

Title: Children, Children!  
Achim Lippoth  
Sweet Factor zero

#### Top Right

Sweet as sugar and heart warming- these images are the majority displayed in children's photography, but the subject has far more diversity to offer, such as the internationally acclaimed children's photographer Achim Lippoth and junior staff photographer Conny Wnek demonstrate on the following pages.

#### Bottom Left

Achim Lippoth is one of the most sought after child photographers worldwide. However his images do not have anything in common with the classical ideal of child photography. In his tableaux, children's souls oscillate between apocalypse and melancholy.

#### Bottom Left PG 2

Achim Lippoth  
Since 1992 has worked as a free people photographer with his focus on children for industrial companies, such as Audi, DaimlerChrysler, IBM, Nestlé, Nokia and internationally renowned newspapers, such as (New York Times Magazine, Life, Wallpaper Magazine, SZ Magazine, Vogue, Stern). In 1995 Kid's Wear was founded, his own magazine. The form after a magazine for children fashion, after receiving multiple awards from Art Directors Club and the Lead Academy, the magazines publication has become a "Bible of international hipstertum" (F.A.S). Artist such as Anton Corbijn, Nan Goldin, Martin Parr, Oliver Toscani and Bruce Webber have contributed to its production. The Cologne photographer, graduate of 1968 self-educated himself in the forms of photography during an arts study, he calls his style of photography »A balancing act between art and commerce«.

An elegant coffeehouse, you think of Vienna: steamed tones, wall paintings stucco, it smells of turn of the century, even if the clothing refers to the modern.

The gaze falls first on the adults, who are sitting rigid in offsetting selected clothing with coffee and cake, conversation moves between them. Unwillingly the eyes are pulled: driven by a subtle spotlight, it lands on a impeccably

dressed little boy who has sunk his face in a cream cake, only the sister with the white blouse and the old-fashioned Dutt seems to perceive that something is wrong. In many ways, a typical «Lippoth», this perfectly and with big expense staged image of the series «Paris» of 2004: The children live in their own, secluded parallel universe, they copy our conversations, play the game of the adult, but on their terms. Their gestures say: we'll do what you expect from us, but you better watch out!

#### **Contradictions of the childish world**

Achim Lippoth, since years internationally in demand as a fashion and advertising photographer with predominantly "childish" motives shows in his free photo series, the contradictions that encounter the children growing up on the this painful path: Innocence, discipline, resistance, conformity, consumerism, anger and world pain.

The series »Together« of 2004 displays the acrobatic synchronized real-socialist youth sporting events and projects them into the space of today's advertising world aesthetic. In the cycle of »No-Fashion« Lippoth staged the child members of a society of traditional costumes group as traditionally consequent small adults.

Devoid of conventional displays Lippoth in »wölflingen« – presents us with a look and content of a particularly gloomy looking series - protagonists in little models, independent and determined an eschatological scenarios.

»Rage Attack« from 2005 shows children's faces contorted with fury, who shave the heads of their dolls, TV screens smashed with toy-machine guns or burnt down apartments with self made flame throwers.

The image series »Class of 1954« was inspired by the movie »The Miracle of Bern«. Here the internationally booked and success ridden photographer shows his ironic side. He breaks the pose military school drill of the post war period with over staged and a fine technical quality, which is obviously a technique of image editing of the new millennium. Despite the eye-bat lashing undertone: the viewer does not feel it a laughing moment, for through the picture he see's in to the ambivalence of their his childhood.

**Closer to the people** But Lippoth can also be quieter, in resent times he seems to be searching for the intermediate: while in his stage setting arrangement, the setting and

cloths often give decisive factor, while during his free work he focuses more on the moment. The man who leaves nothing to chance, who as a regisuer and as a photographer realizes his style to »One shot Movies« and often works with a team of 30 people (plus parent), allows himself to »loose control.«

«I am a photographic chameleon» said Lippoth «I like trying new things, since it's the diversity of light and the cameras- technical possibilities of the photographic medium that make it so exciting.« Some things are only possible with the lightness and spontaneity of a miniature SLR camera, »because it is closer to the person«. Like in the Low-key-Essay »A Night Like This« which originated at the edge of a fashion shooting. »In the evening we organized a bonfire for the kids«, recalled the photographer- »the light of the fire and that of the flashlights mingled in a fantastic way, I just pulled out my EOS-1Ds Mark II and started taking pictures without flash at ISO 800.«

**Frighteningly Mature** the series »Mother, Father, Sister, Brother« was created with no fixed concept. Lippoth used a tele-objective and accompanied the children in their home environment. The idea to photograph them through bottles, plants and curtains was created spontaneously, so Lippoth. »Being a child is the ambivalence between the to-live-in-the-day and the pressure of having to grow up faster« says the photographer almost wistfully. »We built tree houses, but today children are overwhelmed by the media and the childhood is pushed further and further onto the younger years.«

Its no question: Achim Lippoth produces a child's picture, which surprises us. »His« children, although not »Grown-up«, for their bodies are still too small. They are still frighteningly mature. His pictures seem like an antidote to the flood of children photographers, mocking the little child-schema-contaminated teletubbies and sweet schnuffel, which we watch on television, the private eye in the drips.

Lippoth's view between apocalypse and melancholy of the children's world is – fortunately- not the only possible one. But by reducing the sweetness factor to zero, it creates something that can only be done by a few photographers: he opens the terrain of children photography not only to advertising, but also to the artistic and thus prescribes the limits of the generic.