



Abb. 1 Klaus Kampert

**WATER MOVES 131.04.07, 2007**

Fotografie, Pigmenttinten-Druck auf Hahnemühle Photo Rag, 53 x 40 cm

KLAUS KAMPERT

# The body is the shell of the soul.

**K**laus Kampert tries to ascertain in his images the human being as an entity: body, spirit and soul as an integrated whole.

Kampert's main focus lies on the manifold expressions of the human body which gain a meta-base and a link to the inner world through the applied sujet as well as the movement of the body in space and the relationship between body and space. So, movements of the human body and the dynamic element water are caught in a momentary image in the static technique of photography.

The human body is staged as a whole, as a three-quarter figure, a torso, a half-length portrait and in detail-photos.

In his early youth Kampert was already interested in fine arts in all their forms of expression. Having delved into painting, sculpturing and drawing, he finally turned to photography which he acquired as an autodidact. He gained additional knowledge about photography by assisting renowned Düsseldorf photographers.

In 1980 Kampert opened his own studio and initially focused on the area of beauty and fashion, producing advertising campaigns for German and international companies. Simultaneously he developed his own artistic projects which already then centered on the human body and its diverse possibilities of expression. Since the beginning of the new millenium he has almost exclusively attended to artistic photography.

Most of his images show the nude human body, often stressing parts of the body. Kampert tries to detect the essence of man by using the presentation of the human body in movement and expression. Herewith he understands the body as 'the shell of the soul', which can also transport emotions and attitudes of mind of a person. Therefore he does not call his works classical acts or erotic images – even though these genres are close – but he leaves it to the observer to interpret the pictures.



Abb. 2 Klaus Kampert

**NEPTUNS TÖCHTER 164.05.12, 2012**

Fotografie, Pigmenttinten-Druck auf Canson Baryta  
40 x 40 cm

It is his ambition to catch the expression of the human body and the innate language of emotions and the inner self as intensively as possible. The naked human body allows Kampert a closer approach to the human being without the deflection through clothes, cosmetics and accessories.

Certain elements of other artists' works have inspired Klaus Kampert in his art. He admires William Turner's harmonious and yet trenchant presentation of light, which also plays a crucial part in his own works.

When photographing he puts great emphasis on a precise preparation and the use of all facilities available. Thus many of his sets are created with parts he built or painted himself. However, during the pro-

cess of photographing there must be sufficient space for changing the initial concept.

It is important to emphasize the processual character of Kampert's working method. At the end of every single artistic process there is a picture as a result which manages through precision and harmony of all the applied means to focus on the final aim: the human being in his entirety. On the one hand Kampert thinks that the body language of humans has diverse facets. On the other hand the individual person can also express him/herself in many different ways.<sup>1</sup>

Kampert presents the general in the individual. The approach to the human being as a whole is a general one but every model is always an individual, too.

A dancer continually shows a unique expression which reflects him as an individual. However, the physical control of his body is ideally suited to create the expression which the artist needs to transform his intention into an image.

Kampert does not use the photographic image to make a statement about the person photographed but shows individual aspects to achieve a generalisation of the expressive possibilities of the human body, which means to find the unity of body, mind and soul in the body language. The gesture must be convincing, then the image of the person as a whole has no need to include the head. That is why Kampert's presentations of torsos do not contradict his aim but serve to emphasize it.

In most cases he prefers to work with professional dancers, occasionally also with actors and artists who are able to perform complicated movements and can use their bodies expressively. It is vital that the model has total control over his/her body. 'I don't have to tell the dancer anything about the perfect image, he knows it',<sup>2</sup> he told the photo-art-magazine 'Schwarz-weiss' in an interview in 2013 about the discipline and the perfectionism of dancers. The setting supports the model in the development of his expression.

Kampert's main theme is the human expression which is reflected through the bodies in his works, and he presents the relationship between the outward body and the inner life through different subjects. During his artistic career he has always used forms of composition which enable him to illuminate the multiple aspects of his theme and to reveal the complexity of the human being and the diversity of his expressions and spirit.

Some of these modes of setting are e.g. backgrounds with geometric figures and lines projected with beams of light to place the body into a fictive

space. Kampert also constructs stage sets which present the body in a certain environment. A blue ball lit from within, which is thrown, balanced or held by the model in the series 'You better not play with the Earth' serves to put the human being into relationship with the Earth.

