

this book is dedicated to  
l. fritz gruber and  
his wife rene

I would like to dedicate this book to my mentor, the man who "discovered" me: L. Fritz Gruber.

He first noticed my work in 1954 when I organized a photo exhibition in Esslingen's Old Town Hall. I had produced the prints at home in my bathroom. Being very young at the time, I did not appreciate what an honor it was that the great Gruber from Cologne found interesting what the 18-year-old Blum had produced in his darkroom at home. I did not realize Gruber was one of the great personalities of the German cultural scene, whose influence on German and international photography could not be rated highly enough. Amongst other things he initiated the *photokina-Bilderschauen* exhibition in Cologne, comparable with the Kassel *documenta* art fair inaugurated by Arnold Bode. Leo Fritz Gruber had an eye for young photographers, whom he often supported most generously. I am still grateful today that his critical eye should have fallen on me so early, and that his fondness for me led to a lifelong friendship.

He proposed me for the German Society of Photography, and in 1972 he exhibited my photos of Africa at the *photokina* under the title *Das Abenteuer* (Adventure), later taking some of them to the photography collection in the Museum Ludwig. And he gave the laudatory speech when my exhibition *Eros and Dance* opened in 1998 in the SK Stiftung Kultur Deutsches Tanzarchiv Köln.

L. Fritz Gruber died in 2005 at the age of 97.

I owe a great deal to this cosmopolitan and grand old man of German photography. Today his wife Renate continues the legacy of his work. This book is intended as an expression of my gratitude.