

Clegg & Guttman

Rejected

Present on the international contemporary art scene since the early 1980's, Clegg & Guttman take up a visual rhetoric reminiscent of the bourgeois portraits of the Dutch Golden Age, while at the same time referencing the group images that crystallize the powers of the 20th and 21st centuries. They use the conventions of 17th century Dutch portraiture to place them in a contemporary context. Clegg & Guttman's portraits, presented in this volume, are rejected commissions which involve a very particular protocol in the Clegg & Guttman method. Thus, the subjects have commissioned a portrait from the artists, but are free to refuse the result. However, the artists retain the right to show and publish the work, which remains their property, even after the commissioner has refused it. This reverse tactic is also symbolic of the power issues in the particular category of portraiture.

MICHAEL CLEGG (*1957, Dublin) and YAIR MARTIN GUTTMANN (*1957, Jerusalem) have been working together as the artist duo Clegg & Guttman since 1980. The focus of their joint work is on installations and photographic projects. In addition, both artists are also active as university teachers: Clegg is a professor at the Karlsruhe University of Arts and Design and Guttman is a professor at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna.

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