

P R E S S R E L E A S E

Sebastião Salgado: Gold

Opening: **Thursday, 6 February 2020, 6 – 9 pm**
 The photographer will be present

Duration: **7 February – 30 May 2020**

Location: **Galerie Bene Taschen, Moltkestrasse 81, 50674 Cologne**



SEBASTIÃO SALGADO, Gold Mine of Serra Pelada. Pará, Brazil, 1986 (left) // SEBASTIÃO SALGADO, Gold Mine of Serra Pelada. Pará, Brazil, 1986 (right)
Silver gelatin print, 120 x 180 cm + 40 x 50 cm
both images: © Sebastião Salgado + Courtesy Galerie Bene Taschen

"The giant gold mine, Serra Pelada, was right before me. When I reached the edge of that enormous hole, my hair stood on end. I had never experienced such a situation. In a split second I saw unfolding before me the history of mankind. The building of the pyramids, the Tower of Babel, the mines of King Solomon. Not a single machine could be heard. All you could hear was the murmur of 50,000 people in a big hole..." (Sebastião Salgado)

For the first time in Germany, **Galerie Bene Taschen** presents a solo exhibition curated from **Sebastião Salgado's** haunting and unforgettable cycle "Gold" (1986). A show full of archaic power and density, full of cruel poetry and brutal reality.

The photographs Salgado took in and in the face of this situation reveals it all in tense compression at the abyss: greed, death, betrayal, work, and despair. A gathering of values and words that not only reflect Western society, but are also exemplary for the particular conditions in Brazil, especially with regard to the exploitation of nature and the working class.

The workers of the Serra Pelada gold mine would otherwise be forgotten, but they survive in Salgado's pictures. As in his other well-known series such as *Exodus* and *Genesis*, in this work cycle Salgado has committed to invoking memories, capturing commemoration, and counteracting forgetting.

"He paints with light," Wim Wenders once said, and like a classical history painter he tries to do justice to everything to a high degree. While everyone can understand these images, they leave us suspecting that there is always more at stake. In this literal mise en abyme, death and beauty often lie so close to each other that it can be frightening.

The images owe their depth to Salgado's skill in leaving things in their place and preserving their dignity. Viewers are drawn in to the gold rush and greed of the workers. There are no heroic stories in a fairytale landscape here; Salgado goes straight to the core, confronting us with profound questions of humanity.

Through his serial work, Salgado, the journalist and economist, provides insight into his creative process. With every new image, he traces the phenomenon of Serra Pelada, going ever closer with the camera to uncover the workers' conflicts. And yet, despite Salgado's mastery of photography, we should not forget that these are very real people and their personal narratives. Salgado has shared some of these stories in interviews, in the film about him by Wim Wenders, and in his own autobiography.

The exhibition "Gold" was on view from 13 September – 17 November 2019 at Fotografiska photography museum in Stockholm. Parallel to this, the book "GOLD" was published by TASCHEN.

About Gallery Bene Taschen: Founded in Cologne in 2011, Gallery Bene Taschen represents some of the world's leading artists in contemporary photography and painting. The gallery promotes its international artists through regular participation in major art fairs, such as Paris Photo and Art Cologne, as well as its extensive exhibition program. In 2011, Galerie Bene Taschen made its debut with LA photographer *Gregory Bojorquez*; a collaboration with *Joseph Rodriguez* from New York began in 2013. In 2014, the celebrated Berlin-based photographer *Miron Zownir* joined the gallery program. The American photographers *Jamel Shabazz* and *Arlene Gottfried* from New York joined the group in 2015. Since autumn 2017, the gallery has been pleased to represent the New York-based photographer *Jeff Mermelstein* and the German painter *Charlotte Trossbach*. Since autumn/winter 2019, the gallery has been working with the renowned photographers *Sebastião Salgado* and *Larry Fink*.

Contact for information on the gallery and the artworks:

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Hours: Wednesday – Friday, 1– 6 pm, Saturday, 11 am – 4 pm and by appointment

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