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VIVIANE SASSEN

FLAMBOYA

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Two women sitting on a staircase are symbiotically connected through their braided hair. A man at the beach is carrying a child bent over his head like an extravagant hat. A boy is holding his hand in front of his eyes – the hand gleaming golden like the glaring sun.

From October 30th to December 3rd the Kominek Gallery is presenting the series “Flamboya”, photographed by Viviane Sassen between 2003 and 2006. Her mysterious and poetic images of young men and women from Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia and Ghana are shifting between staging and spontaneity, fantasy and realism, intimacy and distance. The faces of the portrayed dissolve in shadows, are turned away, hidden or alienated through body paintings. Their bodies are forming exceptional poses, are lying on the ground or merging with others into artistic and surreal sculptures.

Born in the year 1972 in Amsterdam Viviane Sassen lived with her family in a little village in Kenya during the age of two to five. After studying fashion design in Arnhem and photography in Utrecht she returned to the places of her childhood in 2001 and started searching for the impressions and memories of that time. The colors and patterns, the atmosphere and the rhythm of the country are the things that remained and that are conjured up and transferred artistically in Sassen’s photographs.

Her images are like a chain of associations and sensations, are visual notes not following a preset order or chronology. In the exhibition the photographs are coming together just like in the scrapbook that Viviane Sassen is carrying with her on her travels through Africa to collect inspirations, Polaroids and quotes. Bigger and smaller prints with different frames and interspaces are opening up new perspectives and perceptions with each glance. And like always in the Kominek Gallery there is also a book accompanying the exhibition (published by Contrasto). Here again multi-faceted graphic impressions and connections are unfolding. Through the combination of full and half pages particular images and details are overlaying and thereby endorsing the openness and ambiguity, the playfulness and mysteriousness that are lending Viviane Sassen’s work their special fascination and attraction.