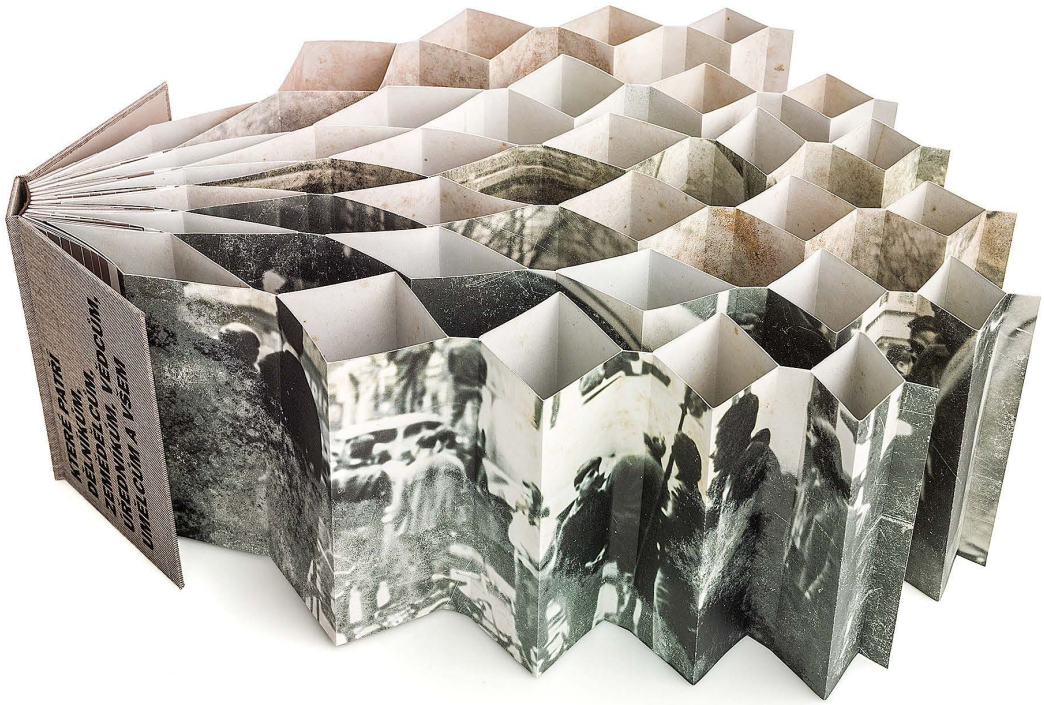


# TWO THOUSAND WORDS

## ROBERTO AGUIRREZABALA

*Two Thousand Words* (in Czech *Dva tisíce slov*) from 2021 is a photobook that analyzes the active resistance, but eminently peaceful, that was carried out in Czechoslovakia during the Prague Spring. Inside the pages of this book you can read the text of the original manifesto in Czech, *Two Thousand Words to Workers, Farmers, Officials, Scientists, Artists, and Everyone*, by the writer Ludvík Vaculík, published simultaneously in various newspapers on June 27, 1968. It is a reformist statement, within the open-minded atmosphere that Czechoslovakia experienced since the beginning of 1968, with the coming to power of Alexander Dubček who tried to create a socialism with a human face. But in the face of this spirit of change, Moscow reacted and acted firmly, sending Soviet troops to invade the country and restore order.

This photobook presents this scene as if it had been frozen in time. Between the pages of the book is almost hidden this Vaculík's manifesto. But twelve photographs from that time invade the reformist text. The images are taken at street level by an anonymous amateur in August 1968 during the invasion of Soviet tanks that were deployed through the streets of Prague. It can be seen how citizens fearlessly stand in front of the Russian army, observe them, talk to them, to the amazement of the soldiers who did not know the purpose of their mission before entering the city.

The originals of these images have suffered the passage of time and poor conservation. Most of them show large spots of moisture that impair their display. The pages of this book, which contain these photographs, have a folding technique that allows it to be extended up to five times its size, creating a sculptural piece that makes it possible to fully see the scenes of the occupation of Prague and the reverse of the snapshots. In this way, it can be observed how the degradation of the photographs increases until become abstract forms where the front and back of the images are confused and any figurative reference is lost. This progressive degradation alludes to the samizdat technique, by carbon copy, used in Czechoslovakia to reproduce banned books during the Soviet occupation. This procedure generated just a ten simultaneous copies while the text continued to retain usable readability.

