

THE PRICE OF PLEASURE

CHRISTOPHER KLETTERMAYER

I have worked in various styles of photography - as a photojournalist I captured the lives of others.

As a fashion photographer I could embrace the creative urges of beauty and designs.

All of this changed after my HIV diagnosis. With meticulous curiosity I reflect on the transformations caused and inspired by the HIV infection in my body in 2013.

An undefined, biological bond between my body and an alien entity forces me to reflect on different perceptions of the concept of the self, emotional states and questions the fluid subjectivity of being. Intimacy: now, a concept interrupted by a foreign toxicity aligning with the closest entity of myself - my material body.

I confront stigmatizations, perceptions and dualities that persist around HIV and sexuality, related to shame, guilt and judgements. I challenge the views about HIV, its carriers and the socio-political re-construction of their bodies and behavior.

For an HIV-positive person in society is still considered a danger, an illness, a guilt, the deconstructive other.



ABOUT

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- Going Viral Installation - December 2023 to January 2024
Museumsquartier Vienna, Austria
- Fernweh - August 2022 - Ongoing
Tropeninstitut 1060 - Vienna, Austria
- Privilege: Intimacy - December 2021
Malkasten Verein - Düsseldorf, Germany
- Going Viral - December 2019
Kulturwerke Monheim - Monheim am Rhein, Germany
- Going Viral - February 2018
Offspace Hörnesgasse - Vienna, Austria
- Temporary Grounds - March 2017
Fotolabor Leutner - Vienna, Austria

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 1000 Days of Covid - February 2023
M Space Gallery - Barcelona, Spain
- Black and White - November 2022
Mrs. Toolip Gallery - Barcelona, Spain
- ArtPositive - September 2021
Marie de Holmsky Gallery - Paris, France
- Ampler than Loneliness - 2020
Online Exhibition via Visual AIDS, New York, USA
- (in)Visible - 2018
Espacio Gallery - London, UK
- Zeitlos - 2017
Haus der Fotografie - Vienna, Austria

GOING VIRAL

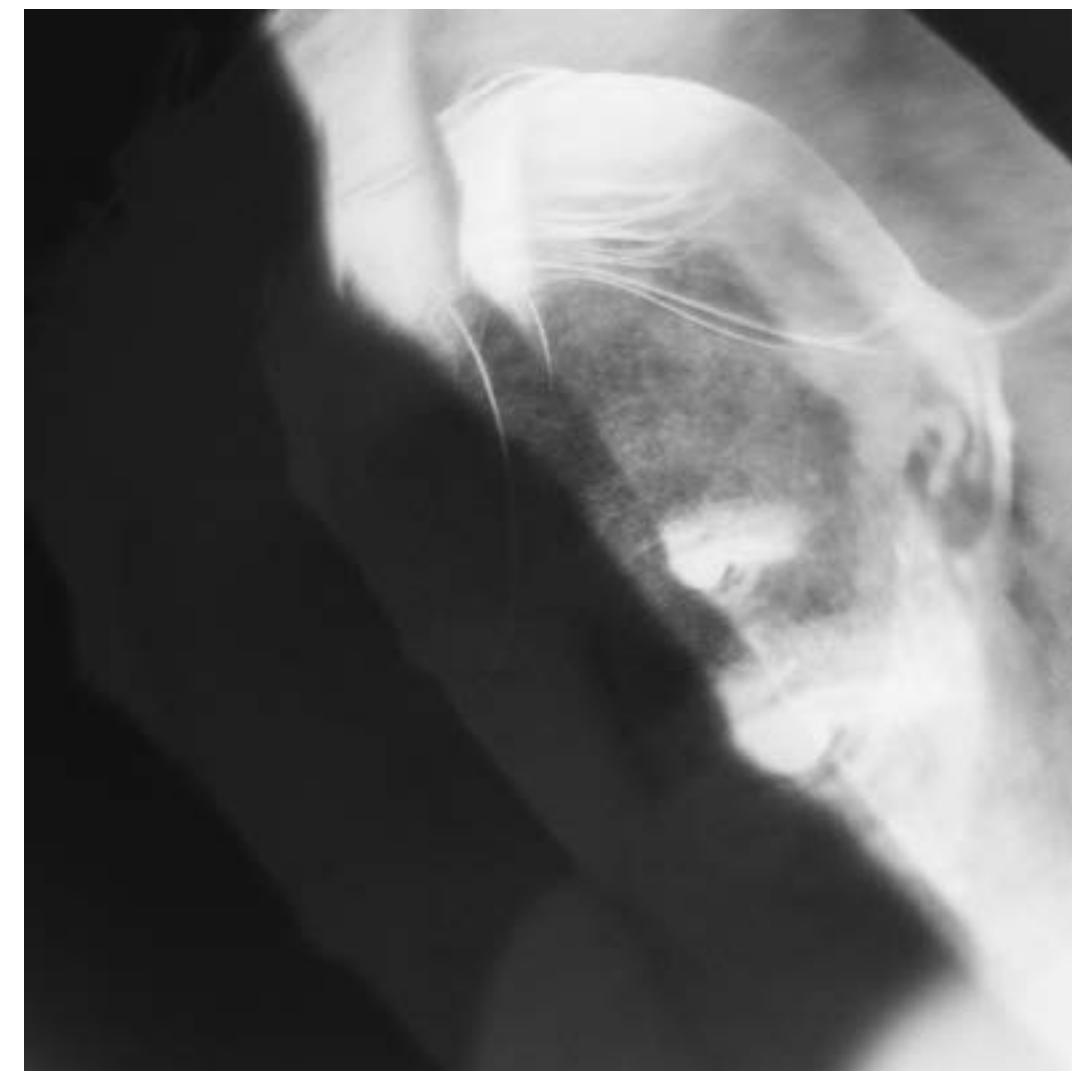
"What happens in the mind, how does one perceive the body, and how does the perception of the self change?"

