

# PETER LIEBING

German, 1941 - 2008

*The Leap into Freedom*

1961

Peter Leibing, a 19-year-old photographer at the time, had been tipped by police that a border guard may escape East Berlin on August 15, 1961, the third day of the wall's construction. This photo became an iconic image of the Cold War as the soldier leaves the Soviet side of Berlin. The guard photographed was 19-year-old Conrad Schumann. Immediately after jumping, he was taken and interrogated by the West Berlin police, eventually being released to Bavaria. He lived in guilt of deserting his fellow guards, fear over threats of murder or kidnap, and worry over the publicity this would bring to him and his family back in East Berlin. He avoided visiting his parents and former comrades, despite the fall of the wall in 1989, and committed suicide in 1998 after suffering from depression.