The series of nine photographs shows the changing position of a blue ball- first rising, then falling. It is the overarching theme that creates the relation and hints at an interpretation. The associations are produced by a series of similar features as shown by the blue geometric shape of the ball and the blue planet Earth. In the context of the theme formal similarities and contextual associations are clearly expressed and connected to the subject of the Earth. The function of the ball as a toy or a piece of sports equipment is here contradicted and the beholder is demanded to respect the Earth.

The most famous example of the game with the Earth is the scene in the satirical film 'The Great Dictator', where Charlie Chaplin as Anton Hynkel throws the globe into the air, where it dances, balances, is caught and finally bursts. Kampert's intention is thought to react to something serious with a touch of humour<sup>3</sup>. The above mentioned series came into being in response to the catastrophic accident in the powerstation Fukushima, Japan on the 11th March 2011, caused by the Tsunami. The colour of the Blue Planet symbolizes the oceans which explains why the ball has its blue colour. The last photo of the series reflects the connection to Japan most clearly as the ball on top of the human body and the white background represent the Japanese flag.

This kind of concepts adds another dimension to Kampert's analysis of the human being, which renders his photographs more meaningful and allows a greater freedom of interpretation.

Several of his series have the element of water as a subject. In 2004 when the ballet of the Deutsche Oper am Rhein wanted to cooperate with Kampert on a calendar with dance motifs, he was highly pleased that the ballet and the sponsor both decided to have the twelve pictures with dance scenes photographed in water.

This was the first time that he used water as a means of expression in his work. Water in its fluid form offers a great variety of settings and has been used in every possible form in the twelve calendar motifs- from a rain shower and dense gush of water to the waterfall and just splashing or even a very calm surface as in the December motif. The dancers' pose reflects the choreographies of Youri Vamos to a great extent. According to Kampert the most interesting



Abb. 3 Klaus Kampert

**WATER MOVES 131.02.07, 2007**

Fotografie, Pigmenttinten-Druck auf Hahnemühle Photo Rag, 53 x 40 cm

thing about the project was combining as many aspects of water with the themes of the choreography and thus to highlight them.

In this series called 'Water moves' water is practically the dancer's partner and the expressive body language combined with the element water gives the photos their strength of expression. In this series the space becomes the stage on which water is used as a vehicle. Water can be an artistic and aesthetic means to stage the human body.

In the series 'Neptune's Daughters' the element water has the interesting function of being the natural environment of the human being whose home is water and who comes from water. These figures have not only evolved from water but are also symbolically related to the figures known from Mythology. The body is surrounded by water and moves totally naturally. To emphasize this aspect the series is kept in black+white. The colour shall not distract from the relationship between man and water.



Abb. 4 Klaus Kampert

**WATER MOVES 131.08.07, 2007**

Fotografie, Pigmenttinten-Druck auf Hahnemühle  
Photo Rag, 53 x 40 cm

Kampert sees water as the elixir of life. 'Water is the pre-requisit of life and therefore plays a great part in the emotional life of humans. In water you feel at home, water heals, water purifies. It adds an additional dimension to our quality of life. Before man is born he exists in water- this is the best symbol for the importance of water for human beings.'<sup>4</sup>

According to Kampert water gains another dimension in a photographic image: water allows the diverse presentation of more abstract human forms.<sup>5</sup>

This becomes particularly clear in the series 'Water Creatures'. Here parts of the body are hidden below the surface of the water, those above are reflected on the surface. The body seems to be divided between above and below the water. The surface

seems to be a line where the elements air and water meet. In the air, which the human eye is made for, the bodies are easily recognized, under water the forms seem to be blurred and diffuse. The surface plays its part in the shaping of the human body and helps to create more abstract figures. Water offers the possibility to show the body without photographing it from head to foot, just as shadows or cloth are used in other series of Kampert.

On the one hand water isolates and exposes those parts of the body above the surface, on the other hand it reflects the body so that new forms appear and complement the actual body. The calm surface offers an excellent reflection, but as soon as there is movement the image becomes contorted and the reflexion of the body seems to shatter into a thousand pieces. In addition to the reflexion on the surface there are other possibilities to represent the body. As water is transparent there are fascinating optical layerings of reflexions of the body parts above and below the surface, which may differ according to the lighting, angle of view, reflection and movement of the water. In this case water proves to be the perfect element of expression, and the interaction of body and water create surprising images.

