

# Christmas Trees

A SoFoBoMo 2014 Book By Markus Spring



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For My Family who celebrated Christmas in a relaxing mood with me

## *About this book*

The Christmas of my childhood is invariably connected with snow, the scent of cookies and a fir tree in the livingroom, but not so much with the omnipresence of Christmas trees in the public space.

Now Christmas trees are everywhere, in the shops and in the street, but unlike the acoustical nuisance of (bad) Christmas carols, for me they still bear a bit of the spirit, in spite of them being only a recent addition to christian tradition: non-documentary evidence in Germany dates back to only 1419, but roughly 100 years later, a forest official already got paid to prevent the theft of trees for decorative purposes.

This Christmas spirit however gets stressed quite a bit by overusage. The pedestrian zone of my hometown Bad Reichenhall, through which this book invites you to stroll with the author, is filled to the brim with Christmas trees. When writing the image comments, I went through that overload for a second time after taking the pictures.

To make the latter more of a challenge, I restricted my self in terms of technique in a massive way: Only one prime lens (50mm equivalent), only black-and-white-images, only square aspect ratio and only night images. But I think this was worth it, the restriction helping for a much better coherence of the images, and the omission of colors ruling out those pesky yellowish/greenish color casts that make night photography sometimes extremely difficult.

*Christmas Trees*

Entering the pedestrian zone at any place, it is impossible not to see any christmas tree.



The German obsession with 'forbidden' signs - comparably only with the American affinity to their 'no trespassing' counterparts - breaks its way near Christmas decoration, too.



Even seen unsharp, Christmas trees uncover themselves by their shape.



In the Spa garden.



Spa guests need to be pampered, at the hairdresser's, for example. And they do know it's Christmas, too.



The railway station.



Seeing the Münster St. Zeno from afar.



No bratwurst frier without an illuminated Christmas tree.



Every spa has rehab facilities. Of course they want to make their guests feel christmassy. It's hard enough if you can't be at home for this season.



Even sitting in an adequately decorated restaurant does not necessarily guarantee non-solitude.



The ice cream parlour is closed for the winter, there's enough ice outside.



Tea, hot mulled wine and the like all sell better under the tree, in a golden environment.



For parts of the working class, Christmas just means even more duty at unpopular times.



This is not the perfect season for sitting outside. Some smokers still do. Have to.



Even if most of the endemic population speaks more Bavarian than English, whoever wants to shine does.



Places are empty at night. Remember, this is a Spa, so the age average is above average.



Christmas tree outside, Christmas tree inside, this is what  
makes the cash register sing.



If Santa doesn't swing enough, Christmas has to rock.



Classic hellenic beauty predates the christmas tree by probably two millenia.



House-high illuminated trees are rare.



The Christmas deer clearly is a neozoon here, still rare in the pedestrian zone, but not so much in the suburbs.



Double the trees is double the joy - or the presents. This is fact!



Christmas memories - sweet! But if you get only a stencil?



A real Christmas market has to sell the illusion that all Bavarians are hardcore mountain shepherds, chopping wood every day and waiting for the Christmas angel to announce the annual wonder.



The mayor's balcony at the town hall. Please note that this tree is 'only' an autochthonic fir tree, not the ubiquitous - and assumedly more precious - Caucasian fir.



The old salt plant houses a chapel for the miners - and for symmetry reasons two Christmas trees.



In the salt plant's backyard, now a car park, this tree looks quite lonesome. Not much business here.



Florianiplatz is Bad Reichenhall's oldest quarter. Christmas tree and crèche hide the otherwise prominent St. Florian's fountain.



Only 50m away from Florianiplatz, this location is barely visible, but still decorated.



Despite its respectable size, this Christmas tree is dwarfed by the St. Nikolaus church walls.



