"The word is so complex that it borders, in its very composition of letters, on the miraculous. The mind can hurl it outward like a volcanic eruption or reduce it to ash, to its own advantage."

Anne Blum, poussière de mots/maux

WORD DUST—ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Word dust hovers over the cover of this book—and so, too, does it find its way into the acknowledgments. Anne Blum, a restorer and artist based in Romainmôtier, generously contributed custom templates for the book cover and frontispiece, developed from her exhibition *poussière de mots/maux*, presented three months ago at Château de La Sarraz. These images were transformed photographically using solarization. Describing her project—where she works with traditional wooden type (see illustration)—she observes: "The word is so complex that it borders, in its very composition of letters, on the miraculous. The mind can hurl it outward like a volcanic eruption or reduce it to ash, to its own advantage. The mind can destroy or save. We are so fragile that survival without words is impossible, which is why we invented language—many languages. Their richness of sound and tone is so vast that no one understands their neighbor."

Before turning to a retrospective glance at my own scholarly work, I would first like to extend special thanks to Bettina Gockel, editor of the *Art & Photography* series, for once again making this research platform available to others in the field of art history.

I have now been publishing the results of my foundational research in the history of art and photography for exactly forty years—albeit primarily as monographs—in both extensive and more modest studies, and across varying spans of time. This work has focused on figures including Niklaus Manuel Deutsch, Vincent van Gogh, Paul Klee, Pablo Picasso, and some two dozen other artists of modern and contemporary art, along with Paul Strand, Régine Heim, Markus Lüpertz, and Candida Höfer. With this second volume of *Photographic Thought Pieces*, I continue a long-term collaboration with Sabina and Kenneth Korfmann-Bodenmann, who have been creating conceptually rigorous and intellectually engaging photographic portfolios since 2019, each consisting of twenty-four original photographs, under the rubric of *Through Different Lenses*.

The two photographers operate on their own terms, both artistically and economically, outside the conventional art world. They do not participate in exhibitions. They do not accept commissions. And they have, to date, successfully stayed beyond the reach of art criticism. Yet the couple has a clear interest

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in scholarly documentation and analysis of their work. Their deep and trusting support of this publication project—in every respect—deserves special thanks.

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Wolfgang F. Kersten
Zurich, September 2025

Translated by Michael Thomas Taylor