

**Home Video Diary**



**ATTILIO SOLZI**



"Home Video Diary"  
by Attilio Solzi

Published by Void in 2017



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*"If there is a task for art it is to represent its time. Art that does not hurt anyone probably does not serve anything."* - This was Attilio Solzi's answer when told that some situations portrayed in 'Home Video Diary' would raise a few eyebrows amongst conservative people.

The straightforward title of Attilio Solzi's new book might not do justice to its complexity.

The reader only needs to glimpse a few pages of his work before they are flooded with questions. What is happening? What leads these people to such surreal moments? Who are

they? Where do these daily life spectacle take place?

Attilio's way of seeing it is: *"Ultimately, life is a comedy played between the drama and the grotesque. Depending on where you were born, one or the other character prevails. Around me, 90% is grotesque. I start from there, but then each "actor" adds their own ideas."*

Fascinated by vernacular photography and family home videos made during holidays and parties, Solzi's idea was to make low-quality videos that mix the contemporary view of directors such as Ulrich Seidl and the poetics of certain avant-

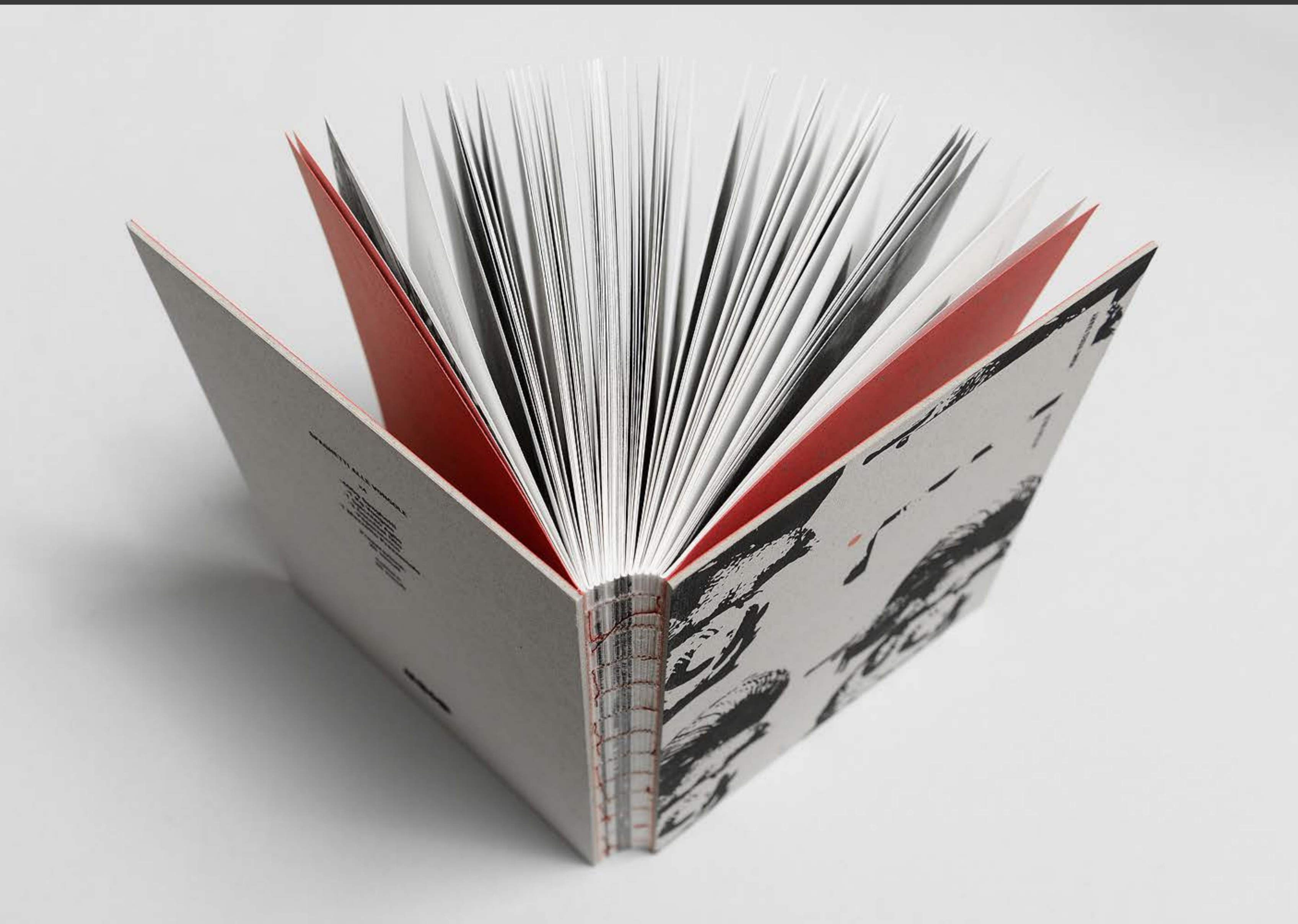
garde photography of the 1970s.

