



Ten years after **Joakim Eskildsen** completed his work on *The Roma Journeys* and after touring more than 30 venues, Gallery Taik Persons has the pleasure to present the project for the first time at its Berlin gallery.

Between 2000 and 2006 Joakim Eskildsen and writer Cia Rinne undertook journeys in seven different countries with a view to gaining an insight into the life of the Roma and the conditions they face. They visited Roma communities in Hungary, Greece, Romania, France, Russia, and Finland as well as possibly related groups in India, spending considerable lengths of time among the people whom they wanted to learn about and, where possible, they lived with them for a while, allowing them to build close connections to the families.

The project culminated in the award-winning book *The Roma Journeys*, to which Günter Grass contributed the foreword, comprising a series of almost 250 photographs by Eskildsen accompanied by Rinne's essays introducing the visited Roma as well as a sound collage from each journey. It gives a rare insight to the life, history, and situation of the largest European minority.

In his photographic body of work, Eskildsen does not depict the Roma from a voyeuristic point of view but rather from the inside, allowing the viewer to be a close observer of their intimate moments and everyday lives. *"We have been frequently asked what had triggered our interest in the Roma, but we were unable to provide a definitive, let alone exhaustive answer. What is certain is that, once we had started, it seemed impossible not to continue with the project. The more we found out about the Roma and got to know them, the more our interest in and liking for them grew,"* Rinne and Eskildsen state.

The exhibition at Gallery Taik Persons presents the project in a different way from the touring exhibition: It gives an intimate insight not only into the photographs and the Roma communities but also in the way the book came about. Besides a number of early drafts of the book, showing the traces of several journeys, the exhibition features sets of nine photographs from each Roma community accompanied by two separate wall installations, one of which depicts the most emblematic work from the series in an impressive large-scale reproduction.

Throughout their history, the Roma have been subjected to persecution, expulsion, slavery, prohibitions on the use of the Romany language and other creative attempts to assimilate, misuse or extinguish their peoples. In Europe, attitudes towards them remain at least suspicious, and many still face direct discrimination. *The Roma Journeys* is not only a project of political force but also a greatly poetic and intimate insight into a rarely seen world.

Joakim Eskildsen was born in 1971 in Copenhagen, Denmark. He lives and works in Berlin. He obtained his Master degree in Photography from Aalto University School of Arts, Design and Architecture in 1998. His publications include the books *Nordic Signs* (1995), *Bluetide* (1997), *iChickenMoon* (1999), *The Roma Journeys* (Steidl 2007/2009), and just recently *American Realities* (Steidl 2016). His works have been exhibited in numerous international venues and festivals including solo exhibitions at The National Museum of Photography (Copenhagen, 2015/16), FO.K.U.S-Foto Kunst Stadtforum (Innsbruck, 2016), Strandverket (Marstrand, 2016), and Fotomuseum Winterthur (Winthertur, 2009), as well as group exhibitions at The National Museum of Iceland (Reykjavík, 2016), Scandinavia House (New York, 2013 & 2014), Kiasma (Helsinki, 2013), and Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg (2009).