



Media Information

AGING TO BE OLD

The »image« that we have of old age is nothing like the actual one belonging to the generation of sixty- to seventy-year-olds. Even in the midst of their »best years« they kept photographer Irene van Nispen Kress very busy studying what it means to be old today. Van Nispen Kress spent more than six years closely following three women not normally in the spotlight through their daily lives. The result is SILVER, a book full of powerful photographs and intimate stories.

Bielefeld/Berlin, December 20, 2019 – »Everyone wants to grow old, but nobody wants to be old.« Is that really so?

Driven by her own sense of having an »expiration date,« Irene van Nispen Kress began her project, Silver, in the fall of 2012. Van Nispen Kress had just turned fifty years old and felt that she had crossed a line: »Suddenly I was one of the older people in society. Unlike yesterday, I'm old today.« These thoughts were accompanied by a strong sense of unease. Was she now entering a phase of life that lacked an outlook for the future? Or worse, was she heading into a phase in which she would only become a burden to others?

Other questions haunted her. Had she as a woman and as a photographer now achieved everything that she wanted and could achieve in life? Was it appropriate for someone of her age to want to start something entirely new? What would she have to be prepared for, and should she already say farewell to society?

Van Nispen Kress quickly set aside all of her worries and faced the changed situation: »I'm healthy and still the same curious, enthusiastic person I've always been. My talents haven't withered; they've ripened and matured. I parried setbacks and grew through them. Today I am myself more than I've ever been!«

So, what does the future have to offer? On a search for positive role models, the photographer found the Dutch women Anke, Mieke, and Ellen. The three women, who were part of her extended circle, allowed her to follow them with her camera. Themes such as the loss of beauty and fertility, of new beginnings, and intimacy in old age were the focus of interest. At the start Van Nispen Kress was particularly interested in the women's energy and dynamism. Over time, however, questions about how they dealt with their growth became the most important factor in her observations.

»I wanted to draw a realistic picture. Not stage something, or dress it up, or repeat it, or put it in the right light,« said the photographer. »I worked with the given circumstances and decided to use black-and-white to counteract the interference of color, which is at times capable of adding an extra layer of beauty. I wanted body language, motion, and emotion.«

Anke represents the lust for life. And for love. Because she was often ill as a child, and carries a cancer gene, she sees each day as a gift. Mieke is curious and full of energy. She pursues her goals and talents and is always trying to do her best. Ellen greets life with inquisitiveness. Her strong impulsivity may have limited her somewhat, but she still bounds through daily life, on a search for hidden treasures. »For me,

these three women are role models for all women. It's not about skin color or social backgrounds. It's not about differences. It's about similarities.«

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What are ultimately the most important things in life?
Love and relationships. Respect and dignity.

Silver is an elegant artist's book featuring impressive photographs, three essays by Hedy d'Ancona, Irene van Nispen Kress, and Marieke van der Waal, and interviews with Anke, Mieke, and Ellen.



Irene van Nispen Kress | Silver

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144 Pages

73 duplex illustrations

Hardcover

Languages: English, Dutch

Text

Hedy d'Ancona, Irene van Nispen Kress, Marieke van der Waal as well as Anke, Ellen, and Mieke

Design

Sybren Kuiper, -SYB-, Den Haag

Events

World Woman Foundation Summit, Los Angeles: March 2020

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