

WHO IS YOURSELF? - Artist statement by Jacob Juhl

I am not a photographer, but I choose to use the possibilities of photography to create art. I do not take pictures "of something", but create fictitious motifs by utilizing photography and image processing. I do not print my pictures as lifelike as possible, but on rough materials such as wooden boards and aluminium, so the structure of the materials shapes the final expression in unexpected ways.

The focal point of my pictures is identity and I often use myself as a model to explore the tension between being yourself, seeing yourself from the outside, and conscious selfpromotion. I work with themes such as simultaneous personalities, coming to terms with opposing personality traits, a fragmentary view of personality and the doppelgänger as metaphorical concept.

As a starting point for my works I often use the sentence "Who is yourself?" and the countless derived questions thereof: Who is this "self"? Who is even capable of being oneself? Can you see "yourself" in the mirror? Can you show "yourself" in a photograph, or on Facebook? Can others see whether you are being "yourself"? What does it mean when you say, "I am not myself today"? Who are you then? How can you be "besides yourself"? How many selves can you be? Is a self already there at birth and is it unchanging? How is a self created? Do you construct your self or do others?

My aesthetic ambition is to create an alluring expression that is able to stand alone, but which also invites personal reflection. In other words my works must be able to repel, fascinate or astonish the viewer on first sight and not necessarily be a source of deep philosophising. But if the viewer is allured by the immediate expression of the pictures they must contain sufficient ideas and psychological depth to invite personal reflection. I strive for the titles to be able to lead to new and surprising ways of interpretation and to work as possible clues into the themes of the works.

My pictures are created using UV-printing on different materials such as brushed aluminium, wooden boards, prepared MDF boards and tiles, whereby I achieve a physical texture in the expression of the photos which I often miss in traditional photographic renditions. It is an illusion that photography can portray anything real in a neutral manner. Paper printing further tries to maintain this illusion as the print or development on paper is attempted to resemble the original photo as much as possible. I would rather examine the consequence of this illusion and explore the structural impact of different materials on the motif, instead of striving for material neutrality. The use of building materials also hints at the active creation and conscious construction of identity which has gradually come into focus in society, especially after the advent of social media in many people's lives.

Jacob Juhl, 2011