'Home Video Diary' is a project that started about 10 years ago. It was a "time-consuming" job over the years that only ended when Attilio's camcorder broke.

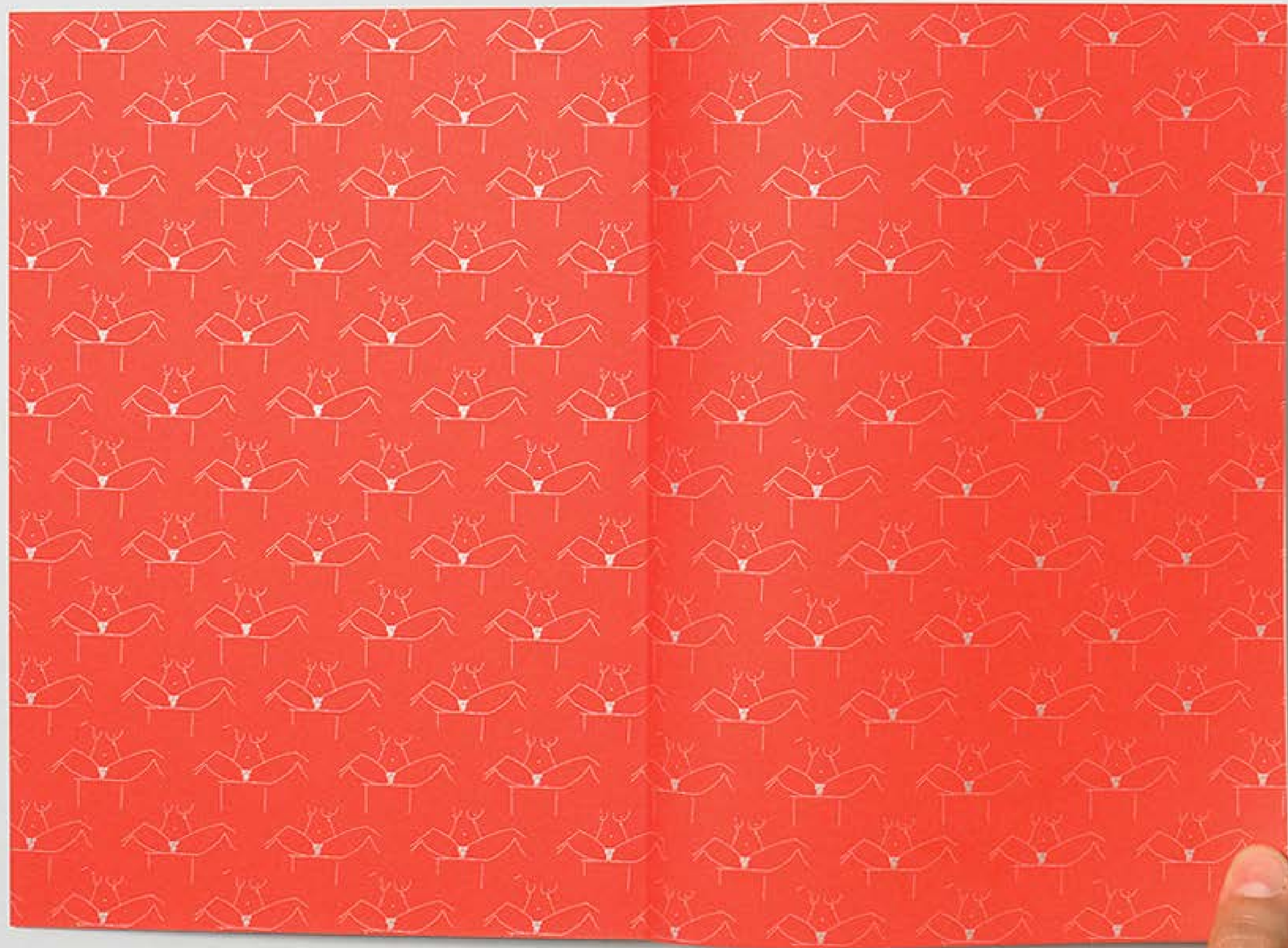
The videos have been shot in the small Italian village where Attilio lived. The people portrayed on those videos aren't actors or models but his acquaintances, friends and neighbours... People that he knew. People who allowed him to enter into their intimate moments, and who in return were able to enter into Attilio's peculiar universe.

