NILS FRAHM

SHEETS

ZWEI

37 *p*

decresc.

8vb

41 ***mp*** *cresc.* *f*

(8)

45 ***sub. mp***

(8)

49 *cresc.*

(8)

53 ***mf*** *cresc.*

(8)

57 *decresc.*

(8)

61 ***p***

(8)

65 *cresc.*

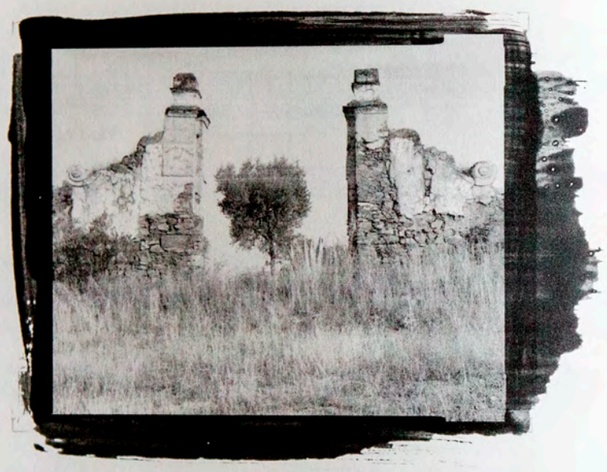
(8)

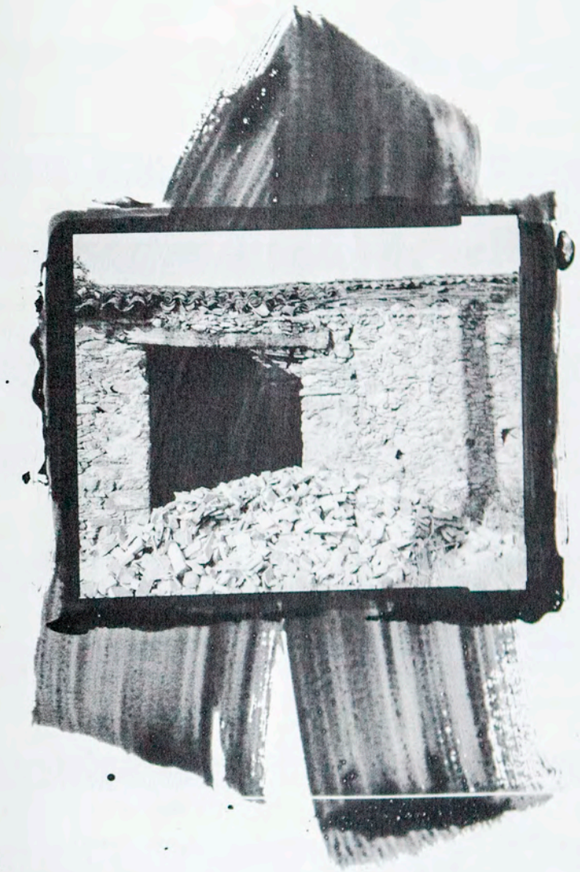
69 ***fp***

(8)

73 *cresc.*

(8)







Dear Nils,

I cannot read sheet music, though playing the piano is a daily routine for me. Once I had the idea to be able to bring the written notes into my fingers onto the keys. I set my 50th birthday as a deadline, but I didn't make it, not even attempted it seriously. So I am still improvising on the piano, learning by listening.

Music is a language everyone can understand and with open eyes everybody can understand abstract art - both enter your mind in a direct way. A combination of images and music can be very powerful, even if they tell different stories. The terms to describe music or art are often lent from another medium. My medium is photography and has accompanied our lives since you were born. You too became a photo-enthusiast as a kid, accompanying me when I was photographing for my clients ... things we learned from each other over the years.

This photographic series emerged slowly like an improvisation, finding a free form in the end. It was on a holiday in Portugal when you were about five years old - we had a house in the countryside and it was very hot. I wanted to take photos but there was little that caught my attention. Then I began to take photos of barns, abandoned buildings and other artifacts of rural life. I started every morning with the rising sun and returned with fresh bread for breakfast. I was covering unknown territory, not knowing what I would find on my way. I exposed just two sheets of film for every spot, one for the whole thing and another one for a detail of it. This was my conceptual bracket, which also limited the possibilities of how the photos could eventually be transferred to paper.

After returning home, the negatives were developed but remained untouched for more than two years, until I had an idea of how to print them. The combination of detail and overview wouldn't work for framed pieces, so I thought about making a book. I had experimented with liquid light-sensitive emulsion before, a process which seemed very much in line with the theme. The roughness of the emulsion and the watercolor-paper would transport the rough and simple structures I had photographed. Applying the warm white emulsion with a brush onto the prepared paper at dim yellow safety-light created something unpredictable which usually is not associated with the photographic process. It inspired me to continue experimenting, leaving some spots of the image-area untouched and recycling the tests for the binding. After transferring the emulsion to paper it had to dry in darkness to then wait for another hand of emulsion and drying before it could be used for the classic printing-process. It happened that other family members and I forgot that paper was drying in the dark. Opening the door meant all paper was exposed to light - a disaster. I had to start again - three times. However, I somehow finished five books. They all contain the same images though they are slightly different and individual in execution. And even mistakes like the exposed paper turned into something. A year later I developed them all. No content, just black silver emulsion on paper. I called this book-project Fragment. I am happy to find some of these images now inside your second edition of 'Sheets', offering some thoughts about structure and improvisation, music and art in general.

Your father, Klaus