

L'ŒIL DE LA PHOTOGRAPHIE

JAEGER ART : Ingar Krauss : This Is Not a Fashion Photograph

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Noémie de Bellaigue

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The Berlin gallery presents a vast selection of portraits taken by Ingar Krauss since the late 1990s. From the German countryside to Russia, via the Philippines, Ingar Krauss takes a sensitive look at the world around him.

Ingar Krauss is a storyteller of the intelligible. Born in 1965 in East Germany, he was a caregiver in a psychiatric environment before becoming famous in photography. A life experience which will undoubtedly forge future images approaching life from the emotional

side.

During the 1990s, Krauss photographed his own daughter and her friends after childhood. Among his most famous works, those of Hannah, a young girl from the small village of Zechin, located on the German-Polish border, where the photographer's family farm is located. Ingar Krauss follows this young girl dressed in her long blond hair over several years, capturing her in different situations, always using the same codes: leaning against flowery wallpaper, against a large tree trunk or even holding a multitude of balloons in front of her face, blurring her identity. The black and white photographs of these young adolescents manage to touch on the complexity of a pivotal period that is difficult to grasp with images where a score of emotions embrace each other.

In the early 2000s, Ingar Krauss visited juvenile prisons in Russia to paint portraits of young prisoners. The dark uniforms contrast with the bright white of the walls of their jail. Only a label plastered on their chest seems to differentiate them. Despite a standardized staging conveying a certain coldness, the emotional intensity that inhabits these young people manages to pierce through. A posture, a look, a movement of the lip are enough to betray an apparent impassivity, making these subjects particularly touching.

The exhibition also presents a large series dedicated to seasonal workers, coming from Eastern countries, such as Ukraine or Romania, for agricultural harvests in Germany. Between 2006 and 2007, Krauss went to meet them on the outskirts of Potsdam – about an hour from Berlin, in the asparagus and strawberry fields. Men, either very young or rather old, photographed from the front, always from the same distance, in accordance with the artistic tradition of portraiture. Some stare at the lens while others seem to shy away from it and run away.

Through this work, Krauss intends to give back an identity to those left behind by society who are nevertheless essential to making it function. Working 7 days a week, without protection, housed in a more than precarious manner... Krauss bears witness more broadly to the difficult working conditions of those they call "birds of passage". With the desire not to lock them into their position as workers, these images are like a recognition of their greatness and their humanity.

Ingar Krauss's portraits, like his still lifes, remove their subjects from their spatio-temporal framework to transport them into an almost dreamlike universe. This is particularly striking in his photos taken in Davos, in the Philippines, subsequently colored using plant-infused oils. Using this technique, Krauss aims to reproduce as faithfully as possible the magical atmosphere that captured him in Davos.

Each theme addressed by Krauss's lens, whether it is childhood, solitude or even precariousness, benefits from photographic rigor mixed with a deeply human approach. A title tinged with sarcasm to talk about lives on opposite courses to the catwalk: *This Is Not a*

Fashion Photograph is interested in the fragility of the world with sincere universalism.

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Ingar Krauss at JAEGER ART until June 22, 2024.

JAEGER ART

Brunnenstrasse 161

10119 Berlin

www.jaeger.art