

Press release

Abdulhamid Kircher | *Rotting from Within*

29.06.- 31.08.2024

Opening: Saturday, 29 June 2024, 6 - 9 pm

"He says his gift to me was bringing me into this world"

Rotting from Within is Abdulhamid Kircher's first presentation of the eponymously titled body of work and the first exhibition of the artist at carlier | gebauer. The title captures a feeling which the artist describes as "the unearthing of my father and the generational trauma that exists within the patriarchs of my family; subsequently the task of uncovering my own self amidst the things passed down". The deeply personal aspect of Kircher's practice is mirrored in his site-specific approach to the blank exhibition space of the white cube. These installations include photographs taken by the artist, as well as archival images and biographical artifacts. Kircher and his partner, Zoe Bullock, create each of the installations in reaction to the space, working on site with an inkjet printer, choosing to vary the format of the prints with each iteration of the installation, rearranging the prints on the exhibition walls. With this approach a constant flux emerges in the work, introducing fluidity in the seemingly fixed medium of photography. Kircher's installation requires the artist's hand, even though as photographs they could be potentially endlessly reproduced from afar. This present absence is a recurring theme in Kircher's work, playing out on different levels and pulling the viewer into his own world.

Through his photographic practice Kircher examines possibilities for reconciliation, questions of identity and intimacy, impacts of patriarchy and violence. *Rotting from Within* can be viewed as a family album in fragments, as proofs of evidence of an ambivalent relationship. A living archive, these works give shape to the relentless attempt to understand filiation and address its wounds and its core. They extend an invitation to grapple with reality as it is unfolding right in front of us while simultaneously being conscious of never coming to terms with what is there. Amid all these difficult entanglements, image taking offers a refuge, imposing a distance to the events witnessed. Kircher is asking himself and the viewer: "Can any of us really see something as it is happening to us?"

The summer of 2014, the first summer Kircher spent with his father after a long rupture in their relationship, marks one of the beginnings of this work. During this summer he turns to photography as a means of documenting, exploring this emerging relationship between his father and him. They spent time together in their native Berlin, and traveled to relatives in Turkey. Over the course of 10 years, Kircher continuously returns to photography in the presence of his father and his extended family. His camera follows them in their daily lives, collecting slice of life moments. Needless to say, the relationship between Kircher and his father expands beyond these 10 years the artist actively examines through photography. Kircher's installation incorporates a rare image from his mother's collection, which marks other beginnings for *Rotting from Within*. This image depicts father and son on the day of the artist's birth. From there the trajectory of his life, their relationship unfolds, skipping over some aspects, zooming in on others, arriving to the summer of 2014 and expanding beyond. The figure of the father is almost omnipresent in these works, Kircher inverts his absence in his life to a seemingly prevalent dominance in the work.

Abdulhamid Kircher (*1996 in Berlin) lives and works between Berlin and Los Angeles. He graduated in 2018 from The New School's Eugene Lang College of Liberal Arts with a Bachelor of Arts in Culture and Media and in 2022 with a Master of Fine Arts in Visual Arts, from the University of California, San Diego. His monograph *Rotting from Within* published by Loose Joints is forthcoming in June 2024.