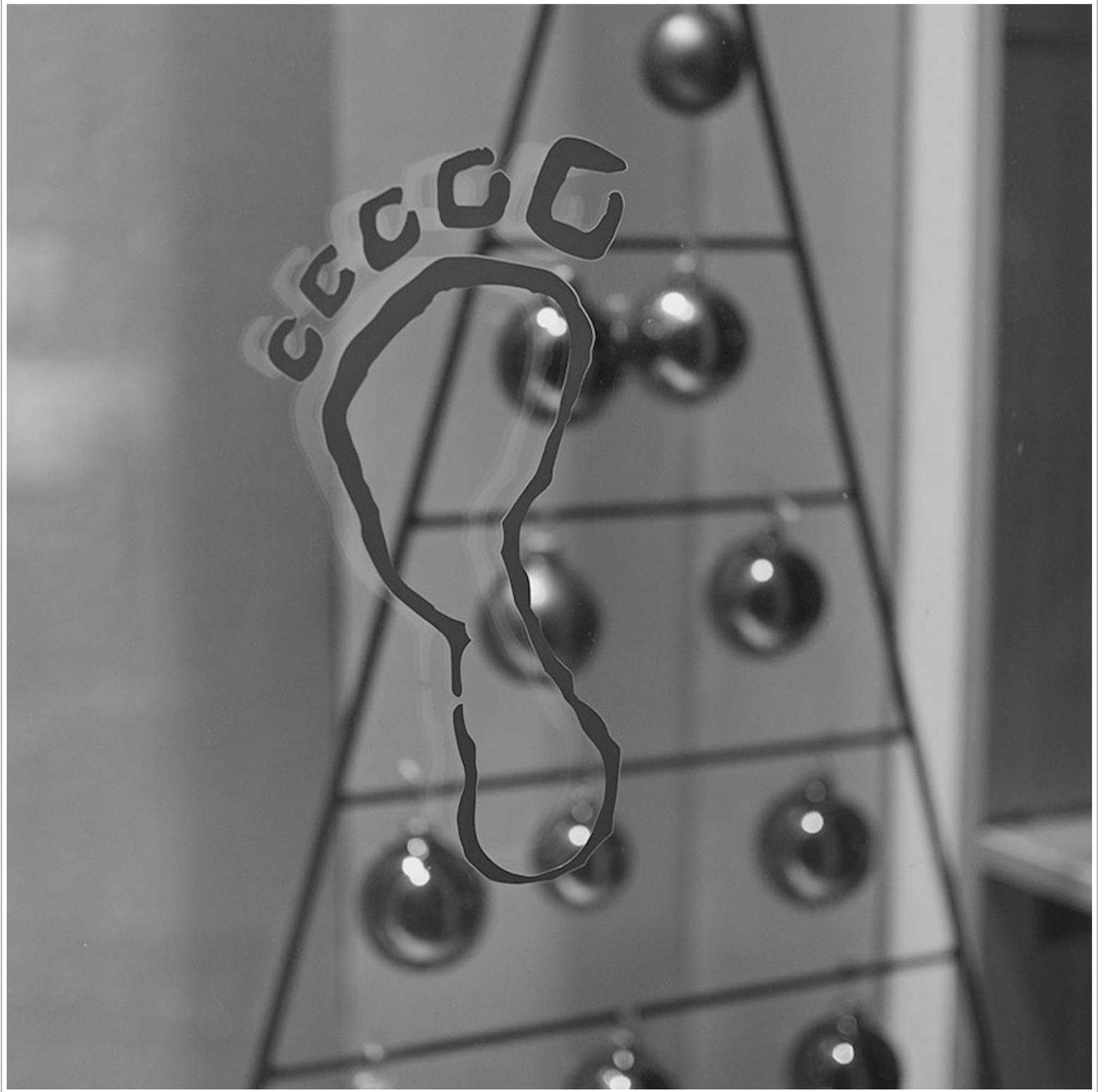
Coolness is a question of (fake) candles during this season.



Small is beautiful. It still should help to sell traditional costumes in this shop.



This orthopedic shoemaker prefers the more terse approach.



Contributing to global warming with a plain-air propane heater? The Christmas tree will hopefully compensate.



A decorative mannequin outshines even a Christmas tree.



Fir trees in their natural winter habitat, juxtaposed to their decorated relative.



In the flower shop, the Christmas tree almost drowns in a sea of decorative items.



Again a domestic fir. There seems to be no discernible pattern regarding their distribution.



Later at night, the illumination of the shoes becomes less important, but not so for this glitter variant of a Christmas tree.



*Buxum sempervivens* is rarely used for Christmas decoration, and its one globe decoration here is quite sparse.



A flying Christmas tree. Maybe it brings the boots stuffers.



