

BOOKS FOR SALE

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Kolkata, India
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68 Fotografien, c-prints,
80 x 60 cm / 130 x 100 cm

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Unfazed by predictions of the possible demise of the printed book in the digital age, printed works are abundant in Kolkata's university district and are produced daily by numerous local publishing houses. Around College Street, one can find every type of book: hundreds of bookstalls offer new and second-hand works, ranging from classical texts to religious literature and contemporary textbooks.

Kolkata is not only distinguished by its love of reading: the city is India's third-largest software exporter and plays a role in developments that drive global digitalisation, which is likely to affect the material role of the book over time.

Nonetheless, respect for the printed book remains strong. In a population that has experienced historical material deprivation, the printed book holds a particular value. This respect is especially evident in the often improvised street stalls – structures made of books that seem to give every work its place.

My photographic work focuses on these bookstalls. For the photographs, a short section of the street was temporarily closed to capture the stalls without people. The work was executed using large-format photography to best reveal the structures and details of the individual books and stalls. The empty-street images are contrasted with scenes of the busy everyday life around College Street, a place in Kolkata whose grandeur is expressed through the appreciation of books as cultural treasures, even in the smallest, simply composed stalls.