

Mental Considerations.

ERIK

FRANSSEN

Erik Franssen was born in Heerlen, in the Netherlands, where his fascination with photography started, specifically, in his high school darkroom. After finishing high school, Erik moved to study at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in The Hague, also located in the Netherlands. After assisting other photographers for a few years, he started as a freelancer in Amsterdam, mainly working in the field of editorial fashion photography. His images were published in magazines like Glamcult, GUP, AvantGarde and Dutch Esquire. Also, he has shot ad campaigns for Windows Media Live and for the Italian brand, CBY Crust. In 2007, while he was living in Berlin, he started working on his own projects. He stayed there for two and a half years, to work on his long term project concerning the apparent invisibility of the Berlin Wall. This effort, resulted in exhibitions to important museums such as in the Museum Stadsgalerij | Schunck in Heerlen and in the Centraal Museum Bureau in Utrecht, both located in the Netherlands. Also, it brought him significant publications like in the German magazine "Ein Magazin über Orte". His work is part of several private and public art collections. At the moment, he resides as a visual artist in Amsterdam, where he works on his Mental Considerations series, which move towards a more abstract interpretation of his ideas and inspirations.

All images courtesy of Erik Franssen, opposite page: Untitled.





Wondering about your questions, I started thinking about reinvention as a way of being reborn. I don't believe in actual reincarnation, or at least, we can't be sure that we are being reborn. So in my opinion, we should better focus on this lifetime and embrace its own unpredictability. I grasp the term reborn in a more abstract way, mostly as a process that we go through in life. Sometimes we win, some other times we might lose but, hopefully, we learn from our experiences.

We have to accept that we cannot control everything, although we love to think so. Many of the events that happen in our lives, depend from circumstances and also (bad) luck. Like for example, the place that we are born or who our parents are. We cannot affect those happenings because they are purely based upon chance and physics, but on the other hand, they do define the rest of our lives.

Although there are many things in life that we cannot control, I still think it is necessary to make a pause once in a while and evaluate where we stand. We should ask ourselves, what we really want to achieve, what is more important for us and if the life we are having is actually the kind of life we want to continue leading. This process can be a struggle sometimes, because everything is changing so quickly and the world is very complex right now. Maybe we have based our existence on decisions made some years ago and the train we are now on is moving rapidly, which makes it difficult to get off the bandwagon, surpass our own ego and reinvent ourselves.

In my Mental Considerations series, I try to create some rather disturbing frameworks that echo the viewer's inner world and provide those much-needed spaces, for thought and contemplation. I explore how I can refer to fundamental feelings and needs with minimum resources. We are exposed to so many incentives these days, that slowing down, has become a luxury. We cannot escape ourselves and it's important to remember that everybody struggles with this feeling. Maybe we find comfort when we realize this and as a result, become kinder and more liberated at the same time.

A lot of times, these necessary breaks in life, derive when misfortunate events happen, like the news of a violent attack or the death of a faraway acquaintance. We realize that everything can change in a heartbeat and although we always know subconsciously that this might happen, it still comes as a shock.

This re-awareness of our own mortality suddenly makes us feel more alive than before and instinctively we know what is most important to us. We are willing to change everything and do all the things we dreamt of. We say to ourselves to remember this, but then life moves on and we move on and, we humans, tend to forget. I say, if we could only hold on to this feeling, remember our own mortality or at least find the time to pause once in a while and think, we would mature from this sentiment and maybe, afterwards, feel a bit reborn.

this page and opposite: Untitled.



Isn't talking about rebirth superstitious?

I think it is, but I have to confess, if I want something really bad, I cross my fingers and pray to whatever higher entity, to give me what I want. Just in case, because you never know.