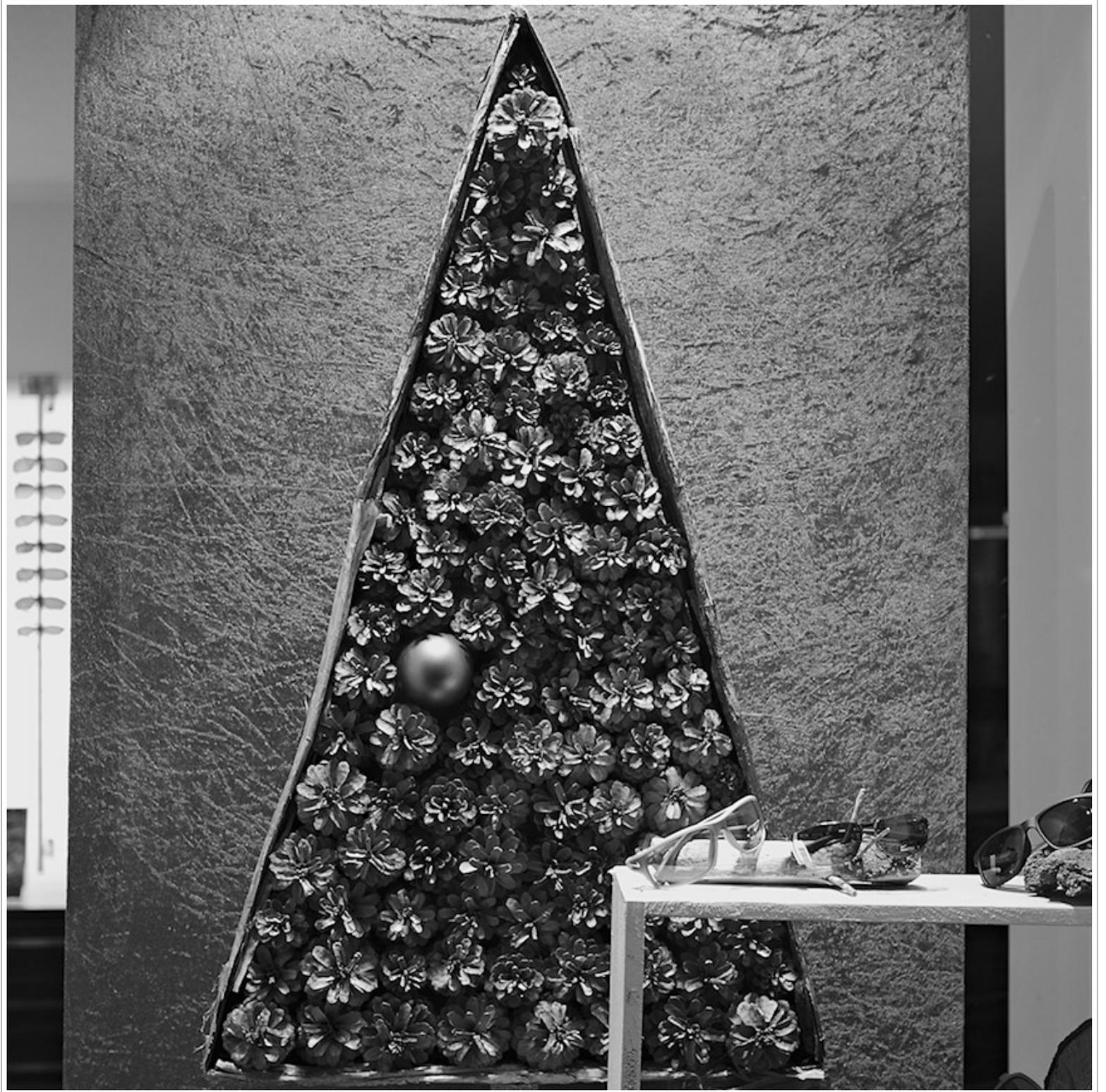
Deers again, probably from the same factory as  
Demmelmayer's on p. 47



The plastic twigs of this trees have probably rested in a too small box over the year.



This is one of the more creative approaches in mimicking the Christmas trees' triangular shape.



Even deep in the shop recesses sometimes Christmas trees can be found.



Home decoration can't live without a Christmas tree and a Advent wreath.



Only the sky is the limit. This tree should have grown a little bit more.



Those putti are supposed to help selling travel dreams.



More home decoration, for every shop window a tree.



Almost dramatic lighting in this clothes shop.



Country style crockery needs only a hint of Christmas tree.



Some trees have to live almost in secrecy ...



... while some will be protected by shutters over night.



The crown is not for the Christmas tree - or is this a multi purpose gloriole?



Natural and artificial christmas trees at the same house.



“Smoking can kill you”, but it’s good for the tobacco seller.



Santa is only an ephemeral phenomenon here.



As the days are dark and short, Christmas trees in front of the window are no problem.



Singled out, this tree has an almost three-dimensional presence in the image.



The strong scissors in this set even cut twigs for decorative purposes.



A lost tree top is hard to compensate, but not necessarily regarded as harmful.



In the end, everything is available for sale - at substantial rebates only days after Christmas.



## About SoFoBoMo

Solo Foto Book Month, or short SoFoBoMo, is challenge for photographers all over the world. The goal is to produce a photo book with minimum 35 images and to publish it as pdf on the SoFoBoMo website, all in 31 days within a fuzzy month period of 2 months.

To learn more about SoFoBoMo, just visit <http://sofobomo.com/>. Here you can read the photo books created for this challenge in the current and the past years.



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Markus Spring works as a GIS specialist for the City of Munich. In his free time he uses his camera to document his findings in the visual realm. His photoblog can be found on <http://markus-spring.info>