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IDENTITY WITHOUT SIMILARITY: THE RELATION BETWEEN THE INDIVIDUAL AND HER PICTURE

MAJA TABEA JERRENTRUP

Abstract: *"This is me" we tend to say about photographs of ourselves—which is remarkable given that the image with which we identify is a two-dimensional visual taken from a very specific moment in our past. And yet the image is interpreted as an icon or an index of our present being. The problem of seeing similarity where there is difference seems to be increasing with the rise of hobby models—a niche demographic made up of mostly women between the age of 16 and 40, who enjoy posing for the camera even if they aren't getting paid for it. This paper investigates the social and psychological motivations behind hobby modelling in the German-speaking context.*

Résumé: *«C'est moi», tendance à dire à propos des photographies de nous-mêmes, ce qui est étonnant étant donné que l'image n'est qu'une version à deux dimensions prise à un moment précis de notre passé. Et pourtant, l'image est interprétée comme une icône ou une référence de notre présent. Le problème du rapport à l'image semble s'accentuer avec la montée en puissance des modèles-photo qui s'exercent comme hobby – principalement pour des femmes âgées de 16 à 40 ans, qui aiment poser pour la caméra même si elles ne sont pas rémunérées. Cet article examine les motivations sociales et psychologiques du passe-temps de mannequin dans le contexte germanophone.*

"This is me," we say when talking about photographs. It is quite astonishing how much we identify with a picture, which reduces us to a two-dimensional image and only shows us a specific moment already in the past.

A close connection to identity accompanied photography from the beginning: "Photography … began historically as an art of the Person, of civil status, of what we might call, in all senses of the term, the body's *formality*" (Barthes 79).[1] For Roland Barthes, photography is constitutive not just of personal identity, but also of cultural identity—mediating both the body of the person and, in the process, his or her "civil status." We find a similar dialectic in Jacques Lacan's research on the discrepancy between an initially fragmented self-awareness and the consistent image of self achieved through the mirror stage in early childhood. Sylvia Brodersen uses an analogy to photography to explain the alienation by which this image of self is obtained in Lacan's mirror stage: "As the 'I' in the experience of the mirror is based on an image, tthe identification of the subject with its self-image in the mirror is based on alienation. Like the mirror, photography turns the subject into an image" (Brodersen 145, translation MTJ).[2] This is an alienation, however, that now seems to be regularly overcome by today's typically media-experienced user, who casually asserts *this is me* when confronting her photographic likeness.

For the maintenance of this likeness, a thoroughly chosen styling, complete with costume, make-up, posing, and setting is necessary today more than ever (Lauser 469-80; Pavis 174; Shukla 5). As Walter Leimgruber observes,

> The increasing emphasis on the body is often explained with the fact that because of disintegrating social boundaries and the disappearance of traditional social classes, which are tied to the social distribution of roles, it has become necessary to position and differentiate oneself through deliberately developing an individual style. An active self-marketing through performative strategies of image cultivation and staging of the self, in which the body plays a central role, has gained in importance. (Leimgruber 213-14, translation MTJ)[3]

Waltraud Posch similarly mentions as an example TV shows that deal with creating the self through the body (see Posch 19). Following this trend, Kerstin Brandes sees the topic of "visibility and identity" increasingly treated both in art and politics (Brandes). Connected to this focus on visual identity is a consideration of communication through visual mediation. These approaches come together in photography, as photography "function[s] as a tool for identity formation and as a means for communication" (Van Dijck 58).

PHOTOGRAPHY AS STAGING

The specific moment of taking a picture is–especially if the photographer does not hide his action—coined by various aspects, that make the "photography-I" differ from reality (on the problem of defining reality in this context, see Dörfler 11-52 and Venohr 47). In fact, photography naturally brings out people's tendency to pose for the camera and adopt certain facial expressions to communicate something (for the meaning and interpretation of posing, see Freund 75). This is evident in photographs taken to mark special occasions, such as parties, holidays, or trips. In model photography, it is the taking of the photograph itself that becomes the occasion.

