

PIERRE LIEBAERT

FREE NOW – Belgium, 2012 > 2015

Pierre Liebaert invites us to a strange in-camera. The models who replied to his ad wanted to pose in the intimacy of closed doors, as if this face to face with the photographer whom they knew nothing about was the one thing they had been waiting for.

No other desire than to be in front of him, to be contemplated, exposing themselves before the camera and transgressing a norm their public life or private situation seem to impose on them. By posing nude and masked, revealing imperfect bodies at odds with the standards of erotic photography, these men had nothing else in mind but to abandon themselves to the gaze of the other, to submit themselves to it. The resulting photograph is for them but a document bearing witness to this, a «photograph as proof», an image of their momentary freedom.

This burlesque confessional produced photographs permeated with great solitude; a sad carnival of naked bodies reminding of recumbent statues, the mask protecting them from themselves. Opting for the gaze of the photographer rather than the psychologist's couch, they leave light hearted, having unburdened their secret onto the one who will remain its sole depository. Pierre Liebaert rediscovered the essence of photography, of the relationship between model and photographer, exacerbating the notion of power it infers in this desired submission.

Text by Xavier Canonne,
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