

**Text by Wendelien van Oldenborgh on the work Studio.**

**Studio, Rotterdam, 13 - 09 - 2002, 3:30 to 7:15 PM**

Slide-installation with four projectors, rear-projection on two screens, 2002

The location is a photographer's studio. Most Friday afternoons the photographer takes pictures of the people he has invited to pass by to include them in his project. He is dependent on what he observes that week and who is willing to pose for him. His job is to identify and register groups of people, who code themselves, consciously or unconsciously through dress sense and behaviour. His studio becomes the place where those groups meet by chance and individuals offer their image for his camera.

*The portrait-photograph is a closed field of forces. Four image-repertoires intersect here, oppose and distort each other. In front of the lens, I am at the same time: the one I think I am, the one I want others to think I am, the one the photographer thinks I am, and the one he makes use of to exhibit his art. In other words, a strange action: I do not stop imitating myself, and because of this, each time I am (or let myself be) photographed, I invariably suffer from a sensation of inauthenticity, sometimes of imposture. In terms of the image-repertoire, the Photograph (or the one I intend) represents that very subtle moment when, to tell the truth, I am neither subject nor object but a subject who feels he is becoming an object.*

*Roland Barthes*

(in Camera Lucida, Vintage 1979, translated to English by Richard Howard)

Four young men happened to be photographed that afternoon: Scep, Jan Hein Lakeman, Andries Voskamp en Thomas Moonen. What the photographer's camera wants to capture, is the image the young men display of themselves and the ideas the photographer has of their image. In the moment of the photograph those desires move between them and are expressed exactly on that one spot: the cross on the floor where they are asked to pose for his camera. This cross indicates both that moment of exchange and a momentary intersection of private and public space: in the instant of posing the image that the subject privately projects turns into the image which will be realised in the photograph and become public. The pre-image, the subjective experience of the image, the cliché (the negative), turns into its positive presence by means of a release of the shutter and the flash.

*The camera is capable of provoking people to reveal aspects of themselves that are fictional, to reveal themselves as the creatures of imagination, fantasy and myth that they are.*

*Jean Rouch*

(quoted by Mike Eaton, in "The Production of Cinematic Reality", in "Anthropology - Realty - Cinema" 1979)

The 16mm film camera was there to record the ritual, which takes place around this particular point. The photographer and the young men were aware of the presence of the film camera as an addition to the photographic camera. The film camera took a position beyond the photograph and extended the moment of posing into a further moment of posing and acting, thereby doubling the weight of the image. In the recording of this act the desires, fantasies and expectations which are producing the representations of "selves", are in transition, moving between all players involved. The camera stays mobile.

*You are not I. No one but me could possibly be. I know where I have been and what I have done ever since yesterday when I walked out of the gate during the train wreck.*

*Paul Bowles*

(‘You are not I’ in *Collected Stories*, Black Sparrow Press)

The models and the photographer have all become actors, playing the roles they have that afternoon, and partly portraying themselves in the image they expect. The camera is a silent observer of all the transitions, and an active creator of new intermediaries.

In a last scene a camera literally changes hands, and is put into the pocket of what happens to be the photographer.

Wendelien van Oldenborgh, 2002

With thanks to: Ari Versluis, Ellie Uyttenbroek, Scep, Jan Hein Lakeman, Andries Voskamp, Thomas Moonen, Constance Ruhm, Ludo Engels.