



Ulrike und Helmut Pfeiffer

F1, 2

68159 Mannheim

+49 (621) 15 66 52 3

[www.planet-mannheim.de](http://www.planet-mannheim.de)

[www.fotoimquadrat.de](http://www.fotoimquadrat.de)

## Planet Mannheim – Description

### The Idea

168 people of different nations live in Mannheim. At some point, we got the idea of taking a photo of one representative of each nation. We were fascinated about the fact that nearly every nation of the world was represented by at least one citizen in Mannheim, no matter which passport they own. The photos should be taken in their social environment (home, family, work) or at any other place within the city. The environment should be part of the photo.

It is still uncertain which personal data will be added to the portraits apart from name, age resp. year of birth, nationality and profession. With regards to people who might have cultural problems with having photographs taken or might be afraid of missing anonymity we probably have to find a common denominator. In individual cases we can probably do without all data except the nationality or origin.

### The Purpose

There are already many illustrated books about people living in Mannheim. These often contain not only local celebrities, but also so-called “ordinary” people.

We are not focussing on photographing so called celebrities. The total of all images should show the variety of the different cultures joined together in Mannheim. A single shot is like focusing on single aspects of this variety, namely the individuals. Let us compare the whole of it with a certain pattern on a carpet. The portraits are the enlargements of selected blurs of colour up to one single fibre. As one picks out a single fibre randomly also the selection of our models is by pure chance. Therefore they are not there to represent their race, their nation or their people. They stand as themselves, human beings with a certain cultural background – like all people in the world. The only thing all of them have in common is that they live in the same city.

### The Term Nation

To avoid misunderstandings we want to pay attention on the term „nation“.

#### *Definition from Wikipedia:*

*A **nation** is a body of people who share a real or imagined common history, culture, language or ethnic origin, who typically inhabit a particular country or territory. (...) (source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nation>)*

The terms *nation*, *state* or *people* are often mixed up. We won't be able to shed light on this muddle of terms. Our choice is probably (like often in photography) a snapshot. If we would have made this kind of illustrated book in the 1980s, we would also have taken a picture of a representative of Yugoslavia. We are aware of the fact that India, Spain, Russia etc., consists of many different peoples. Anyhow we talk about the Indian, the Spaniard, the Russian, etc.

To keep it simple our choice is based on a list published from the city council of Mannheim in document No. 144/2009 „Statistiken 2008 zur Mannheimer Bevölkerung mit Migrationshintergrund“ (Statistics 2008 on the inhabitants of Mannheim with a migration background). That does not mean that we want to exclude anyone or say anything about the right of self-determination of people. The choice does not constitute any political opinion.

## Aim of the Project

In the end all portrayed persons shall be published in an illustrated book. To advertise for the project we will publish chosen photographs on our webpage [www.fotoimquadrat.de](http://www.fotoimquadrat.de) and [www.planet-mannheim.de](http://www.planet-mannheim.de). It is also conceivable that the photographs might be used for exhibitions, slide shows or other forms of presentations.

As far as possible we want to take photographs of members of all nations who live here. But we are conscious of the fact that some people might probably have reservations for cultural or religious reasons, lack of confidence or because they do not know the photographers. Therefore this aim must be reviewed and newly defined after a certain period of time.

## The Photographers

Ulrike Pfeiffer, year of birth 1969 in Stuttgart, BTA/Lab manager

Helmut Pfeiffer, year of birth 1960 in Bretten, IT Consultant

Together they run **foto im quadrat** and feel very connected to their current hometown Mannheim. For many years now they have been part of the Stadtteilinitiative gegen Fremdenfeindlichkeit (citizens' initiative against racism) which has been organising the Max-Joseph-Straßenfest (street festival) in Mannheim-Neckarstadt since 1992.

Mannheim, June 2009