From feeling toxic and plagued by self-doubt and self-loathing to contemplating my own past behavior, burdened by regrets. I had to reassess my self-image.

Self-reflection is a constant process. Through the juxtaposition of analogue photographs and their respective negatives, I visualize the stark contradictions that the diagnosis has confronted me with.



Installation in front of the Museums Quartier, Vienna - 2023/2024



THE SELF

Reviewing and recapturing, my life as a „negative“ continues to pop its head into my life as a „positive“. Wearing a mask, my search for the artistic identity continues – trying to find a balance between the now and the has-been.



THE EVERYDAY

Despite having treatment, new routines and dependencies have established themselves in my life. A pill a day keeping me healthy, tri-monthly blood examinations and an alarm that rings once a day. To remind me of my medication. To remind me that I'm HIV positive and dependent.



THE SEX

The challenge of confessing my HIV status is continuous company. When is the right time to tell someone about my positive status? Especially when there are sexual implications?



THE BLOOD

Ever since my infection, blood has become a fascinating aspect in my life. Be it the tri-monthly blood tests I take, the viral load, or the sensation of “venomous” blood, or an alien entity inside it. Blood infected me. Sex infected me.

HATE SPEECH

After having had several publications in english- and german speaking magazines, I was always fascinated by the comments underneath the articles.

Writing openly about sex, dating and my life with HIV often causes discomfort in readers, leading them to write hateful, bigoted and violent comments.

I recorded some of these comments, which could be listened to while reading some of my articles.



*Installation at the first solo exhibition
of "going viral"*

DISSOLUTION

A video installation, using a 90ies TV and footage of a pill dissolving in slow motion.

Once the pill is dissolved, an alarm goes off, and the video is repeated. In an endless loop.

This aims to give the viewer the sensation of the every day pill I must take to keep HIV at bay. And how I am reminded of it day by day.



*Installation at the first solo exhibition
of "going viral"*

SHE DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT HER STATUS.

SHE HAD BEEN INFECTED A FEW WEEKS BEFORE OUR ENCOUNTER.
THE VIRUS WAS RAMPANT AND SHE WAS HIGHLY INFECTIOUS.

THINGS HAPPEN.
BAD THINGS HAPPEN.

LOOKING BACK, THE ONLY "SAFEST SEX" PRACTICE WOULD'VE
BEEN TO USE WHOLE-BODY CONDOMS.

OR NOT TOUCHING ONE ANOTHER.



SUPER SAFE SEX

PRIVILEGE: INTIMACY

An HIV diagnosis didn't only give me a virus, but it robbed me of my concept of intimacy. I had been stripped of a feeling that is supposed to be so natural, and such an essential part of a relationship.

I longed for the feeling of letting go – but forbade myself to do so. Not allowing to be myself nor indulging in my own sexuality. The taste of skin, the sweat, the sounds and the passions experienced with a partner seemed alien to me.

It made me realize the privilege that intimacy entails. That something that is so common to so many people in every relationship can be perceived as a threat.













