

Artist Statement

"The illusion of otherness arises from identifying with the external alone."

I've always felt out of place, a strange, weird individual. This feeling of otherness is what drives my photographic practise; I'm drawn towards a constant exploration of what it actually means to be *an other* and how to break that illusion. I find it crucially important to challenge convention and peel the layers of the masks.

I believe the concept of otherness and standard, societal norms are strongly connected. We are very harsh to make opinions based on someone's exterior looks and therefore I'm interested in the voices of those who represent our societal projections. In my series "*Morphosis*" I study this phenomenon by showing different types of characters for viewers to reflect upon based on their outer surface and physicality alone. The people I chose for the project are shown in identical picture pairs. They're adopting two different roles, both their assumed more natural self and a more made-up version that perhaps reflects something more truthful to themselves. What actually is natural and normal, and who gets to decide that? The boundaries between authenticity and artificiality become blurred and questions of identity, gender and everyone's right to self expression are strongly present. Should classic understanding of masculinity and femininity be redefined?

A photograph is a statement that says something about our lives and existence; a validation of human emotion but also a political tool of change. Photography serves a strong role as contemporary instrument of power. My work is about respecting people with different ages, cultural backgrounds, bodies and experiences. Hear their story first. No one wants to identify as the stereotype the picture presents them as. What do you see when you look at them?