It is one of Kampert's principles to think critically but to contribute to the beauty of the world, too. Klaus Kampert's works give a visual impression that he has a deeper theme which is to show the human being as a holistic entity and to come closer to him, to his body, mind and soul. In the course of his life as an artist he has come to the conviction that man is a 'promethean' being who strives for creativity and aesthetics, empathy and humanity. He aims to represent these aspects within his art and is influenced by other art forms in the creative process. Classical music in particular is a source of inspiration for him where he finds a similar image of humanity. He is enthused by the idea that man as a creative being is able to continually achieve something new and surprising. And that is what he wants to describe.

*Paula Kampert and Marius Alexander Stiehler*

## ENDNOTEN

1 Vgl. Lehmann, 27.

2 Lehmann, 35.

3 Klaus Kampert im Gespräch mit der Autorin am 07.02.2015.

4 Vgl. Anm. 3.

5 Ebd.

6 Ebd.

## ABBILDUNGSVERZEICHNIS

- Klaus Kampert (Abb. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12)



Abb. 5 Klaus Kampert

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Abb. 6 Klaus Kampert

**WATER CREATURES 163.04.12, 2012**

Fotografie, Pigmenttinten-Druck auf Hahnemühle Photo Rag, 40 x 55 cm



Abb. 7 Klaus Kampert

**WATER CREATURES 163.07.12, 2012**

Fotografie, Pigmenttinten-Druck auf Hahnemühle Photo Rag, 40 x 55 cm



Abb. 8 Klaus Kampert

**WATER CREATURES 163.08.12, 2012**

Fotografie, Pigmenttinten-Druck auf Hahnemühle Photo Rag, 40 x 55 cm



Abb. 9 Klaus Kampert

**WATER CREATURES 163.09.12, 2012**

Fotografie, Pigmenttinten-Druck auf Hahnemühle Photo Rag, 40 x 55 cm



Abb. 10 Klaus Kampert  
**NEPTUNS TÖCHTER**  
**164.03.12, 2012**  
Fotografie, Pigment-  
tinten-Druck auf Canson  
Baryta, 40 x 40 cm



Abb. 11 Klaus Kampert  
**NEPTUNS TÖCHTER**  
**164.01.12, 2012**  
Fotografie, Pigment-  
tinten-Druck auf Canson  
Baryta, 40 x 40 cm

Abb. 12 Klaus Kampert  
**NEPTUNS TÖCHTER**  
**164.04.12, 2012**

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tinten-Druck auf Canson  
Baryta, 40 x 40 cm



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# KLAUS KAMPERT

(Auswahl)

- 2015 Festival Europeen De La Photo De Nu, Arles
- 2014 Bewegt, Museum Helgoland, Helgoland (Einzelausstellung)
- 2014 TEN Arts, Galerie Joseph, Paris. Moscow International Foto Award, MIFA, 3. Platz
- 2013 TEN Arts, Fotofever, Paris. Art of Photographie Show, Art Institut, San Diego, Kalifornien. Ecologica/Mente, Magazzini dell'Arte Contemporanea, Trapani, Italien. Prix de la Photographie Paris 2013, PX3, Silver Medal
- 2012 Fotografia Contemporânea, AFK Galeria, Lissabon, Portugal. Black&White Spider Award, 2. Platz, Merit of Excellence.
- 2011 Prix de la Photographie Paris 2011, PX3, Gold Medal
- 2010 Graphis Photography Annual 2010, Gold Award. Photography Masters Cup 2010, 2. Platz, Merit of Excellence
- 2009 True Bodies, Oliver Gordon Gallery, Toronto Kanada (Einzelausstellung)
- 2008 Schöne Neue Welt, Visual Gallery of Photokina, Köln
- 2006 International Photo Festival, Xining, China
- 2005 Selected Characters, BFF, Düsseldorf
- 2004 Tanz in 13 Akten, Deutsche Oper am Rhein, Düsseldorf, Tanz in 13 Akten, Theater der Stadt Duisburg, Duisburg (Einzelausstellung). CO OP, Kunstverein Hildesheim, Hildesheim
- 2000 Zeit Blicke, Galerie der Stadt Stuttgart, Stuttgart  
Ausgezeichnet: Large Format Award 2000, Rheinauhafen, Köln
- seit 1980 Selbstständiger Fotodesigner
- 1953 In Düsseldorf geboren



Klaus Kampert

[www.KlausKampert.com](http://www.KlausKampert.com)

## LITERATUR ÜBER KLAUS KAMPERT (AUSWAHL)

- B. M. Pedersen, Photography Annual 2014, New York 2014.
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