



## Kitchen Stories from the Balkans

Eugenia Maximova

Self-published

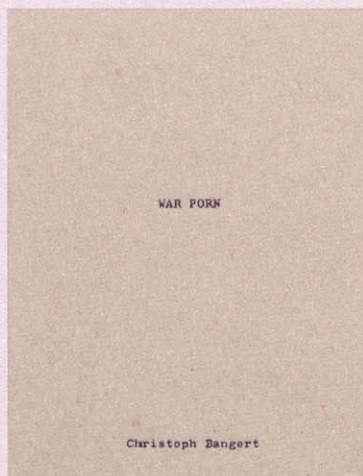
There is something very intimate in **Eugenia Maximova's** way of photographing kitchens. For this book she's photographed in private homes in the Balkans; Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Romania. The project was completed in 2012 and it offers an atmospheric and revealing portrait of the region.

Maximova shoots on film with a medium format camera. Each frame is shot carefully. The lighting is perfect, painterly even, and though her images bloom with nostalgia, she somehow manages to avoid the sugary or romantic. Maximova leaves the used spoon and the once bitten slice of salami on the table.

The book's design is minimal. With a cover inspired by the type of laminated wax tablecloth common in Eastern Europe — and an inlay that obeys the same straightforward aesthetic — there is nothing fancy here and it works beautifully. As a cherry on top, Maximova has included some tasty recipes from the region. In this book, every little detail has its place.

Maximova self-published the book after running a crowd funding campaign. The book came out in May 2014.

Hannamari Shakya



## War Porn

Christoph Bangert

Kehrer Verlag

**Christoph Bangert's** *War Porn* is not a book I will likely look at very often. There are no aesthetic masterpieces here. The sequencing betrays no heightened sense of narrative or pacing. But this German photojournalist's fourth book is not about his talents with a camera (which are pronounced): it's about how we look (or refuse to look) at photographs of atrocity. The result is a deeply powerful statement on censorship, consumption and shame.

We "weren't supposed to see these pictures," Bangert's preface begins. That's because the scenes they depict are too gruesome, too terrible to publish in a newspaper or magazine. Books are a different story though, and here we are presented with a mostly unbroken sequence of color photographs depicting bodies, dead and alive, tortured or riddled with abrasions, or burned and bandaged in hospital. Children, babies, men and women all ruined by war and disaster.

But far from a book about the events that caused these wounds (there are no guns or explosions on display here), *War Porn* is a meditation on our relationship to distant violence through images, our willingness to ignore those images, and, ultimately, the impotence of photography as an agent of change. That's not photography's fault, of course, and Bangert isn't exactly calling for action here—he's simply asking us to look at the facts. War and catastrophe (Bangert treats them interchangeably) have consequences: bodies are destroyed, humans are crushed and consumed. His book forces us to register this, and to confront the mechanisms of self censorship at play in a culture that conflates viewing with voyeurism and would silence those who look too closely.