Anja Manfredi
The South Tyrolean Housing Estate
or The Memory of the Houses, the Plants and the Birds

German/English, 160 pages, 9.5 × 14.5 cm, numerous illustrations in color and b/w, softcover
Texts by Maren Lübbke-Tidow, Anja Manfredi and Hannes Obermaier and photographs by Anja Manfredi
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The South Tyrolean option—what was that? In 1939/40, the German- and Ladin-speaking inhabitants of South Tyrol were forced to make a decision: stay in South Tyrol or move to the Greater German Reich. Meanwhile, in Tyrol and elsewhere, residential buildings were erected virtually overnight to accommodate the emigrants.

Anja Manfredi’s grandparents were such so-called Optanten, who came from South Tyrol in 1940. They found a new home in Lienz. Language always played an important role: Which language was one allowed to speak in public, which did one even want to learn?

In this artist’s book, Anja Manfredi shows photographs of her grandparental “South Tyrolean housing estate” in East Tyrol. They tell stories about a time when one did not show one’s heritage publicly everywhere, and freedom was not a given. Which parts of these stories can still be gleaned from these buildings, and which parts have been overwritten by new ones?