

„Cheese!“

Photos of People from Graubünden

How do people present themselves on photographs? What pose does the photographer choose for them in the studio? Do people show themselves more relaxed in their private family album? And how do man and woman come across as cool as possible in digital photography?

The exhibition at the Rätische Museum shows pictures of people over a period of about 150 years. The images are always of people who knew that they were being photographed (meaning more or less arranged shots) – they are neither press photos nor photos that claim to be artistic.

Photographs of people are subject to historical change, which is determined by social needs, photographic technology, and economic conditions. The people of the Belle Époque (approx. 1880 to 1914) have different ideas about how they want to present themselves on photos than we do. And today the younger generation has different notions than the older generation.

At the time of the Belle Époque people go to the studio when they want to have their picture taken. The studio photographer delivers representative photographs. Around the start of the thirties of the 20th century the medium photography comes into widespread use in Graubünden. Many households have a camera; the time for “snapshot-shooters” begins.

Snapshot-shooters want to take pictures spontaneously and fast. Their shots are meant to serve the memory of beautiful moments; the creative quality does not matter that much. At the centre is family life; photography has intimate character.

For about the last ten years digital photography allows for unlimited picture taking. On the Internet photos can be shown to the whole world. Above all the young make full use of this possibility. Their photos comply with the new conventions. The off-key, the outlandish is now “in” – precisely the opposite of what was in demand during the Belle Époque.

In “Cheese!” the Rätische Museum presents an assembly of photos only seldom shown in museums. This original approach opens unusual and new perspectives not only on the past.

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Closed Monday, Tuesday to Sunday 10 am to 5 pm