

## PRESS RELEASE

## Bertelsmann Brings Unique ‘Last Folio’ Exhibition to Germany

- **Extraordinary art photographs show remnants of Jewish life in Slovakia**
- **Images convey historic yet topical message for the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of World War II**

Berlin, March 4, 2015 – The media company Bertelsmann is bringing the international touring exhibition “Last Folio – Textures of Jewish Life in Slovakia” to Germany for the first time. From April, 33 photographs by the renowned photographer Yuri Dojc will be on display in the Berlin State Library (Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin). Dojc repeatedly traveled to Slovakia – first alone and then from 2005 together with the filmmaker Katya Krausova – to speak with Holocaust survivors and document evidence of ancient Jewish culture in the country. Unique in their authenticity, aesthetics and intensity, the images show abandoned Jewish buildings left virtually untouched for decades, as well as abandoned books and documents. They give an idea of the destroyed Jewish world in Slovakia and send a reminder, 70 years after the end of World War II, to draw lessons from what happened, and to keep the memories alive.

The “Last Folio” exhibition has already traveled to several countries – including the U.S. and U.K., Slovakia and Italy – as well as the European Commission in Brussels and most recently the UN in New York. Now Bertelsmann is presenting the extraordinary photographs in Germany in close partnership with the Berlin State Library: After the opening ceremony on April 23, the exhibition will be on public display free of charge in the foyer of the State Library Cultural Forum from April 24 to June 27, 2015. The art book publisher Prestel, part of Verlagsgruppe Random House, is publishing a 128-page companion book (in German and English) that tells of Yuri Dojc and Katya Krausova’s quest in essays and 60 color illustrations.

Bertelsmann Chairman & CEO Thomas Rabe said: “It is our honor as well as our wish to bring this highly acclaimed exhibition to Germany. In times of new conflict in Europe and of growing religious intolerance, the images have an up-to-the-minute message.” Dojc’s photos also show the power of books transcending generations and epochs. “Especially the motifs featuring books show the viewer what has been lost forever, but must not be forgotten,” said Rabe. “The artist conveys this without any moralizing undertone or great historical and political drama. In his photographs the decaying books represent the people who were forcibly torn from their lives and never came back.” The exhibition’s opening on April 23 is deliberately timed to coincide with World Book Day, Rabe added.

Yuri Dojc and Katya Krausova were born in the former Czechoslovakia and left their homeland in 1968 for political reasons. In 2005, they made the first of many trips together to Slovakia, where they met Holocaust survivors who told their stories - often after decades of silence. The artists recorded these meetings photographically and on film. And they found harrowing, deeply moving remnants of former Jewish life in eastern Slovakia, such as in an abandoned community school filled with dusty journals and books or in a dilapidated synagogues, frozen in time. Many things were still exactly as they were left in 1942 when the former inhabitants were deported. Most deportees from Slovakia were later killed in concentration and extermination camps such as Auschwitz.

Yuri Dojc now lives in Canada as an internationally recognized art photographer; his work is displayed in the collections of the National Gallery of Canada, the Library of Congress in Washington and the Slovak National Museum, among others. Katya Krausova went to London, where she co-founded the film and television production company Portobello Pictures, which won the Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film with "Kolya" in 1997. "Last Folio" has become a focus of both the artists' lives.

#### **Exhibition "Last Folio – Textures of Jewish Life in Slovakia"**

Opening ceremony: April 23, 2015, Duration: two months (April 24, to June 27, 2015)

Venue: Foyer of the Berlin State Library Cultural Forum, Potsdamer Strasse 33

Open: Monday to Friday 9:00 AM to 9:00 PM, Saturday 10:00 AM to 7:00 PM, free admission

#### **Last Folio - A photographic memory / Ein fotografisches Gedächtnis**

Yuri Dojc and Katya Krausova

Bilingual edition (English/German), 128 pages with 60 color illustrations

Clothbound hardcover with dust jacket, 29 x 31cm

€ 39.95 [D] / € 41.10 [A], CHF 53.90

ISBN: 978-3-7913-8145-9

To be published on April 20, 2015 by Prestel Verlag

**More information, video and pictures** can be found on our website at:

<http://www.bertelsmann.com/news-and-media/specials/last-folio/>

#### **About Bertelsmann**

Bertelsmann is an international media company whose core divisions encompass television (RTL Group), book publishing (Penguin Random House), magazine publishing (Gruner + Jahr), services (Arvato), and printing (Be Printers) in some 50 countries. In 2013, the company's businesses, with their more than 111,000 employees, generated revenues of €16.4 billion. Bertelsmann stands for a combination of creativity and entrepreneurship that empowers the creation of first-rate media, communications, and service offerings to inspire people around the world and to provide innovative solutions for customers.

For further questions, please contact:

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