This *Two Thousand Words* photobook is a work from the *Samizdat* series by Roberto Aguirrezabala that is within the *book-nobook* concept that the author is currently developing within his most recent production. This concept was coined by Milan Simecka in 1984 when he discovered how the literary works published clandestinely in samizdat were previously unknown objects, pieces of perforated sheets, typed and bound at home. This *nobooks* had the character of a vital being, that restores life, that saves Czech literature, an object that is closer to the human being, is made to measure with rudimentary techniques. Aguirrezabala adopts this idea, *nobook*, as a fundamental axis in the *Samizdat* series. These pieces want to be works that seek to deny the book, reach its limit, enter paths less traveled but more in line with the human mind, ultimately questioning everything.

### VIDEO

https://vimeo.com/535785854

### CREDITS

**Concept, edition and design:** Roberto Aguirrezabala
**Images:** Anonymous, Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968 during the Prague Spring
**Text:** The manifesto *Two Thousand Words to Workers, Farmers, Officials, Scientists, Artists, and Everyone* by the writer Ludvík Vaculík signed by intellectuals and artists and published on June 27, 1968
**Printing:** Laboratorio para el arte *by* Estudios Durero
**Hand folding and binding:** Roberto Aguirrezabala

### DESCRIPTION

**Number of copies:** 20 + 2 Artist's Proofs (numbered and signed)
**Measurements:** 12,3 x 18,8 x 4 cm (folded) and variable dimensions (unfolded)
**Paper:** Nautilus 160 g
**Cover:** Linocolor screen-printed fabric
**Binding:** Sewn with brown linen thread
**Book box:** Protective cover in high quality compact cardboard covered with Linocolor fabric
**Publication date:** March 2021
**Price:** € 325.00 (VAT included)

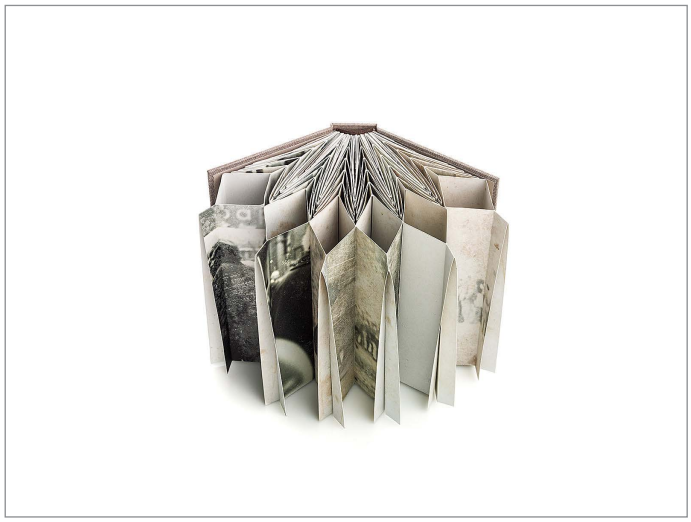
### ONLINE SHOP

https://shop.robertoaguirrezabala.com

### AWARDS

Shortlisted at **Les Rencontres de la Photographie D'Arles 2021**, in the Author Book Award category.