Who is playing a character? Who is playing themselves? It is hard to figure out where reality ends and fiction begins. The strong bond between artist and the people within the images blurs such definitions. In the words of the artist: *"'Video Diary' is fiction but wants to be truer than the truth. It is a look at daily life where the border between the real and the surreal is not clear."*

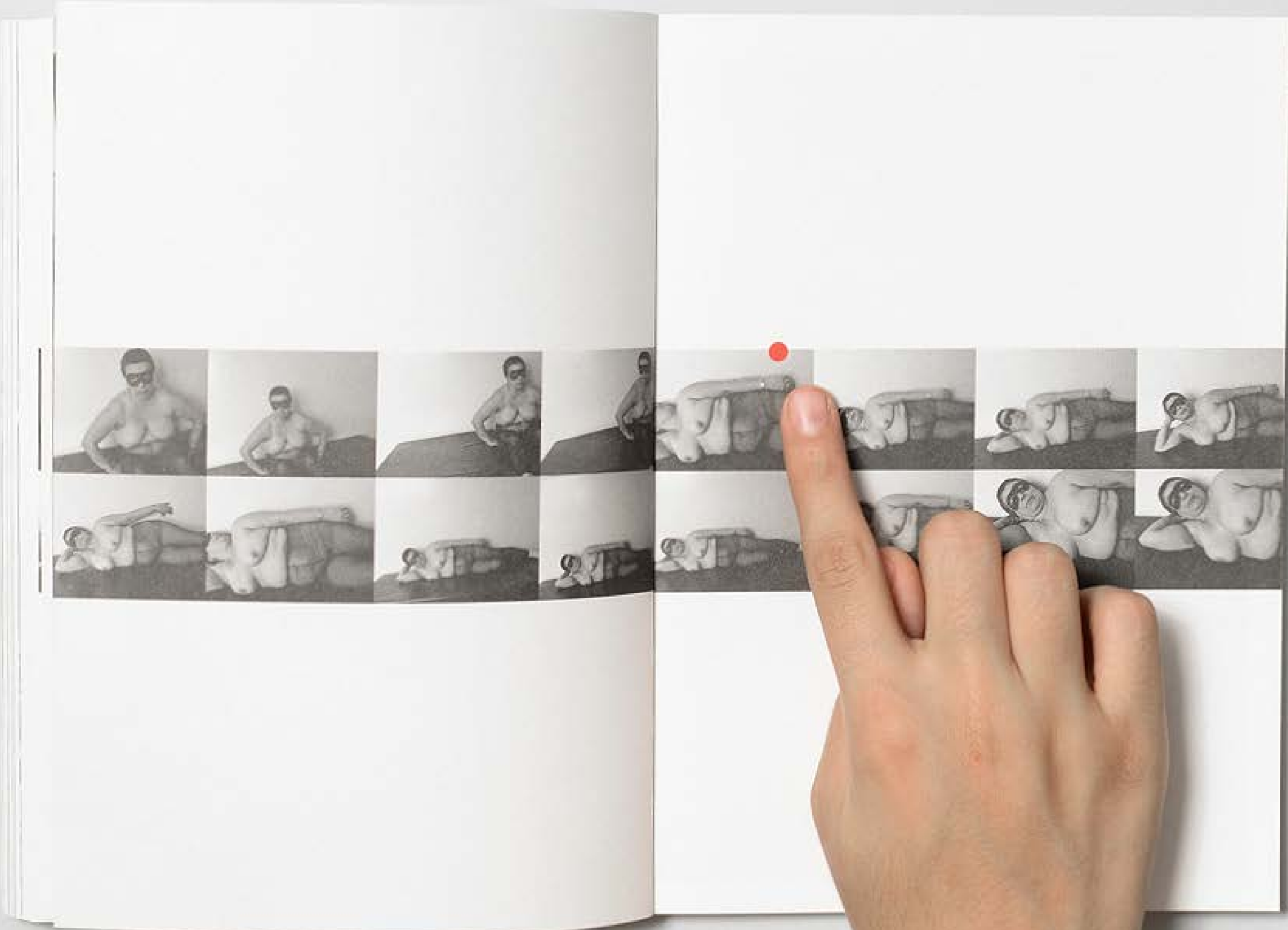
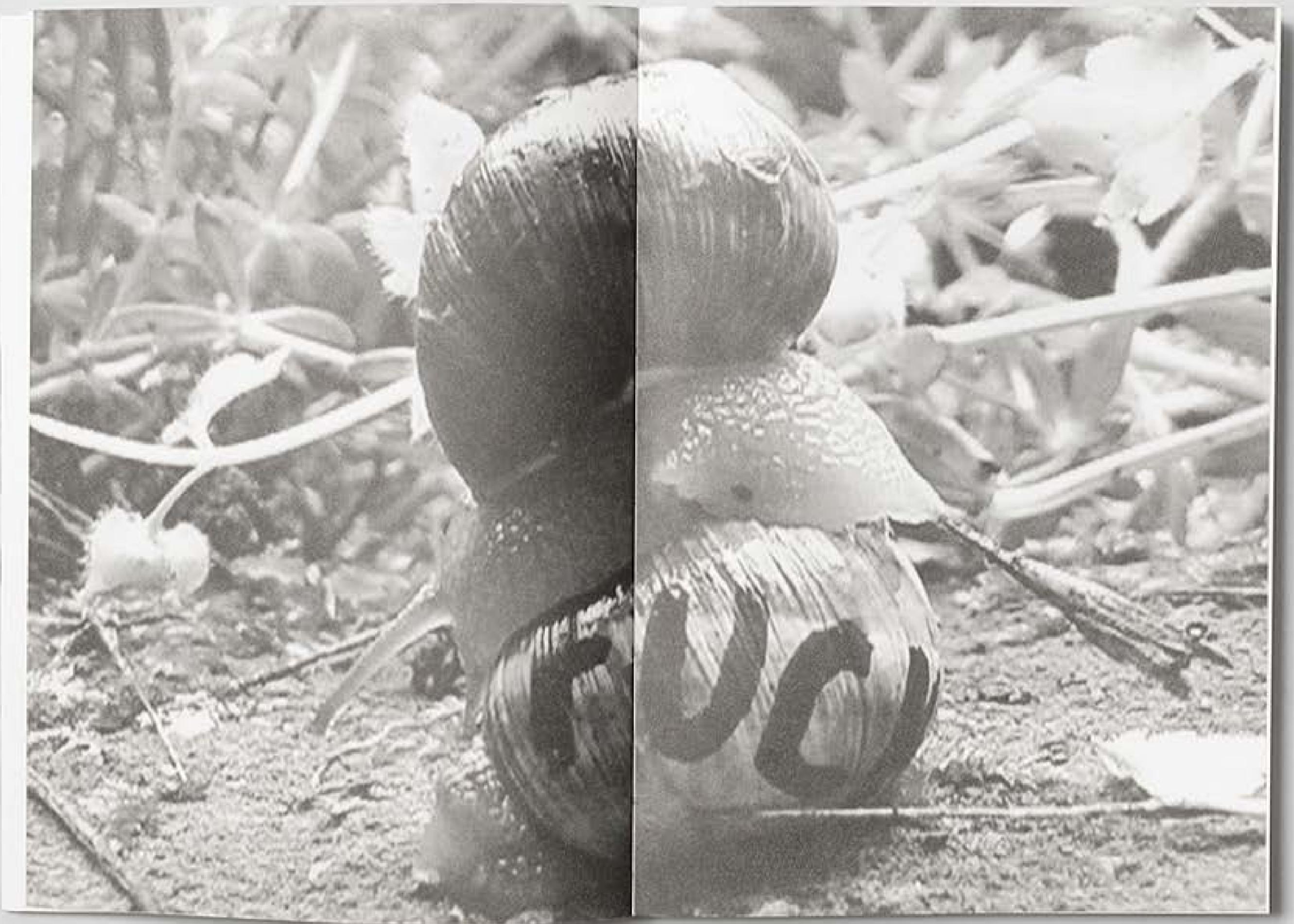
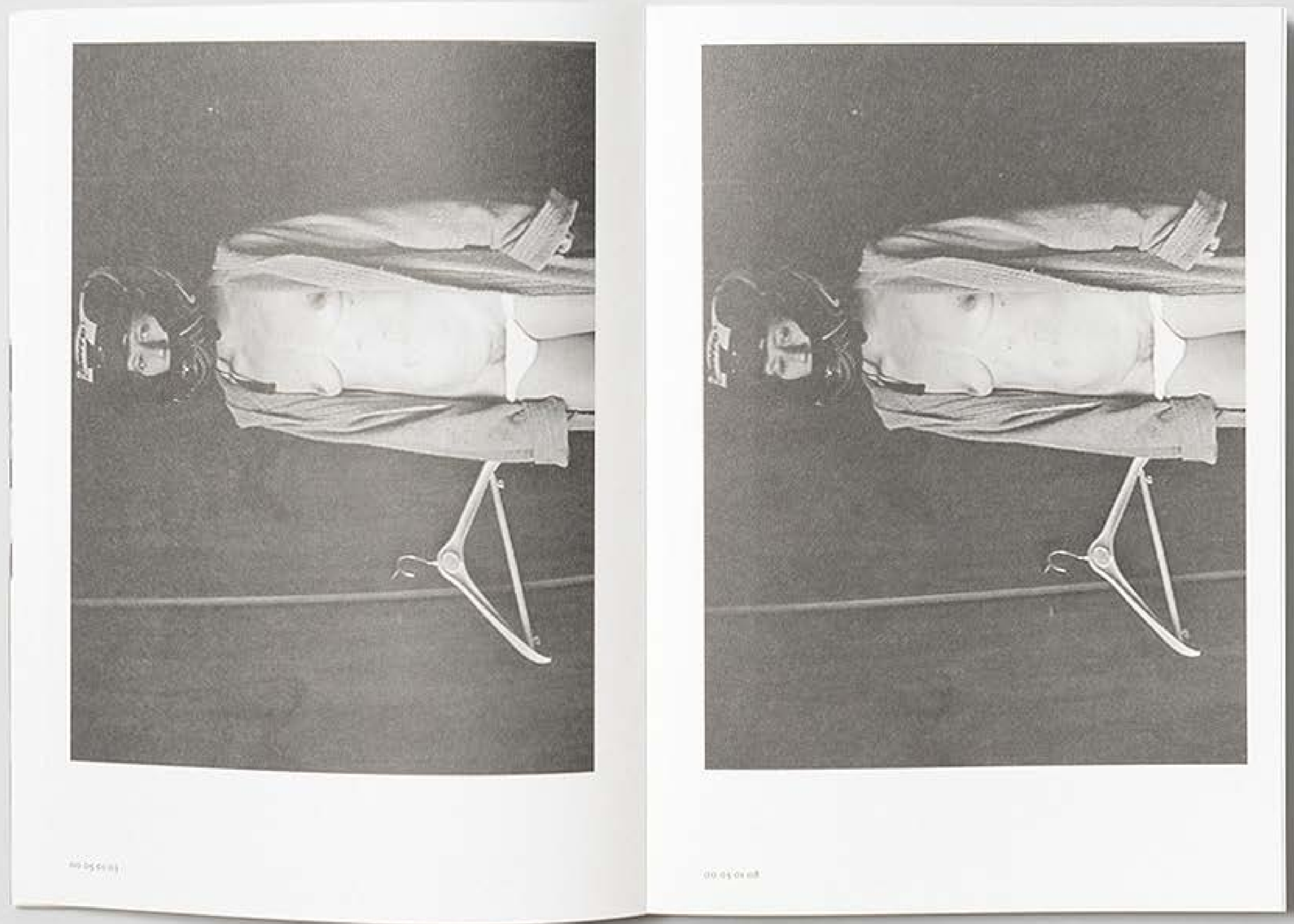
'Home Video Diary' is definitely a book that raises more questions than answers.