Typically, one only understands these last kind of photographs to be staged because in model photography the (only) "declared objective … is the two-dimensional picture," (Weiss 50, translation MTJ) and strategies of staging are not hidden .[4] But staging and posing are not exclusive to model photography. In both model and occasional photography the picture is shaped by factors on both sides of the camera, from dress and make-up to light set-up and handling. As Daniele Muscionico writes, "Photography does not just show a certain event, but creates it through the pure existence of a picture showing it" (Muscionico, translation MTJ).[5] Events often gain attractiveness and relevance through the *picture-ness* that photography creates. This is especially evident when looking at Instagram and Facebook: without an (attractive) picture, a moment becomes uninteresting, nearly not worth experiencing or existing. The post-production following the act of taking pictures has been made very simple even for amateurs

by smartphone apps such as "Beauty Plus" and is now an integrative component of occasional photography.

Despite all these "manipulations," photography is still seen by most people as being truthful. The supposed facticity of photography is especially notable when pictures are used to document or prove something (for the problem of the truth claim, see Lackner). In fact, one can feel so much unity with a picture that one calls the image "I." The relationship between photography and the person being photographed has been interpreted in various ways: using semiotic terms, the photographic image can be seen as an index (one leaves a trace on a film or a chip), as well as an icon (one is similar to it) (see Larsen). But if due to styling, make-up, retouching, and so on, there is hardly any similarity left, the image should lose its status as an icon and, after post-production, also the features of an index—the *this-is-me* feeling of identity no longer seems to obtain.

THE MOTIVATION FOR BEING PHOTOGRAPHED

I n the preceding section, I examined the experience of people that belong to the scene of staged photography associated with model photography because here certain tendencies are more obvious and possess an overt "avant-garde" influence, for example, on fashion trends. Nonetheless there are clear parallels and overlaps between professional models and groups of bloggers, Instagram and Facebook stars and starlets, and other social media users that practice hobby modelling. The wish to earn money with their pictures, however, does not have priority for most hobby models. My data is based on several years (2008 to the present) of observation and participant observation in the scene of staged people photography, mainly in the German-speaking context (Germany, Austria, and Switzerland), in front of the camera as well as behind the camera. This experience gave me the opportunity to develop an emic perspective and to come up with suitable questions for semi-structured interviews. I conducted these interviews with 40 hobby models in 2018. Thirty-eight of them were women, reflecting the fact that women are far more active as models than men. To reach more models and to offer more ways to interact with them, I also conducted

online surveys in model photography groups on Facebook in 2018, offering to receive answers anonymously via e-mail. This triangulation of methods should help to compensate for each method's limitations.[6]

The approach underlying this paper is interdisciplinary and relies on thick description and semiotics for its arguments. I am a cultural anthropologist, but questions about identity that matter to anthropologists have also been addressed by sociology and psychology. I therefore do not want to limit my approach to one discipline. For the hobby models participating in this study, the *this-is-me* feeling is of higher relevance than for "ordinary" people looking at their photographs. Models regularly invest a lot of time and money in producing and later presenting these pictures as "themselves"—pictures which are characterized by thoughtful selection, retouching, different costumes, make-up, retouching styles, and played-at scenarios. How do the self and the staged image of self relate to each other? How do the "this" and the "me" interact to form the *this-is-me*?

First of all, people need an incentive to get photographed that exceeds the pure documentation of life or other necessities that make it compulsory to get pictures. They need an incentive that sees photography and/or the resulting pictures as purposeful in themselves. A critical examination of our society that brings the scene of staged people photography into view shows that the body is understood as malleable and closely connected to social status:

> Whoever wants to lead a happy, fulfilled and socially acceptable life adopts a corresponding lifestyle that incorporates trendy sports, which mould and train the body, as well as a certain diet. Depending on the specific group or subculture, these demands are complemented by certain rules of behaviour as well as clothing, jewelry, language, and gestures, but also body-related accessories such as tattoos and piercings. (Leimbruber, translation MTJ)[7]

As numerous casting shows demonstrate, being a model obviously constitutes a dream for many, connected to fantasies of fame, status, glamour, and money. The first "presentation ladies" in the nineteenth century did not have a stellar reputation (Wolak 44). Nowadays, how-

ever, being a "model" is regarded as a desirable job, which opens up many opportunities and carries social prestige (see Müller-Schneider 27; Evans; and David):

> Beauty has great social power. Appearance influences the way a person is seen by others, and therefore also how he himself [sic] experiences the many encounters with other people. Beauty is a tool to get recognition and privileges. Appearance is important for our interaction with people. It can open up life chances or close them. The power of beauty lies in the fact that it can influence and shape our lives. (Posch 229-30, translation MTJ)[8]