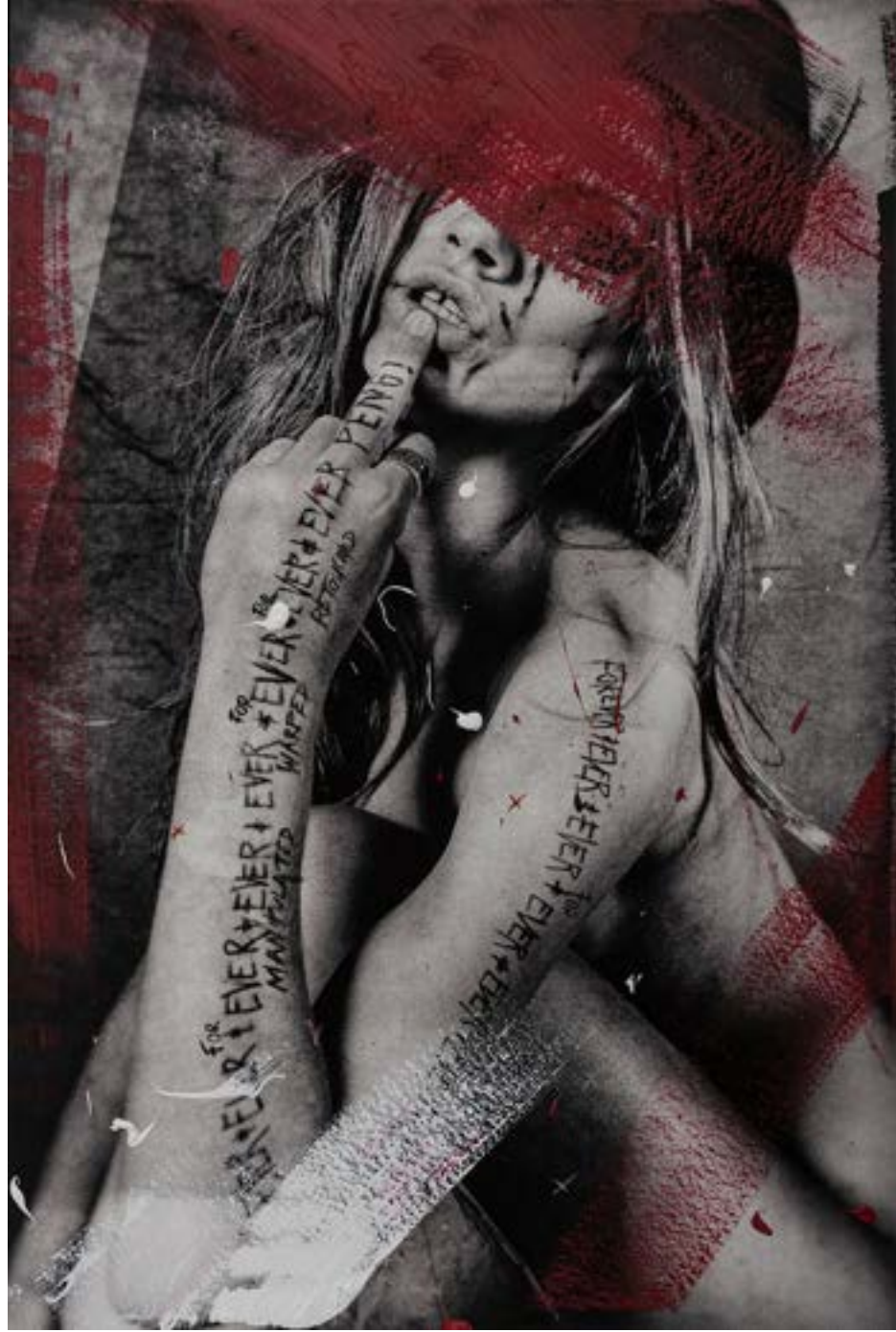
ERASED AND ALTERED

In the years after my diagnosis, my artistic endeavours froze.

Plagued by doubt, i reflected on the old work of mine. Chastizing myself for the life i had lead, the decisions i made. the path that took me to my infection with HIV.

Instead of creating something new, i had the desire to alter and destroy the work of my past. Overpainting the works seemed like the most suitable form, resulting in these images.

