

Press "The Blondes"

„The Blondes“ is a photo series of 42 parts, all taken over the period of the project „Blond“ in Tilburg and Amsterdam (NL) .

"Blond" was realised as one of a series of five interventions that made up the venue *Shopping*, commissioned and curated by the Fundament Foundation. All of them took place in the shopping area of the city centre of Tilburg, interrogating how contemporary art can be related at present to the codes and strategies of shopping.

For the project *Shopping* Olaf Nicolai submitted a proposal which involved the reproduction of a certain aspect of beauty and glamour, essential components of shopping: Being Blond. Blond hair carries a wide range of connotations with it, varying from purity and sexiness to coolness and seduction. In Western Europe hardly anybody is a natural blonde. Almost all blond hair is artificial, therefore man-made and reproduced; natural blond hair is almost exclusively found amongst children. Bleaching is a practice that is as old as shopping itself; upon the time of the creation of the first department stores, around the 1850's, also the concept of hair colour fashion was introduced, in order to give upper class ladies artificial hair colours. Today blond hair refers often to stereotyps like the vamp or the diva (such as Mae West, Marilyn Monroe, Brigitte Bardot, Catherine Deneuve, Madonna, Britney Spears) as well as to the fashioning of drag and queer communities.

The concept "Blond" by Olaf Nicolai consisted of establishing a hairdressing shop where people could have their hair bleached free of charge. He changed empty shop premises into a hair shop. The shop was to be open for the period of one month. The customers were advised by a colour specialist and also had a diversity of possibilities: A variety of blonde colours were offered for choice.

Instead of the regular advertisements for hair products, photos of existing works of art in which "blond" plays an important role (including Andy Warhol, Vanessa Beecroft, Karen Kilimnik, Douglas Gordon, Santiago Sierra, Olaf Breuning and many more) were presented in the hairdressing shop, creating a mixture of hairdresser, art gallery and a mantelpiece display in a private home. There was only one condition to be bleached free of charge: every customer had to allow that photos were taken of them, before and after the hair treatment, and the customer had to give the artist permission to use the photos for the artist work.

›The Blondes‹ series is a selection of the numerous photographs taken during the project "Blond". The complete series will be presented at Galerie EIGEN + ART Berlin for the first time.

In occasion of this exhibition a catalogue was published at Artimo Verlag / Amsterdam.

This catalogue reproduces the whole series in original size.

A perforation line gives the possibility to detach the works from the book and present them in individual arrangements.

Thomas Meinecke: WELCHE FARBE HAT MARIAH CAREY?

DANA INTER
NATIONAL
ARABIAN BOY
A JEWISH GIRL

GEWANN DEN GRAND PRIX
DE LA CHANSON
IN EUROVISUELLER
DEKONSTRUKTION

WHO SAYS BLACK PEOPLE
HAVE TO BE BLACK
FRAGT DER GROSSE
RUPAUL IN DRAG
SUPERMODEL
OF THE WORLD
WIGSTOCK AFRO
WEISS GETÖNT

MARIAH CAREYS
BLONDES HAAR
SIGNIFIZIERT
DEN SUPERSTAR
DOCH SIE SAGT ES LAUT
I'M BLACK AND I'M PROUD
SCHON WIRD SIE ANDERS
ANGESCHAUT

(2004)

Thomas Meinecke (*1955) works as an author and radio-DJ.
He is member of the Munich based band F.S.K.
2 portraits from "The Blondes" were used by Olaf Nicolai for the layout of the new F.S.K.
album "First Take Than Shake" (Disco B, 2004).