In a similar fashion, Annette Geiger talks about the "beauty turn" (11). Photography and modelling, hobby or otherwise, are further bolstered by the illusion of equal opportunity: "Ever since the introduction of the bourgeois Happy Ending" it is astonishingly easy "to imagine the red carpet underneath one's own feet. It seems that one has just to grab the opportunity" (Schilling 226, translation MTJ).[9] This fantasy can be acted out in either staged model photography or on one's own Instagram account. However, in the latter case, the distinction between model and supermodel suggested by Anthony Curtis Adler no longer applies: "The moment that a model is more recognizable than the product she advertises, she becomes a supermodel, who is no longer really a model sensu stricto but a center of gravity that draws things into her orbit" (Adler 169). In the case of hobby modelling, it is not about advertising products, but rather advertising oneself, and every model would like to be seen as a "centre of gravity" herself. In addition, it should be mentioned that within the scene of staged people photography, not only classical beauty, but also special or extraordinary looks and styles are appreciated:

> the question remains: when are we going to get tired of all this immaculate regularity? Pervasive smoothness might lose its appeal not just in the retouched image, but also in everyday life, when Botox and cosmetic surgery can help ever larger numbers of people to get an optimized "normal face." The beautifully morphed picture that everyone can put on his ID card or on his application will not create anything but boredom... Even some models shown in *Vogue* or similar magazines no longer seem to simply intend to match the

image of childlike beauty, but are rather a grotesque exaggera-
tion of it, a "childlike monster," as it were, which attracts the gaze
through its anomaly. (Geiger 13, translation MTJ)[10]

However, provocative pictures are quite rare. Within the scene, there
is hardly ever any criticism leveled at the look of the model due to an
unspoken code of conduct.[11]

CHARACTERISTICS OF HOBBY MODELS

The models I observed and interviewed come from different
social classes, but the majority could be regarded as middle
or upper middle class. This might be due to two factors.
Firstly, modelling is an expensive hobby. Poor people simply cannot
afford it. Secondly, hobby modelling also requires some organiza-
tional talent, which is more common among better-educated people.

Most of the models are between 16 and 40 years old, with a majority between the ages of 20 and 30. They often can be characterized by one or more of the following features, which are in many cases connected to each other (for more on the following, see Jerrentrup 12).

Preoccupation with One's Own Body

In addition to a model's self-declarations, there are visible signs of a preoccupation with one's own body, which range from heavy weight loss to extreme haircuts and hair colours to big tattoos or even auto-aggressive behaviour such as self-cutting (see Orbach 37 and Wimmer-Puchinger et al. 42; on the specific situation of women, see Wimmer-Puchinger 4). Photography is apparently regarded as an opportunity to approve of the body, insofar as photography implies that the body is worth a picture. Positive feedback while shooting and "likes" on social media might increase this impact (for the incorporation of corporeal displays of physical attractiveness into social activist movements, see Pham).

However, many models seem to be aware of the ambivalences of beauty and mere corporeality. "Beauty characterizes an inconsistency. On the one hand, everyone would like to have it, to enjoy it, and to feel the power it has, on the other hand, it seems to be something which is only superficial and is regarded as a banal externality" (Wolak 17, translation MTJ).[12] Such assumptions are reflected in some scenarios staged for photography, as well as in quotes, sayings, and short interpretative statements that accompany the pictures. Stated approval of one's own body does not necessarily imply that one understands the body as "beautiful". It can also include accepting its deficiencies or interpreting them as unique peculiarities. As one model I interviewed commented, "Through modelling, I can finally accept my looks and feel valuable and beautiful for the first time in my life" (Model R., translation MTJ).[13] Another model, who wanted to be photographed as a mermaid, observed, "I can identify with Disney's Arielle because I also always wanted to have a different body. This is what photography enables me to do" (Model H., translation MTJ).[14]

Experience of Deficits

Some models stress in informal interviews, as well as in comments on social media, that they experience deficits in their personal life stories, which for example result from problems in their homes or with their relationships. Many of these models thus understand photography to act out experiences and interests that, for personal or historical reasons, have been denied to them (see Gyr 362 for the yearning for kitsch; see Venohr 47 for the yearning for authenticity). The help photography offers in this context is twofold: it makes yearnings and fears manageable by condensing them into pictures, and further supplements the model's first-hand experiences with vicarious experiences. "I miss romance in my life, this is why I like romantic topics in photography. Life is so grey" (Model N., translation MTJ).[15]

