

ABOUT ME BY MARGIT BRANDL
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BROKEN MUSES AND ME

I take pictures since over 10 years and have exhibited in Austria, Croatia and Belgium. In taking pictures, my main subjects are mannequins and other artifacts - especially when they are about to break apart. For me, broken mannequins are unwanted still lifes. Often they are tremendously human and show aspects that human beings would rather hide. Their scars and bruises are uncovered and still they keep up appearances. These mannequins face the world as they know it - or as their sculptor wanted them to. They do not cease to inspire me to take their pictures; thus I call them her Broken Muses.

The human touch in the frozen inanimate fascinates me as much as the brittleness and irrational self in human beings. All too often in life, I meet many people who have different urgent items on their agendas, but who reject those agendas in the next second, being determined and spontaneous, busy and contemplative at the same time.

In other words among those I like there are two sorts of people: Those who would buy me a glass of red wine anytime and under all circumstances—all the while neglecting that I like white wine better—and those with whom I would go out for a coffee—anytime and under all circumstances, even if they would then have tea, water or whatever is on their mind to share.

From time to times I need to get an idea of the world outside, and that's one of the main reasons for taking pictures.

ABOUT MY WAY TO TAKE PHOTOGRAPHS

My perception has changed through photography. It has clearly sharpened and focused on the essential. I am pushed to make pictures.

When taking pictures the most important thing is to see the special in the ordinary. What you see matters as well as the way you observe your subject. In addition, almost everything in my photographic art revolves around changing perspective.

Even though I am convinced that quality matters, I think it is possible to take good photographs with almost any camera. Good material keeps you from thinking of it. Whether, how and if a good camera will function is out of question and as a consequence good material helps to concentrate on the picture itself.

ABOUT LIGHTENING CONDITIONS

Admiring the benefits—and the limitations—of light and shade is a prerequisite to good photography. Light as well as shade can be the biggest obstacle to a good picture.

I like the evening twilight best. When the day goes down, shadows grow longer and pictures have to be taken quickly because the light, which second by second grows more and more beautiful, is nevertheless fading away quickly.

ABOUT MY PICTURES

I do not change or rework my pictures. I do not change the scenery, in other words my pictures reflect the circumstances in which the picture has been taken. In simple terms, I see the pictures and take them just as they are. They are not arranged or consciously changed. I do not accommodate items or manipulate images manually or digitally afterwards. I admit a selective perception that plays tricks on me and leaves me and my pictures less objective than they could be. But the subjective component is the key to understanding the mannequins, broken things, statues and all the like.

To sum up, I do not want to change scenery that I photograph, but I do want to change my motive's context.

ABOUT "BEING" ANALOGUE

Whenever I am asked to tell more about my way to look at the world and to make pictures I tend to also explain why I love film and my analogue cameras. On the one hand it is definitely the shutter sound which I am nearly addicted to, which is pure joy and gives me a certain exhilaration every time I hear it.

And then of course there is the need to be careful with the material, to think and look first and then decide on a picture. It is important to me that it does matter whether I take a picture or not.

If you use digital cameras, whatever you do not like you can erase afterwards. And you see it instantly. To me, this instantaneous result takes away half of the joy of photography. I do not want to waste material.

And then there is the aspect of having to wait. Film pictures are not instantly visible. It is cumbersome to obtain them: buying film, finding the right motives, encountering a good place for the development, and finally picking them up and viewing the result. And my reward for dealing with impatience is double joy: once when making the pictures and a second time when holding them in hands.