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**PRESS RELEASE**

*“In the howling tempest of noise and drunkenness”:*

**Rainer Viertböck – Oktoberfest**

The festival of superlatives in extraordinary photographs

**Rainer Viertböck  
Oktoberfest**

*Photographs*

Ed. by Nicola Borgmann  
With texts by Thomas Wolfe  
and Nicola Borgmann  
166 pages, 153 color plates  
ISBN 978-3-8296-0765-0  
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*“All of the buildings and  
amusement devices  
of the fair were now  
blazing with a million lights;  
from the vast irradiant  
murk of the night  
there rose and fell in  
wavelike nodes the huge  
fused roar and humble  
of the crowd.”*  
Thomas Wolfe

At first glance, the Munich Oktoberfest means: lederhosen, brass bands and drinking. At second glance the largest public festival in the world, held for the first time in 1810 to mark the occasion of the wedding of the later King Ludwig I and Therese of Saxe-Hildburghausen, is a logistical masterpiece and a phenomenon that is unparalleled worldwide, although it is often copied. Brimming with superlatives in scope and magnitude, be it in terms of beer consumption, visitor numbers or sales of souvenirs and fan merchandise, this major annual event is a challenge for any photographer.

Right in time for this year’s festival, Schirmer/Mosel Verlag presents the opulent illustrated volume *Rainer Viertböck – Oktoberfest*. The multi-award-winning photographer Rainer Viertböck (born in 1958) has documented the last two Oktoberfests daily (!) from spectacular perspectives and considering unusual aspects in extraordinary color photographs. It is a world of its own that reveals itself in a blend of nostalgia and celebration: old and new fairground attractions that promise scary and airy excitement, an astoundingly peaceful tumult of masses on the wide Wirtsbudenstrasse and of course the famous brewery tents as big as halls, which Rainer Viertböck photographed “before” and “after”, meaning, empty and full to bursting. Naturally, the book would not be complete without shots of the familiar drunken heaps on the lawn in front of the Bavaria statue, blithely sleeping off their intoxication. One of the highlights of the book however is a previously unseen panorama shot of the Oktoberfest site at dusk, revealing a view of the incredible dimensions of the colorful goings-on on the Theresienwiese.

With no fear of mingling with the masses, Rainer Viertböck has gone to great technical lengths to produce a successful combination of photographic observations of the architecture of the fairground rides and snapshots of the colorful chaos of the festival; the result is truly an highly aesthetic portrait of Munich’s renowned Oktoberfest. His images are accompanied by texts by editor Nicola Borgmann and an essay by US author Thomas Wolfe (1900–1938), who wrote the successful novel *Look Homeward, Angel!* Thomas Wolfe (the subject of the Hollywood biopic *Genius*, with Jude Law in the starring role, currently showing in movie theaters) first visited the Oktoberfest in 1927. Wolfe’s impressions of the initial out-of-place feeling he experienced, then his amazement and finally contagious fascination are as topical today as they were 90 years ago. The first-class photographic publication *Rainer Viertböck – Oktoberfest* is impressive evidence of this. A book for anyone who regularly attends the Oktoberfest and for those who are soon to do so for the first time.

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