Search for Identity

Many people active in the modelling scene are or were members of a subculture. Subcultures represent an "interference in the orderly sequence which leads from real events and phenomena to their representation in the media"—"a kind of temporary blockage in the system of representation" (Hebdige 121). What starts as emancipation, however, later gets integrated into the mainstream, a process that re-appropriates the subculture's signs and, in the process, redefines behavioural norms (Marchart 114-15). Being part of a subculture can be understood as a search for identity. Brodersen sees this search for identity as typical of the present age: "In a time in which traditional boundaries such as class, origin or religion have lost their importance and in which there are many opportunities for every individual to create his life and his look, youth cultures can offer a feeling of belonging" (Brodersen 158, translation MTJ). This might be overstating the facts, as social classes still exist and often play an important role. Yet it illustrates how class might not offer (enough) feelings of identity to the individual.

Subcultures usually carry their own meanings and ideals of beauty. Not all subcultures, however, require their members to adhere to these meanings and ideal permanently. The boundaries defining playful or "part-time" subcultures such as cosplay or LARP are flexible (see Geiger 22), whereas subcultures such as Gothics, Punks,

and Lolitas intend to be a more permanent counterpoint to the mainstream. As Geiger observes, it is a "very old cultural technique to refuse all fashion trends to the point of making oneself 'outrageous'—for example, by living in rags in a barrel or shocking all the well-adjusted and pseudo-individuals with piercings, tattoos, and mohawks" (Geiger 22, translation MTJ).[16] This preoccupation with outward appearance and its connection to the inner self is often a fundamental component of subcultures. Nevertheless, subcultures tend to develop fashion statements that are similar to the mainstream or have a tendency to be absorbed into the mainstream. The model's quest for individuality and uniqueness is never permanently fulfilled and therefore never permanently maintained. "Who am I… I am not sure… I could be so much but am so little… always searching… never finding… it is very fluid… but photography can fix it, at least for a tiny moment" (Model F., translation MTJ).[17]

Indulgence of Variety

Over a period of time, a model usually adopts different looks. Even if one of her initial motivations was, for example, a yearning for the romantic, she might also want to stage herself wearing leather rags with hot pants and a skateboard. Often, these different looks a model adopts are only held together by her social media appearance as a whole (i.e., her profile) and have hardly anything in common with each other or her real life appearance, which is usually much less interesting by comparison. One model notes, "I have modelled as an elf, as an angel, as a dominatrix, as an avant-garde fashion model, as a freak. It is never boring. I like looking different in every picture. I experiment" (Model V., translation MTJ).[18] Another model states, "Sometimes I do not even recognize myself. I scroll down on Facebook thinking 'what a great pic, what a cool girl'—and then I notice, it was me" (Model Z., translation MTJ). [19] The sheer number of pictures circulating on social media in which people present themselves in various staged poses suggests that people derive positive experiences from these pictures. Yet the obvious advantages of such pictures—namely getting to know new people or acquiring a circle of fans—are not sufficient to explain this phenomenon. Why do people want to model in such different ways and why do they feel like be-

ing one with these pictures, especially if the pictures themselves bear very little resemblance to their real appearances or life situations?

Distorted Concepts of Self

The most obvious reason for feeling one with these pictures must result from a misperception of self. Frequent, diverse, and heavily retouched pictures in the context of exciting costumes and settings actively produce a concept of self that diverges from reality. But when the *this-is-me* effect is achieved, this divergence is negated, or at least overlooked. Nonetheless hobby modelling can become a conduit for realistic self-appraisals at the same time that it distorts self-image. As one model observes, "I like myself much better [now] than before modelling. I know that I am not great and that I am not a top model, but I don't hate my looks anymore. I gained more self-confidence and learned to get along with my body" (Model D., translation MTJ).[20]
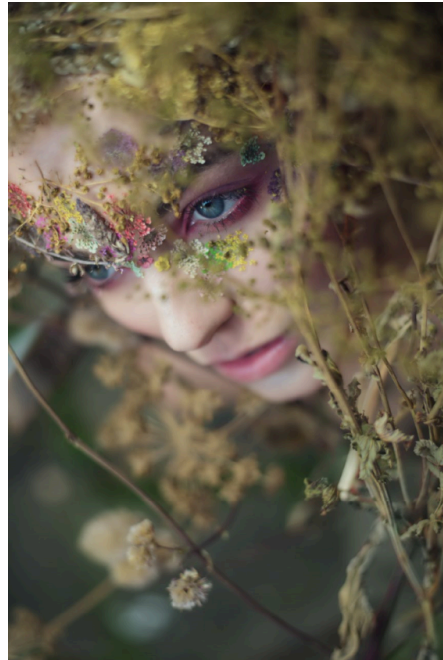
A POSSIBLE WORLD

