



Körper 2.0

Self-portrait as Discobolus

Photograph, 43 x 50 cm

It started out as a fascination of what I call the ultimate form. Shiny, round, hard, and heavy – it was amazingly pretty.

I chose to carve this form in marble, which sent me back to Ancient Greece and all the handsome, white, naked male bodies (beautiful, naked female bodies were nowhere to be seen).

Since the form I was carving was a kettlebell, an object used to create an ideal body, I began to understand why this form is ideal too: The body, which this form represents, is a well discussed and well distributed body, and the connection to this ideal body verifies the form itself.

So instead of carving a human body in marble, the way Myron did, I carved the form that created it. This led me to the idea to sculpt the Ancient, male ideal Discobolus - The Discus-Thrower using my own body as a sculptural material. My new body sculpting idea was somehow utopian, since it is complexed to create a male body ideal using the body of a female. But this was a sweet dilemma, because to me the whole idea of an ideal is utopian too. One sovereign ideal? It cannot and does not exist; at least I do not believe it to be so. I mean, even in Ancient Greece photoshoping was a thing – to create the superior ideal, Discobolus, several different men were used as posing models. This guy is not really real!

I began my work in November 2014. At this point I had hired a Personal Trainer, a *phenomenon* that at the time had also received a great amount of publicity. My memory of my first session in the gym is to this date crystal clear: I was uncomfortable, skeptical, and a tiny bit scared too. I was dripping anxious sweat. My opinion of this new society, in which I was about to become an active member, was critical. But this was of some importance too, because how can you raise any critique with no knowledge of what you are actually criticizing?

The first two weeks I could not walk. And I was starving too. My deadline for this piece was May 2015, which was a big challenge, my trainer explained to me. An ideal timeframe had been a whole year, not just half a year. But due to the fact that I was short on time, I had to follow an extremely strict diet, cutting, bulking then cutting again, and lifting weights 6 days a week. Rest Day each Wednesday. I would never have thought it would have such a great impact on my social life!

As the months passed by my body started changing. My muscle mass was increasing, my arms got bigger, my shoulders got wider, my stomach got harder, but my breasts on the contrary almost disappeared. Looking away from my long, blond hair, my biological gender was almost in disguise. Instead of being tired all the time my head was clear, and I was high on adrenalin. I loved and do still love the gym!

During the process of sculpturing my body, many questions were building up inside me: Questions about how and to what extent the collective body of Western society creates and affects our private bodies. Why it is so crucial to us to define a body as either male or female? In which way we favor some abilities above others? And how have we learned to read certain capacities to be explicitly feminine or obviously masculine?

I was confronted with a lot of questions too. A friend once asked me if I saw the reflection of an ideal, female body when looking in the mirror. If I looked at myself and thought I was pretty. This remains unanswered. It was never of any importance. Even though I was living in the body that was also my working material, when I look at my self-portrait as Discobolus, I do not see me.