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MRZ
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Wenn die Facebook-Maske fällt

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MEHR STERN-BLOGS: DASGEGENTEILVONTRAURIG
 Unklare Besitzverhältnisse
 Weihnachten ist auch nur ein Mittwoch
 Mettwurst. Unbedingt.

Behind the Facebook mask

I'm a stalker. I stalk my daughter on Facebook. Purely out of motherly concern of course. There are many mothers who do what I do. Amateurs often out themselves by accidentally sending a friend request to the boy who flirts with their child online while they're checking out his activity. Not us though. We modern mums are true professionals, silent observers, ready to interfere only when things take an ugly turn.

I look at the girls' profiles with fascination, those child-women, unrecognisable from the familiar ponytailed girls in school uniform. They pose in figure-skimming half profile, hand on one hip, large eyes framed by heavy eyeliner, mouth half open in mock, cheekbone-enhancing surprise. Pouting is so last year, smiling in your profile picture is social suicide.

*By contrast, feigning happiness in a group picture is a must. Look at me and my glamorous friends, the photos seem to say - pictures of lookalike girls with painted faces and desperate smiles. Lorde, Queen of Teen Angst, provides the soundtrack with her song **Tennis Court**: "We're so happy even when we're smiling out of fear".*

*The group is important for survival - vital, some would say. In **"Divergent"**, the hugely successful Hollywood film version of Veronica Roth's equally bestselling teen novel, the world's population is divided into five fractions, each demanding absolute conformism from their members. It's the school playground transposed onto the big screen.*



"Die Leute denken mein Leben ist perfekt, aber das stimmt nicht. An manchen Tagen kann ich es nicht mehr ertragen." Valerie, 14 @ Bénédicte Vanderreydt/courtesy of Format Festival 2015

Vanderreydt stages her three protagonists and their friends like models in a fashion shoot. The result is a glossy version of the realities that the girls themselves set up and 'improve on' before they publish them on social media. There's just one important difference: each girl looks directly at the camera, without even a trace of a smile. She appears lonely, vulnerable, simultaneously childlike and mature. She somehow doesn't fit the picture - a sentiment she shares with adolescents around the world.

Bénédicte Vanderreydt's project and multimedia show „I am 14“ will be shown at **Déda Gallery, Derby, from March 13th to April 12, 2015. The event and exhibition is part of **Format, Britain's biggest and most renowned photography festival.****