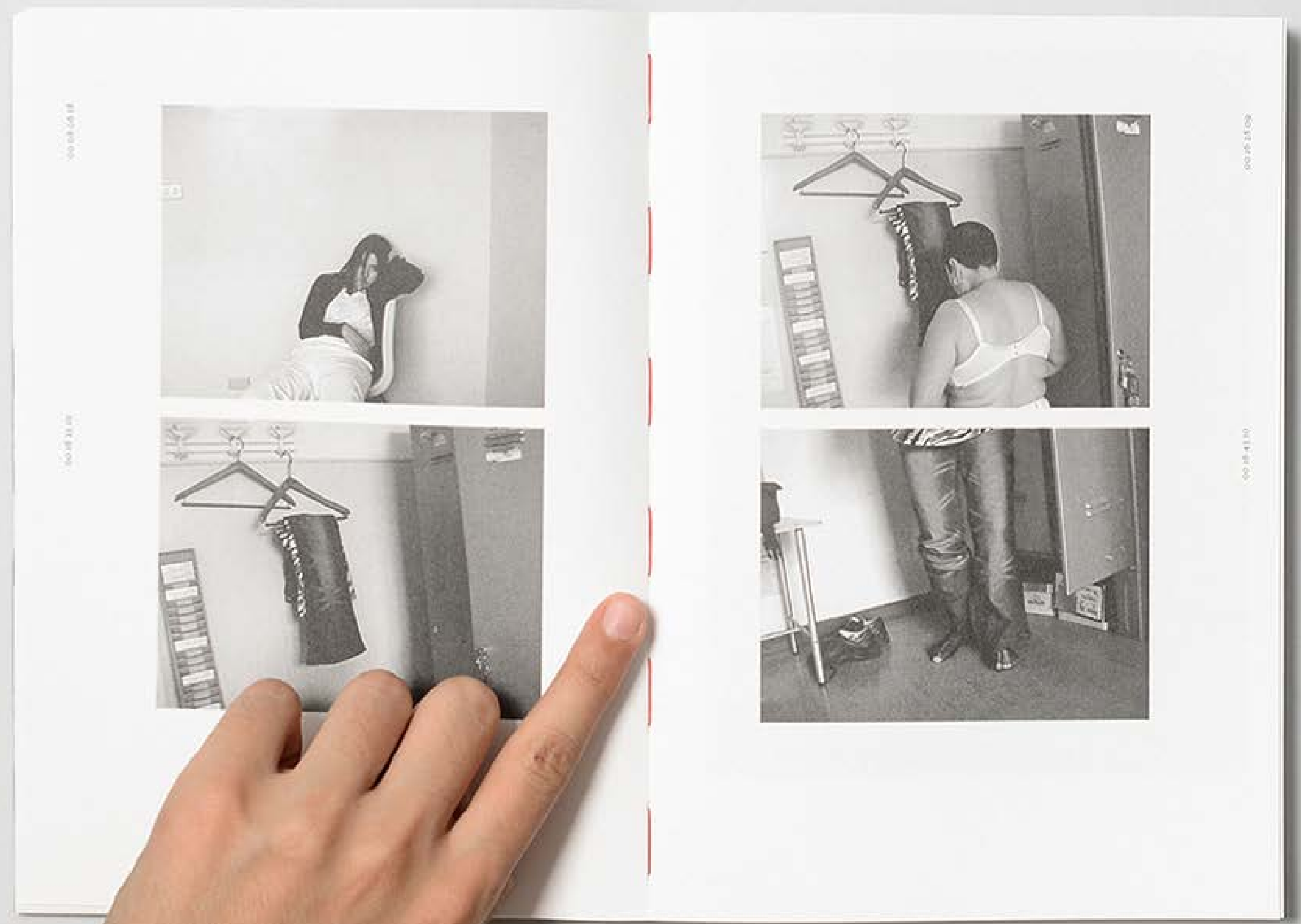
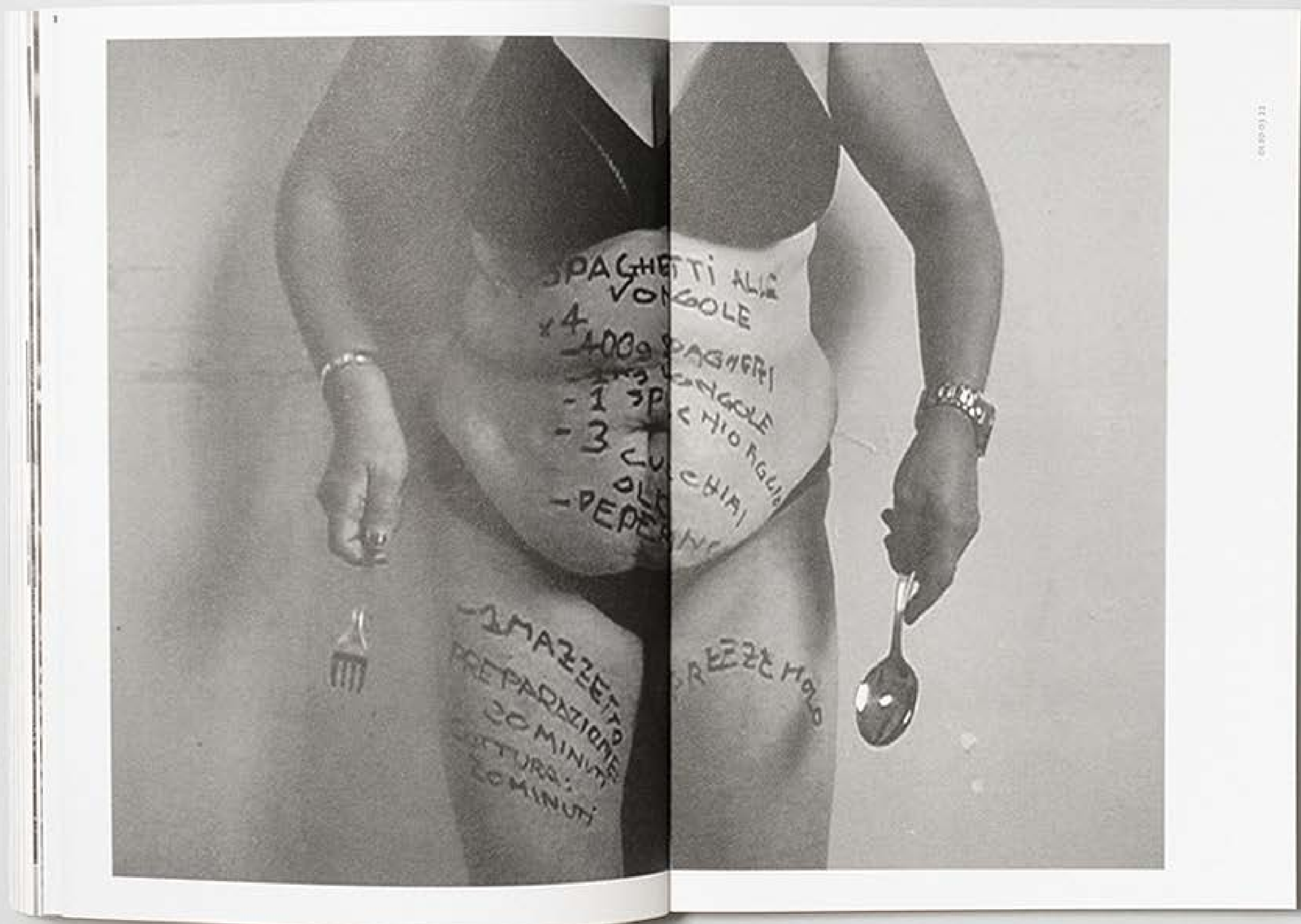
Details of "Home Video Diary" by Attilio Solzi



