

Thanksgiving and **Things in common series** (/Owned) investigate the relation between identity and memory.

Over the course of time we build new layers upon the existing memories, we link them together and add new associations in the process that can be described as creating myths. Although the results – the myths – are different for each person, the creation itself is something we all, as human beings, have in common.

The form of the pictures from these series is also connected with the topic of mythologization of our memories. They are supposed to be „nice“, generate what we usually feel, while trying to remember our favorite toys we played with as children, familiar places where we spent our time, or illustrated books we used to read. The recollections we have are enjoyable and pleasurable, but very often deceiving as well – especially when the myth we cherish turns out to be better than reality.

The world is not simply given to us, and its meaning has to be both discovered and created. Even though we deceive ourselves sometimes, or doubt the value of the results from time to time, such a creative power is worth being thankful for.

Creativity in experiencing reality also underlies my other project, **The Protagonists**, in which I examine what constitutes an identity not of an individual, but a larger social unit – a family.

A family is to me the most important and the most intimate relationship that exists between people. It does not mean, however, that its concept and definition is limited to blood ties only. Families may be formed by corresponding experiences, shared values and emotional closeness; or, paradoxically, they may be based on opposition and contrast.

The kinship between the protagonists of my pictures is created in two ways. Firstly - visually, which is emphasized by the background that binds and exposes the people – the fabric and the clothes make them look alike, but it is exactly because of the sameness of the surrounding that their individuality stands out.

Secondly – conceptually, on the level of interpretation. The pictures in this series are not documentary photos. I met some of the families that are presented, but some others were created. It is up to the viewers to decide what the relations between the people in the photos are, and if the community they have formed in front of the eye of the camera really exists.

What really fascinates me in photography as a medium is that it allows not only to create something by adding and building, but also to present a viewer with a novel image and perspective by removing and deconstructing. I used that while working on **Non-Places**.

I had an opportunity to take some pictures inside a shopping centre at night, and then I started working on the pictures, but the process was different – instead of adding, I was removing. I got rid of people, ads, logos, merchandise and writings to uncover the very construction of the place, to see it as it was before it was concealed behind them.

The title, Non-places, was chosen after having discovered Marc Augé's theory of such spaces. Places are areas for living and coexistence, where new relationships are formed. On the other hand, there are also non-places (like gas stations, airports or shopping centres), which cannot be described in this way, and which are so similar to each other that almost elude identification. They remain anonymous and “unowned” despite the constant presence of people.

It seems to me however, that even non-places do not lack identity completely and that my baring them have revealed an element of their character.

„**Display**” was a combination of many elements – a video, performance and... Christmas trees I collected from Cracow's homes and churches were the core of it, but the site and the people were equally important. The idea for the exhibition stemmed from reflections on how our rituals constitute us as a society, and a fascination with the way the immaterial value of tradition, passed orally from generation to generation, gives

raise to very material objects in their abundance.

Right now I am working on an interdisciplinary project in cooperation with such institutions as Historical Museum of the City of Cracow or „Wieliczka” Salt Mine, where I am preparing site-specific installations. These works and places are closely related, that it was necessary to reflect on the character of the place, its structure, history and context in which it functions.

„**Cracow in the Box**” project harks back to Erik Kessels's „Photography In Abundance”, and investigates the problem of overabundance of images. The Museum's collection consists of more than 85.000 photographs, and when we add those from National Digital Archive (all 15 million of them) it becomes clear that it is impossible to comprehend.