

“Please do magic, whatever that may mean for you right now.” The stage directions are simple and clear, but the performance itself is rather difficult and hard to work out. For more than thirty years, the artist Ingeborg Lüscher, who has lived in Ticino since 1967, has been inviting friends, neighbors, and colleagues to perform a “magic” act in front of her camera. Without any systematic intention, this has led to a collection of more than 500 contemporary self-presentations and long taken on the characteristics of an original and surprising portrait gallery.

This book presents 100 collected “sessions” from three decades—from Paul Thek to Ai Weiwei, and from Andy Warhol to Annika Larsson. Concentrated yet relaxed artist celebrities “doing magic”, accompanied by an introductory essay and 100 delicate as well as amusing and enlightening annotations by Hans-Joachim Müller, the long-standing head of the arts section of the *Basler Zeitung* and art critic for *Die Zeit*.