Year International, International Photography Awards, and Grand Press Photo competitions. He is the author of two photobooks: *Stigma*, which earned 1st Place distinction from the IPA, and *Neverland*, which is included in the Tate's Martin Parr photobook collection. His photograph *Freedom* was chosen as the winner of Press Club Polska's 'Icon of 30 Years: Freedom and Solidarity' competition. His works have been exhibited at La Quatrième Image festival in Paris, the Prague Biennale, and Harvard University.

Dyba Lach is a documentarist, producer, and author. She is a graduate of the Film School in Łódź, and, in press photography, the Institute of Journalism at the University of Warsaw. She is co-author of the photobook *Stigma*, which won an IPA award and was selected as a 2014 publication of the year at the Stefan Batory Foundation's Beata Pawlak competition. In 2015, she was a finalist at the second edition of the DEBUTS competition for young photographers. She directs and coordinates artistic events, performances, concerts, cultural projects, and short documentaries.

Book info:

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PREVIEW VIDEO: <https://youtu.be/7Et7Sznma5E>



"Over the past three-and-a-half years, Adam and Dyba Lach have passed through Poland A, Poland B, and Polands of every other letter. Their work itinerary recalls the heyday of reportage, when editorial offices sent reporters to regions around the country simply to check in with how things were on the ground. A reporter wasn't given unlimited time, but still had ample opportunity to properly cover an area, and even to grow bored with it.

Back then, the country was closed but the people: open. Today, the world has accelerated. It seems smaller. Borders are, for the most part, crossable. And yet for some time now in Poland, everything has felt entrenched: the sides, views, and divisions, the myths and symbols. Diagnoses are readily available and easy to ingest. All you have to do is pick one out.

Adam and Dyba Lach, however, had their doubts, which formed the basis of the texts and photographs comprising the book *How to Rejuvenate an Eagle*.

You can show a lot through photographs, but not necessarily with concrete exactness. Much depends on the contexts we each bring. When considering photography, and Poland itself, one should heed the words sung by Maria Peszek in 'Polska A B C & D': 'Nothing is what it seems.'

Michał Łuczak / Sputnik Photos, photographer and curator

