

PRESS RELEASE

UFERSTUDIOS
EXHIBITION HALL
AT KESSELHAUS
UFERSTR. 23
13357 BERLIN

EXHIBITION

Markus Rock

The I and the Other

PHOTOGRAPHY 2014–2015

PRESENTATION & RECEPTION
23 NOVEMBER 2015 · 6–10 PM

EXHIBITION
24–29 NOVEMBER 2015 · 12–7 PM



Markus Rock began his career in different positions in the media world, such as make-up artist, stylist, production designer and consultant, before he started to work as a photographer himself. After 25 years in San Francisco, Munich, Paris and Barcelona, where he worked for numerous international clients, such as Vivien Westwood, Harper's Bazaar, Madame, Levis, MTV and Sony Music he moved to Berlin.

In his latest artistic work he investigates the complex and contrary meanings of human physicality for the individual and his relationships. This work, which was created in 2014 and 2015 is presented in «larger than life size» prints in his current exhibition with the title «The I and the Other» in the «Kesselhaus» of the Uferstudios in Berlin.

The philosopher Martin Buber said, that only by confronting the other, man finally becomes himself. In this confrontation, the I loses its narcissistic structure (by experiencing) friction and resistance. This principle of dialogue is a reoccurring characteristic of Markus Rock's work.

RALF HANSELLE · from the catalogue for the exhibition «Leib»

The longing to unite with the other and the simultaneous fear of this union, create an inner conflict. In his latest work, Markus Rock explores this dilemma, the human body and its inherent ambivalence.(...) The bodies appear in a vacuum free of context - naked in front of a black background, reduced to their pure physicality, as objects, yet in the encounter with the observer they reveal themselves as subjects, as sentient, self-aware individuals.

JAN GROSSER

Markus Rock's photos are both brutal and tender at the same time, showing humans as they are. Alone and in relationship. Their impact is not defined by their size. He gives us an opportunity to recognize the real I and the real Other.

ANDREAS SCHÄFER

PRESS PREVIEW: 23 Nov. 2015 11 AM–1 PM (also by arrangement during the setup on 20–22 Nov. 2015)

MATERIAL/PICTURES: per eMail on request

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JAN GROSSER

Markus Rock – The I and the Other

The human body is, depending on one's perspective, an object as well as the home of the human subject. Its physical existence poses the boundaries, behind which the subject is protected and imprisoned in a sort of existential isolation. Never will I really be able to feel what another feels, never will I take his place or be fully united with him. He will always remain the Other to me, the unfathomable. Yet, the body is also the means, by which to come into contact with the Other and, at least, in part overcome this loneliness acquired at birth. Because the encounter with the Other envelops me in a cloud of sensual impressions – his voice, his touch, his warmth and smell – which leave emotional traces in me, to be integrated as memories. In this manner, the Other may become part of me and I of the Other and we thus break through our isolation.

Being entered by the Other, however, also presents a danger to me. I cannot completely know, alone control it. Will it hurt me, emotionally or physically, or overwhelm me so that I can only feel and think the Other and no more myself? Caught between my desire for union with the Other and my fear of it, I am facing a fundamental dilemma.

In his current work, Markus Rock looks at this dilemma, the human body and its inherent ambivalence. Rock declines some of the innumerable constellations of this conflict. In his pictures, the bodies appear in a vacuum without context – in their nakedness before the black background – reduced to their physical presence as objects, but in meeting the viewer also as subjects. The lying woman with her eyes closed remains distant and passive, while the men who gaze directly at the camera or decidedly away from it emerge as active subjects. Other figures stay occupied with their bodies as objects or their inner experience – the tattooed man who steps away from the viewer, the woman reaching between her buttocks, and the man holding his head in his hands. In their self-absorption, these figures reveal themselves also as subjects – as sentient, self-aware beings.

In the images of the couples, the encounter with the Other is shown as a constant struggle, which poses the question of power – in the form of penetration, the taking of as possession, the exercise of a force upon the Other – and the question of identity – Who are you? How do you respond to me? How resilient are you; how resilient am I? This struggle is playing out in the conflict between the desire for and the fear of the Other, between intimacy and distance, the fundamental conflict of human relations.

When the figures gaze directly into the camera, entering into eye contact with the viewer, so to speak, we can feel clearly what is present in all the images. Every man experiences himself in his dichotomous existence as self-aware spirit and physical object, as an I and as an Other. Each encounter with another person is the field, where this split is staged anew. As painful as that may be, it remains our only hope.