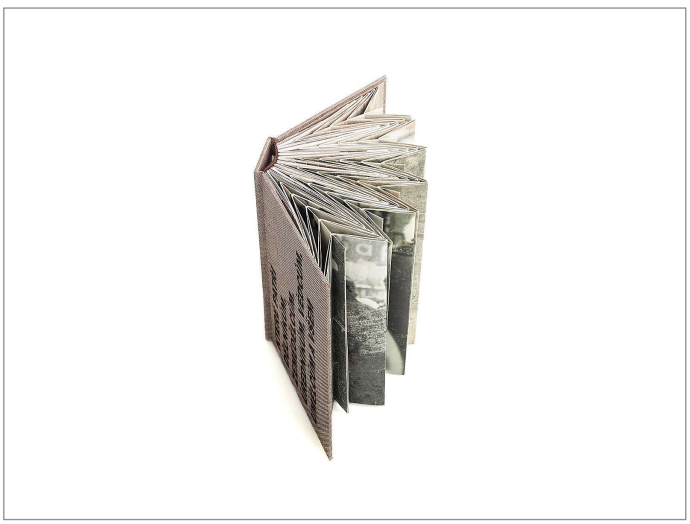












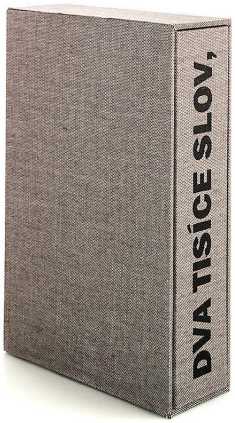

DVA TISÍCE SLOV,
KTERÉ PATŘÍ
DĚLNÍKŮM,
ZEMĚDĚLCŮM,
ÚŘEDNÍKŮM, VĚDCŮM,
UMĚLCŮM A VŠEM



## BIOGRAPHY OF ROBERTO AGUIRRREZABALA

Roberto Aguirrezabala holds a Bachelor's Degree in Fine Arts from the University of the Basque Country. In the course of his artistic career he has won several awards: Grants for artistic research, creation and production in the field of visual arts from the Ministry of Culture, Spain 2021; Grant for Creation by VEGAP 2020; Finalist in the X y IX Pilar Citoler International Biennial Award for Contemporary Photography 2019 and 2017; Montehermoso Award in the Viphoto Festival 2018; First prize V Premio Ankaria, Ankaria Foundation 2018; Finalist in the Best Photography Book of the Year Award, PHotoESPAÑA 2019; Acquisition Award at the XX Sala El Brocense Plastic Arts Prize 2017; Photographer of the Year in the International Photography Awards IPA 2017 Spanish edition; Special mention PHotoEspaña, Photography Award from the ENAIRE Foundation 2017; First Prize Best Work of net.art X Canariasmediafest, Festival Internacional de Vídeo y Multimedia de Canarias 2002; Award to the revelation artist in Festival de Vídeo de Navarra 1998, among others. His work has also been supported by numerous grants, including: Plastic Arts Basque Government Grant in the Publications modality 2019 and 2018; Call for BiAD projects - Bilbao Art District 2018; Bilbao Arte Foundation Grants 2015 and 2010; Plastic Arts Basque Government Grants 2016 and 2010; Generación 2001, Caja Madrid Grant; Diputación Foral de Bizkaia Grant 2005, Arteleku 1999; Mecad 1999.

He has held several solo exhibitions, including particularly: War Museum, Montehermoso Cultural Center, Vitoria, 2019; Entropy, Bilbao Arte Foundation, 2016; Roberto Aguirrezabala, net.art 1998-2008, Centro Huarte de Arte Contemporáneo, curated by Roberta Bosco and Stefano Caldana, 2008. His work has been seen in numerous group exhibitions such as: X Pilar Citoler International Biennial Award for Contemporary Photography 2020, Cordova, Spain; Art//edina 2018; XVIII Concurso Encuentros de Arte Contemporáneo 2018, Alicante; Bilbao Art District 2018; IX Pilar Citoler International Biennial Award for Contemporary Photography 2018, Cordova, Spain; Obra Abierta 2017, Plasencia, Extremadura; Infinito Interior, Enaire Foundation Photography Award, Instituto Cervantes, Madrid; 12º Canarias Media Fest 2006, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria; ARCO 2000 and 2002, Madrid; The discreet charm of technology. Arts in Spain, 2008, curated by Claudia Giannetti, MEIAC de Badajoz, ZKM in Germany, Instituto Tomie Ohtake in São Paulo, Brasil; net.art in the Spanish Pavilion of the Universal Exposition Hannover 2000; 12º Rencontres Internationales 2007, Paris, Berlin, Madrid; Sintopía(s) de la relación entre arte, ciencia y tecnología, 2007, Cervantes Institute of Beijing and Nueva York.




*Two Thousand Words* photobook.

### CONTACT

roberto@robertoaguirrezabala.com
http://www.robertoaguirrezabala.com