A second explanation, however, modifies the previous one. The models may believe that their pictures are an approximation—that they convey optimized, but *possible*, versions of themselves. What they enact in front of the camera are trial runs of alternate identities. The *this-is-me* effect becomes a *this-could-be-me* effect. The model understands the persons shown in her pictures as possible versions of herself. Rebecca Coleman describes this development in contrast to Barthes's theory of the origin of photography: "For Barthes, the desire is for photography to 'capture' a particular way of being, a personality for example, and render this as it (actually) is. However, for the girls [the subject of research are young girls and their online portfolios], the desire is for photography not to capture a personality as it is but rather a body as it might be" (Coleman 110). This attitude is reinforced by the models' own statements. As one model observes, "The body, after all, is malleable material" (Model X., translation MTJ).[21] Another states, "I have just one life. This is not enough. I want to try out what all I could be. The way I look is just the base in this game" (Model K., translation MTJ).[22] This is similar to Coleman's and Gilbert Shang's assertions that on the internet people are showing ideals of the body and the self, rather than their authentic beings: "The dominant motif of photography on Facebook is the presentation of the ideal body/self. This ideal body follows, but sometimes deconstructs a repertoire of normalized social body etiquettes popularized by mainstream and showbiz cultures" (Shang 242). What constitutes this ideal, however, is always changing. My interviews and observations suggest that even with pictures shown on so-called *social* media, real communication is not intended. Instead, the model's activity is mostly self-referential. Thus intense feedback is not necessarily wanted or even very important for the *this-is-me* effect to be achieved. In front of a picture-centred backdrop, which characterizes today's everyday culture, one might need one's own picture to help structure one's life, to condense experiences and emotions into two dimensions and, in so doing, make them manageable and easier to remember: "A product of shootings is often the creation of memories of situations, which would not have existed without photography… and often there is no picture matching what

should be the real memory—the colours might be changed in the process of retouching, the atmosphere might be altered, the room might be replaced, the figure and the make-up improved" (Jerrentrup 124, translation MTJ). As such, the resulting pictures are close to false memories. Profiles on social media become diaries of false memories. "When I look at my pictures I see little stories as if they were real" (Model V., translation MTJ).[23] These fabricated memories are more directed to one's own self than others. A "like" is just minimal communication. Even introducing various kinds of "likes" on Facebook does not allow for much evaluation—is it courtesy, is it a return service, is it lecherous or enthusiastic or just something one does out of boredom? Any medium in which this is the main type of communication is not a social, but rather an asocial, medium. The user has created her profile as a means for self-affirmation, in which she herself is the centre and all communication partners around her are merely uplifted thumbs or simple hearts. "Pictures for the children" (*Bilder für die Kinder*)[24] is the title Model B. chose for her model portfolio on Facebook even though she does not have any children yet. This has various implications, not just that these pictures are very personal to her, but also that by modelling, she creates her "image," the way she would like to be remembered.

MEDIA IDENTITY

The reality surrounding the model and her media "reality" might be kept separate insofar as she ignores the former. This is not about Irving Goffman's front stage, but rather a parallel world, which, similar to many online games, takes place detached from the body (see Goffman). Thomas Lackner refers to the need for an immaterial, spiritual reality, which since the Enlightenment has lost its relevance:

> Modern science has increasingly disregarded the immaterial, "spiritual" reality… and called it deprecatingly a question of belief.… It is assumed that with the help of technology in the form of the computer, which is a product of modernity, spiritual reality could be regained. Cyberspace, therefore, is a vision of a new spiritual, immaterial reality, with which the discomfort and the soullessness of

the material can be overcome.... One of the main visions of cyber-space ideologues is the wish for incorporeality ... the human body is considered an unnecessary burden, which needs to be overcome.

