



NEW RELEASE KEHRER VERLAG

Mathilde Helene Pettersen

I need a kiss before they leave

Text by Anna-Kaisa Rastenberger
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Photo series reflecting on the strengths and fragilities of family, motherhood and time

*Stop time. I want you here forever.
 Never grow up. Never leave.*

I need a kiss before they leave is an emotional family portrait, filled with immense joy, but also with a disturbing realization of a wonderfulness that cannot be stored. It reflects upon a human desire to freeze time, to forever savoring those moments which are destined to live on only as distant memories.

Photography is of course the artistic technique to actually freeze time and to store a split second forever. In this book, Norwegian photographer Mathilde Helene Pettersen captures an entire parenthood, with all its bright and dark moments.

I need a kiss before they leave reflects on becoming and being a mother, on building a family, on the immediate and unpredictable, on strengths and fragilities in life, and sometimes on the overshadowing fear of death and the irreversible.

Mathilde Helene Pettersen (b.1976) received her Master's degree in Photography and Film from the Edinburgh Napier University in Scotland / The University of Agder in Norway. Based in Kristiansand in southern Norway, she works primarily with personal art projects. Pettersen was presented in the Norwegian Journal of Photography #2 and has been exhibited at, among others, at the Musée de l'Élysée in Lausanne, the Festival de la Luz in Buenos Aires and at the Henie Onstad Kunstsenter in Oslo. Pettersen is a member of Association of Norwegian Visual Artist and society of Fine Art Photographers in Norway.

From the text by Anna-Kaisa Rastenberger:

First things first: loving is not for the faint of heart. Loving, day after day, requires the courage to handle the disappointment of quotidian love falling short of the ideal of love. It requires even more courage to extend love to societal structures in need of repair. (...)

»This is my story.« These are the words used by Mathilde Helene Pettersen at the beginning of her book I need a kiss before they leave. The series, consisting of photographs taken with a camera phone over a period of eight years, is a chronicle of childbirth, motherhood, and family life. Pettersen writes that this was a story she hesitated to tell.

Pettersen has spoken about the challenge and dichotomy of combining motherhood with the work of a photographer. On the one hand, she leads an ordinary enough, down-to-earth life with her family; on the other, she has a life outside the home, working as a photographer. Even in the Nordic countries, this is no simple equation to balance. Although the principle of gender equality in the workplace is firmly established, or at least acknowledged, it remains elusive in practice.

Exhibition

Norwegian Documentary Photography
 Henie Onstads Art center in Oslo, Norway
 23.08.19 – 12.01.2020

Book Signing

Kehrer Verlag@Paris Photo, 08.11.2019, 4 pm

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