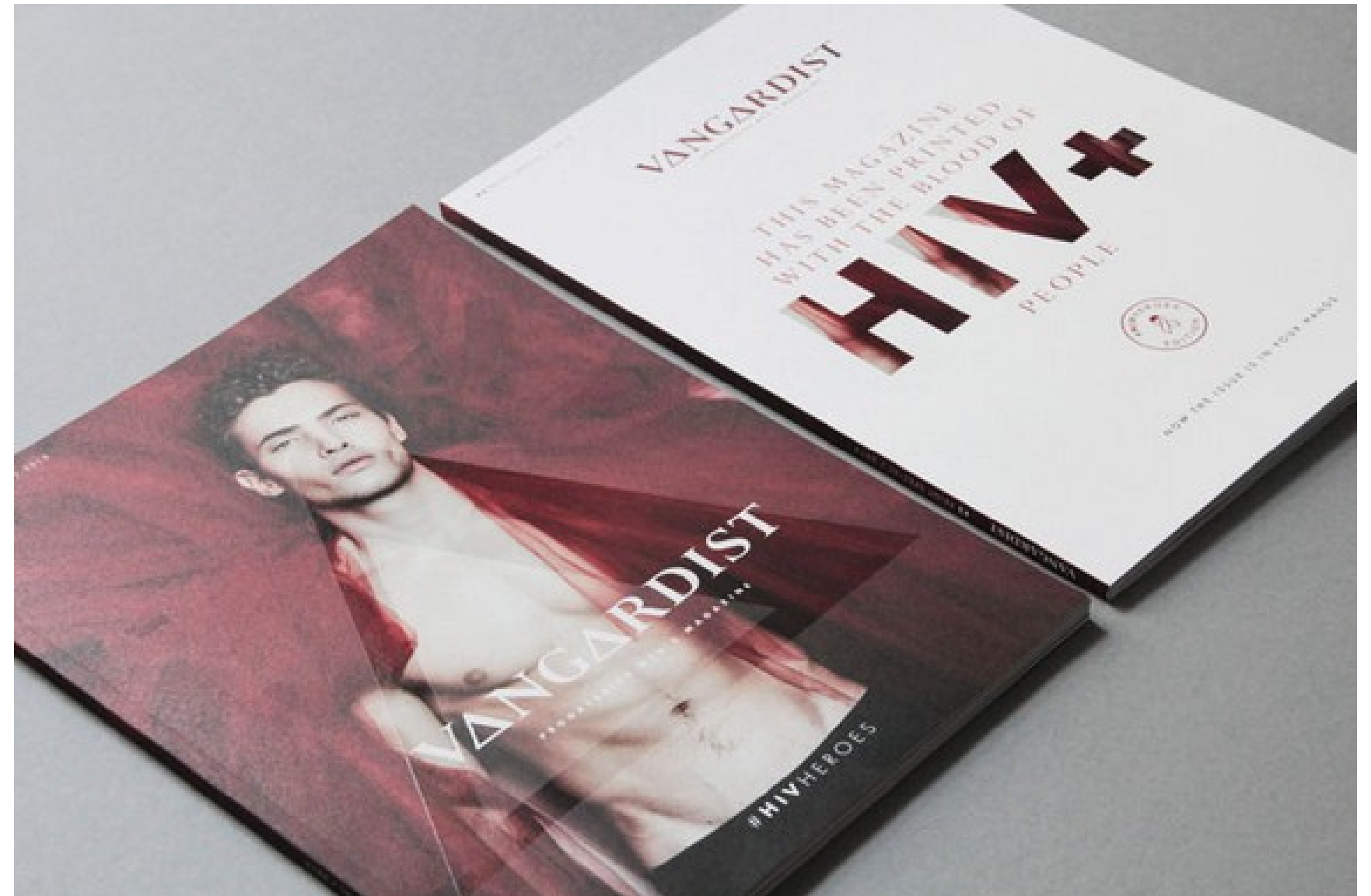




COLLABORATIONS AND PROJECTS

Blood donor for the Vangardist Magazine based in Vienna, Austria.

The ink for the magazine was partially mixed with donated blood by people living with HIV.



COLLABORATIONS AND PROJECTS

A cover and series for the Falter Magazine in Vienna, Austria.



COLLABORATIONS AND PROJECTS

Co-Writing and directorial assistance for the short film "Nicht die 80er" - based on my written work, winning the Goya Audience Awards.



RADIOPLAYS

So far I have written 3 radioplays in german, and one in english. All of them addressing aspects of an HIV positive life.

The english radioplay is for internal use only, but the german ones are accessible via a podcast I co-created in Switzerland.

Hi Leute, Ich habe AIDS

Grenzenlose Panik

Der nächste Satz entscheidet

BEFORE THE VIRUS

16 years of photography have amassed a lot of work. Both in my journalistic approach as well as my fashion photography.

Please follow the link to see the work this has entailed.

www.klettermayer-art.com

For my written work and updated news, please follow this link:

www.philipp-spiegel.com