(Lackner 95-96, translation MTJ)[25]

In the incorporeality of cyberspace, a kind of transcendence can be found that defies bodily imperfections and transience. This parallel world—be it in countless video games or in model photography—is built around a body, which is then overcome by replacing it with an image that can be easily re-shaped and re-fashioned (see Entwistle). In the parallel world, this malleability is standard and establishes the person as a typical and respectable part of this cyberspace. The model sees her self as being in unity with her pictures. This identity is achieved not by ignoring the immense effects of styling and retouching, but by embracing all of this because it is what confirms her identity as a model. *This is me* in this case means *this is a part of my identity, this is me as a model* or *this is my social media self*. In this sense, the person photographed shows sophistication in handling identity, being conscious of the fact that identity (today) is a process, a "doing identity": "'Identity'—as the idea of a subject identical with themselves as well as signification of one's belonging(s)—designated the henceforth impossible moment of fixing or being fixed, which constituted the permanently preliminary product of an unfinishable process of manifold, contradictory as well as rule-governed identifications" (Brandes 15, translation MTJ). As one model suggests, a certain satisfaction can be derived from having one's identity unfixed. "Many of my friends don't know much about me as a model. It is a world I keep separate—not because I am embarrassed about it, but just because it is not relevant to my friends outside the scene" (Model B., translation MTJ).[26]

As Zygmunt Bauman observes, "If the modern 'Problem of Identity' was mainly constructing an identity and keeping it stable, then the postmodern 'Problem of Identity' is mainly the avoidance of any fixation and keeping options open" (Bauman 133, translation MTJ; see also Finkelstein 3).[27] Bauman's assumption of an entirely fluid identity is often criticized (see Antweiler 24). A stable self might be regarded as outdated; but it is still the basis on which most human commu-

nication relies (see Shang 242). Nevertheless an important, if not the most important, characteristic of identity for the hobby model lies in identity's instability. Among photographers and models, the term often used to describe and to characterize this feature positively is "mutability." Thus, the idea of identity seems to dissolve on one level: one identifies today with this, tomorrow with that—what stays as a base is not the content, but the form, the condition of constant change.

THE PICTURE AS A SYMBOL

Finally, one more option is possible, which correlates identity on a more abstract level: the *this-is-me* effect as referring not so much to the external but to the inner world of dreams, desires, and fears. In this case, the relationship of the photograph to the person being photographed is not, as initially stated, that of an icon or index (see Peirce 65), but a symbol—a picture which stands in for motifs that the person being represented understands as relevant to her inner life. Therefore, it is not important whether there is visual congruence. The picture is regarded as relatively independent of the appearance of a specific person, as a creative outcome that evolves around a specific topic or thought process important to the model's inner world, rather than pertaining to the person's outward appearance. Barthes' description of photography as "an art of the Person" (see Barthes 79), her identity, her civil status applies only partly in our case. Staged people photography is not the art *of* the person, but art *about* the person. As one model puts it, "These pictures matter to me. With them, I want to express what is important to me. It might be easier than doing it with words. A picture can tell more than a thousand words, and it is more fun to do it and works on a less technical, more emotional level than words" (Model S., translation MTJ).[28]

This is me—is this an expression of delusion or reflection? The answer might vary a lot among individuals. Yet there are hints that more is at stake than a narcissistic belief in a distortive self-image: even if the use of social media for creating a concept of self is controversial, almost all of these models assert that modelling helps them to

feel better in the long run, whereas pure narcissism or egocentrism usually results in negative outcomes and leads to discomfort.
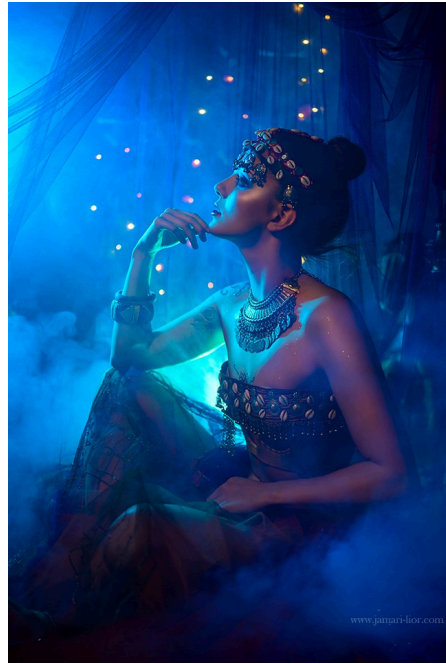
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IMAGE NOTES

All the pictures show the same woman, model Viola Julia von Hoesslin. For years, Viola has been embodying very different characters or concepts in her numerous shootings. There is no consistency and no main topic regarding her work in front of the camera. She enjoys staging herself, or being staged, in many different ways.

