

Que moi (ou presque) is essentially about me (and a few « others ») to mark the dawn of my sixties. *Tempus fugit...*

« Always behind the camera »; that's how we picture a photographer, and we judge their work strictly by the photographs they produce. Incidentally, it is rarely the goal to attempt to discover what someone looks like by looking at their images or leafing through their books. But we always seek to get, *de facto*, a little idea of the person behind the lens.

Well, finally, here are 60 opportunities to see Denimal's face.

But that's not all. A few other family members appear: grandparents on their wedding day, and parents who were still teenagers at the time, unaware that on 12 July 1965, the next generation would be born. They are also the ones who took the photos of his childhood years. Then came friends and acquaintances, before the time of self-portraits and as well as my son. The last image is signed by my lifelong partner.

The project was born out of reflections on the course and trajectory of my life over the past six decades. These reflections stemmed from a combination of factors: my sixtieth birthday, the passing of my closest family members over the past 15 years, my extended stay in Sweden, a *terra incognita* I dreamed of as a teenager, and finally, the realization that time is accelerating. So I am unfolding in images the path I have travelled, *nolens volens*, from 1965 to 2025, with one photograph per year.

*A priori* glance, rather than egocentric; as intimate as it is memorial, and initially focused on iconographic research, this work has revealed its therapeutic aspect.

It enabled me to strictly establish a memory of my past, the foundation of my identity. It then led to a recollection of the moment the photograph was taken, and the moments before and after that moment, ultimately connecting the photographs and the years together. Thus, the journey between each image is slowly redrawn to establish a guideline for my existence. In other words, this work allows me to recreate a link between disparate, blurred or forgotten phases, successive breaks between the moments when the photographs were taken. Each image brings back a memory, and between each of them are periods of *grosso modo* one year. The work of memory allows me to recreate continuity in phases that have become discontinuous. From there, thanks to this work, a life journey emerges, shedding light on forgotten periods of childhood and adolescence, my life as a young adult, and then as a father. Images of travels and encounters come back to me, and pleasures and sorrows resurface.

In these images, I detect the persistence of a self that transcends the passing of time. I must remember these episodes from my life. They are clues, fragments of my identity, and they teach me to live with my past. This is the very essence of the reminiscence so dear to Proust.

Photography, which has been intimately intertwined with my existence since my early years, becomes the tool for this work of memory on my past, a true vehicle that allows me to situate myself today, here and now, in my existence. And which traces the beginnings of guidelines for the years to come, carrying the whole past along in the movement of life.

*Vires acquirit eundo*, as the saying goes.

Laurent Denimal

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