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## THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR RETREAT ARE OVER

### Attilio Solzi and photography as a gallows

Crying upsets any face that is tried by it. When someone is washing their face in front of the mirror after crying, they need to observe themselves for a moment to recognise that very face again, that fulcrum, that tether of their personal image as they remembered it. They recognize their upset features because they know what their face looked like before. And that is exactly what cannot happen in front of Solzi's images – even though, more so than others, they reflect like mirrors. The relaxed face we would like to see again does not exist, nor will it ever. On the bright and clear reflection of the photograph, only our most horrible piece will always be displayed, alone and seductive.

On the agonizing and smothering surface of each of those photos lurks a creeping confession of pain regarding what we are – or what we would like to be and are not, in order not to move the center of balance between us and common thought. To ask for more would be as though asking Bataille's Dirty to stop vomiting and getting cleaned up before the next hotel room, as though somebody caressing a tombstone hopes someone from beyond would benefit from it.

Here, in this kind of sacred tunnel between the person looking at the image and the image

itself, we find only one muted confession written: the memory of a low gaze which speaks of our shame to grow old, to be something amorphous and insignificant. And being careful not to behave like voyeurs would mean we feel indistinctly displaced, bereft of power, which is not the case. Do not feel reassured and convinced that you cannot reside in these ruined, trite spaces – those are the ones that reside in you; you are not the explorer, you are the guest house.

This is why, by wanting to include the event in our reasoning, we can state that the writer uses "depiction in such cases" or/and "the disposal of his body", but by doing so like peasant explorers we would come up with an analysis which would not be very interesting. This fish fillet is not produced only with a good taste policy, it is – first and foremost – obviously related with the photographic mechanism of the event, with the vital system of the image and Solzi is showing us the broken keys of this piano, the gears of the game.

We all know the great rule of direction and its genome: something can be realistic, but never true. In the places where rehearsals are conducted everything is mixed up, everything is different. John Berger used to say that there

is not space where freedom is least expressed than that of dreams, because in dreams, as well as in this black game, nothing is left to chance: the first one who takes the fall is a subject that is no longer a point of reference, a demonstrative element, a good narrator. In fact, they are stepping without hesitation towards photographic record as one walks towards the gallows, and the most interesting part is that they are being sacrificed to externality, in order to tell us something which, in essence, concerns us more than them.

"Do you want to see the beauty of the flesh? Go into a butcher's shop," – thus spoke Bacon – but while browsing these pages, we went back into the shop, between shelves where meat is beautifully arranged and lit; this is a different sort of corner, the previous stage. Indeed, we are still inside the slaughter house – that of Ivano Ferrari – where the fabricated sorrow is authentic and uninterrupted, as the poet himself would say: "the opportunities for retreat are over". We can only look. And whoever looks is contained, because they cannot close their eyes.

Like a blossom, one after the other, the subjects open-up slowly on the scene of each page and are sacrificed on the altar; donating themselves as involuntary symbols. Do they

want to teach us anything? No. Each room is an empty smile, a wild embrace which invites us to not feel guilty if we too want to be something that we don't like.

Attilio Solzi looks at a person doing something that he asked them to do, while somebody else is doing something else and the first person watches on: it's the loss, the room with the photographic mirrors. But in this chaos, in this lack of limits of what is permissible and just, there is something tidy, something democratic which concerns all those present: the desire for all those things to happen. And it's no small thing. It's everything.

Attilio Solzi incessantly flips the other side of the coin, favors defilement, and Home Video Diary is the most beautiful journal, a lucid and relentless dream which comes to life in domino effect. Because the photographic space is a chemical vacuum on which something spreads like a water stain on trousers, a Wbubble, slow, merciless, which in every scene transforms everything into the other side of everything, even a parking lot, an overpass, a balcony, nothing is harmless anymore, everything is tainted, everything speaks of the great cancer: us.

Achille Filippini

**200 Pages**

**404 Photos**

**1 Spaghetti alle Vongole Recipe**

Attilio Solzi (1963) approach to photography is so unconventional that makes one question what is the limit of a pure documentation of a grotesque reality and the playful interaction between photographer and subject. He offers us an unique view of North Italy small-towns.

16 x 23 cm  
192 Pages

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404 Duotone plates  
+ 1 Bilingual text (Italian &  
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## SPAGHETTI ALLE VONGOLE

x4

- 400g Spaghetti
- 1 Kg Vongole
- 1 Spicchio Aglio
- 3 Cucchiari Olio
- Peperoncino
- 1 Mazzetto Prezzemolo

Preparazione:  
20 minuti

Cottura:  
20 minuti

W O I D

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