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NOTES

1. "Die PHOTOGRAPHIE hat …, historisch gesehen, als Kunst der Person begonnen: ihrer Identität, ihres zivilen Standes, dessen, was man, in jeder Bedeutung des Wortes, das An-und-für-Sich des Körpers nennen könnte."↵

2. "Da das Ich der Spiegelerfahrung auf einem Bild basiert, liegt der Identifikation des Subjekts mit dem Selbstbild im Spiegel eine Entfremdung zugrunde. Ebenso wie der Spiegel verwandelt die Fotografie das Subjekt zu einem Bild."↵

3. "Die zunehmende Betonung des Körpers wird häufig damit erklärt, dass durch die sich auflösenden gesellschaftlichen Grenzen und das Verschwinden der klassischen sozialen Schichten mit der damit verbundenen gesellschaftlichen Rollenverteilung die Notwendigkeit entstehe, sich durch bewusste individuelle Stilbildung zu positionieren und zu differenzieren. Eine aktive Vermarktung des Selbst durch performative Strategien der Selbstdarstellung und -inszenierung, bei denen der Körper eine zentrale Rolle spielt, gewinnt an Bedeutung."↵

4. "Erklärte(s) Inszenierungsziel… das zweidimensionale Bild."↵

5. "Die Fotografie bildet nicht ein Ereignis ab, sondern sie kreiert es mithin durch die pure Existenz eines Bildes davon."↵

6. For an extended discussion of methods and a detailed explanation of triangulation, see Jerrentrup 24-27.↵

7. "Wer ein glückliches, erfülltes und gesellschaftliches akzeptiertes Leben führen will, pflegt einen adäquaten Lebensstil, zu dem etwa Trendsport-

arten, die den Körper modellieren und trainieren, und eine entsprechende Ernährung gehören. Je nach Gruppe oder Subkultur werden diese Forderungen ergänzt mit Verhaltensvorgaben und Regeln für Kleidung und Schmuck, Sprache und Gestik, aber auch mit körperbezogenen Accessoires wie Tattoos und Piercing."↵

8. "Schönheit hat große soziale Macht. Das Aussehen beeinflusst die Art, wie ein Mensch von anderen wahrgenommen wird, und dadurch auch, wie er selbst die zahllosen Kontakte mit anderen Leuten erlebt. Schönheit ist ein Werkzeug, um Anerkennung und Privilegien zu bekommen. Das Aussehen ist für unsere Interaktion mit anderen Menschen wichtig, es kann uns Lebenschancen eröffnen oder verschließen. Die Macht der Schönheit liegt darin, unser Leben zu beeinflussen und zu prägen."↵

9. "Seit der Einführung des bürgerlichen Happy Ends" fällt es erstaunlich leicht, „sich den roten Teppich unter den eigenen Füßen vorzustellen. Es scheint, als müsse man nur zugreifen."↵

10. "[D]ie Frage bleibt, wann wir uns an so viel makelloser Regelmäßigkeit satt gesehen haben? Die allgegenwärtige Glätte könnte sowohl als retouchiertes Bild seinen Reiz verlieren wie auch im Leben, wenn Botox und Schönheits-OP auch den breiten Massen zum optimierten Normalgesicht verholfen haben. Das schön gemorphte Bild, das jeder von sich in den Ausweis oder in die Bewerbung kleben kann, wird wohl nichts weiter hervorrufen als Langeweile… Auch manches Model in der *Vogue* o.ä. scheint nicht mehr nur das als schön empfundene normierte Kindchenschema darstellen zu wollen, sondern eine maßlose Übertreibung desselben - ein ‚Kindchenmonster' gewissermaßen, das gerade durch die Abweichung die Blicke auf sich lenken wird."↵

11. Exceptions are extremely thin or fat models, which are often an occasion for discussion. In the case of extremely big models, there are usually many positive reactions, but also expressions of disgust. In the case of extremely thin models, it is often assumed that the photography team propagates an unhealthy beauty ideal.↵

