

GRAINES

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PAUL STAROSTA

TEXT BY MICHEL BUTOR

WITH A CONTRIBUTION BY ELKE ZIPPEL, THOMAS DÜRBYE E AGNES KIRCHHOFF

Graines is an almost intimate journey into the astonishing beauty of nature.

Paul Starosta is a renowned French photographer who explores and unveils nature's artistic side and for this very reason shies away from the definition "nature photographer". Through this book's 200 superb photographs, he leads us in a voyage of discovery into the complex, beautiful world of even the smallest seeds. In order to achieve his aim, he has drawn on the collection of Jean Laty and that of the La Voie des Fleurs association in Draveil, in France.

The shapes and colours that appear in front of us are innumerable, the details infinite. Some seeds look like flowers, others could be stones or sculptures, while still others might be jewels created by some imaginative goldsmith. The light and shade in the pictures put the accent on the artistic, almost magical aspect of their subject, these small masterpieces enclosing the secret of life itself. Biodiversity is concentrated right here, in something at once tiny and infinitely large.

And if each of these wonders reminds us of something else, it is hardly surprising that they should also suggest outlines and features typical of the world of art and architecture. Because man is nature and has always looked to it for inspiration, albeit sometimes indirectly-when not actively denying it -in making his curious, daring creations.

Nature will never seem the same again after leafing through this book.

Paul Starosta is a biologist as well as a master photographer. Combining his two overriding passions-nature and photography-he has published more than 40 books on plants and animals, winning several awards. He features at no. 129 in the 2010 Photo Poche worldwide reference collection, which was created by Robert Delpire and is published by Actes Sud.

Michel Butor, a French novelist and essayist, is one of the leading exponents of the "nouveau roman", avant-garde French writing that emerged in the 1950s. He studied philosophy at the Sorbonne, graduating in 1947, and has taught in Egypt, Manchester, Salonika, the United States and Geneva. He has won many literary awards for his work, including the Prix Apollo, the Prix Fénéon and the Prix Renaudot.

Elke Zippel studied at the Freie Universität Berlin Biology with emphasis on systematic botany and zoology, geobotany and ecology. She completed her doctorate in mosses of the Canary laurel forests. Since 2009 she works mainly for national and international projects in the Dahlem Seed Bank at the Botanic Garden and Botanical Museum Berlin Dahlem.

Thomas Dürbye is an employee of the Botanic Garden and Botanical Museum Berlin Dahlem since 1989. He is the manager of the Dahlem Seed Bank for wild plants that he has built up with since 1994. He participated in numerous botanical collecting trips and excursions in



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Agnes Kirchoff is a biologist with a focus on botany. After her studies she worked in the field of environmental planning for various consultants. Since 1998 she has been working in the Botanic Garden and Botanical Museum Berlin Dahlem for national and international research projects.