

From I to we, from we to me.

A portrait can accomplish all possible tasks. It can simply identify, like a passport photo. It can send you on a search for the personality - like a character study can. It can glamourize like a fashion photo, or like an advertisement it can convey an enrapturing ideal of beauty.

The Hamburg resident Christian Klopp approaches the art of portrature as a seeker, searching to push the boundries of this medium. Klopp works mainly as a film cameraman and follows in the footsteps of the experimentalist photographers of the twenties and the thirties like, Man Ray, Claude Cahun or Maurice Tabard, in that he seeks new ways to advance portrature. It no longer centers itself on similarity, personality or beauty but on the ,until now, ignored side of of our being, our existence. Psycology and surrealism paved the way and camera tricks such as multiple exposure and photmontage were put to use to unearth the complexity within us.

Technically Christian Klopp is breaking new ground. It is true that double or triple exposure process is as old as the medium of film itself, but it is the first time that it has been used in this fashion for portature. CK uses an old Nikon FE3 that he has equiped with a ????? that is normally used in architechtural photography, a standard 85mm lense, a basic onboard flash and recommended Ilford FP4 film stock. Is anything else really nessecary for quality black and white photos? In his portrait series Klopp places two faces ontop of each other, not later in the darkroom but, for the first time, in camera. Klopps method is to photograph one subject in front of a neutral white background and without winding the film on to the next frame, seating the second subject in front of a black backdrop (it should be noted that we are firmly in the analog world here) The results at this moment cannot be verified. As a rule of thumb it takes about ten pictures to produce one technically and esthetically perfect picture. One perfect picture per sitting is guaranteed but totally by chance- surrealisim also plays a significant role in this procedure- Klopp is often surprised himself by the outcome.

It is often acquaintences, friends from former times , strangers, fathers and sons, wives and husbands, mothers and daughters that Christian invites to pose in front of his camera. pairs that Klopp focus in on in a intense, inqusitive and yet unadorned fashion and produces a synthetic picture that both intruiges and confuses but forces the viewer to probe still further.

What do we see here? Two people with all there attributes - jewelery, beards, glasses- in reverse and ?????????? They are people connected, genetically or socially. Relatives biologically similar or two people that over the years of close companionship have left their mark on oneanother. Klopps photographs are an attempt to make visible these similarities through portrature. The Journey from "I" to we has often disturbing consequences. Christian Klopps series, which began in 2008 questions our basic nature. "Who am I" "Who are We?" Plural or singular? Are we to be defined only as individuals or do we only exisist in relation to one another. Is it always this connection to another that finally forms us, etches us and completes us? It is exactly these questions that CK with his photography poses and here, for the first time, in such a manner attempts to answer.