12. "Schönheit charakterisiert eine Widersprüchlichkeit. Einerseits wollen alle sie besitzen, sie genießen und die Macht, die von ihr ausgeht, spüren; andererseits scheint sie nur etwas Oberflächliches zu sein und gilt als banale Äußerlichkeit."↵

13. "Durch das Modeln kann ich mein Aussehen endlich akzeptieren und fühle ich mich zum ersten Mal in meinem Leben wertvoll und schön."↵

14. "Ich kann mich mit Disneys Arielle identifizieren, weil ich auch schon immer einen anderen Körper wollte und Fotografie ermöglicht mir das."↵

15. "Ich vermisse Romantik in meinem Leben, daher fotografiere ich gerne romantische Themen. Das Leben ist so grau."↵

16. "Wie stünde es nun um das andere Extrem, jene ebenfalls schon sehr alte Kulturtechnik, das ganze Mode-Treiben dahingehend zu verweigern, dass man sich absichtlich 'unmöglich' macht und – z.B. in Lumpen gehüllt in einer Tonne zu wohnen oder mit Piercings, Tattoos und Irokesenschnitten all die Überangepassten und pseudo-individualisierten Originale tüchtig zu schockieren."↵

17. "Wer bin ich… ich weiß es nicht… ich könnte so vieles sein, aber ich bin so wenig… immer auf der Suche… niemals angekommen… es ist sehr fluide… aber Fotografie kann es festhalten, wenigstens für einen winzigen Moment."↵

18. "Ich habe als Elfe gemodelt, als Engel, als Domina, als Avantgarde-Fashion-Model, als Freak, es ist nie langweilig. Ich sehe auf jedem Foto anders aus. Ich experimentiere."↵

19. "Manchmal erkenne ich mich selbst nicht, ich scrolle auf Facebook runter und denke 'was für ein mega Foto, was für ein cooles Mädel'—und dann merke ich, dass ich es bin."↵

20. "Ich mag mich selbst viel lieber als vor dem Modeln. Ich weiß, dass ich jetzt nicht gerade großartig bin und kein Topmodel, aber ich hasse mein Aussehen nicht mehr. Ich habe mehr Selbstvertrauen gewonnen und gelernt, mit meinem Körper klarzukommen."↵

21. "Am Ende des Tages ist der Körper formbares Ausgangsmaterial."↵

22. "Ich habe nur ein Leben. Das ist nicht genug. Ich will ausprobieren, was ich alles seien könnte. Wie ich aussehe, ist nur die Basis in diesem Spiel."↵

23. "Wenn ich mir meine Fotos ansehe, sehe ich kleine Geschichten, als wenn sie wahr wären."↵

24.

25. "Die moderne Wissenschaft blendete die immaterielle, ‚geistige Realität' … immer mehr aus und bezeichnete sie abwertend als Frage des Glaubens… Man glaubt mit Hilfe der Technik in Form des Computers, also einem Produkt der Moderne, wieder geistige Realität zu erlangen. Der Cyberspace ist demnach eine Vision einer neuen geistigen immateriellen Realität, mit der das Unbehagen und die Seelenlosigkeit des Materiellen überwunden werden kann… Eine der Hauptvisionen der Cyberspace IdeologInnen ist der Wunsch nach Körperlosigkeit… der menschliche Körper gilt als unnötiger Ballast, den es zu überwinden gilt."↵

26. "Viele meiner Freunde wissen nicht viel von meiner Modelei. Das ist eine Welt, die ich getrennt halte, nicht, weil ich mich dafür schäme, sondern weil es für meine Freunde außerhalb der Modelfotografie nicht relevant ist."↵

27. "Wenn das moderne 'Problem der Identität' hauptsächlich darin bestand, eine Identität zu konstruieren und sie fest und stabil zu halten, dann besteht das postmoderne 'Problem der Identität' hauptsächlich darin, die Festlegung zu vermeiden und sich die Optionen offenzuhalten."↵

28. "Diese Fotos bedeuten etwas für mich. Mit ihnen kann ich ausdrücken, was mir wichtig ist. Es ist vielleicht leichter als mit Worten. Ein Bild kann mehr als tausend Worte sagen, und man hat mehr Spaß daran und es funktioniert weniger technisch, mehr emotional als Worte."↵