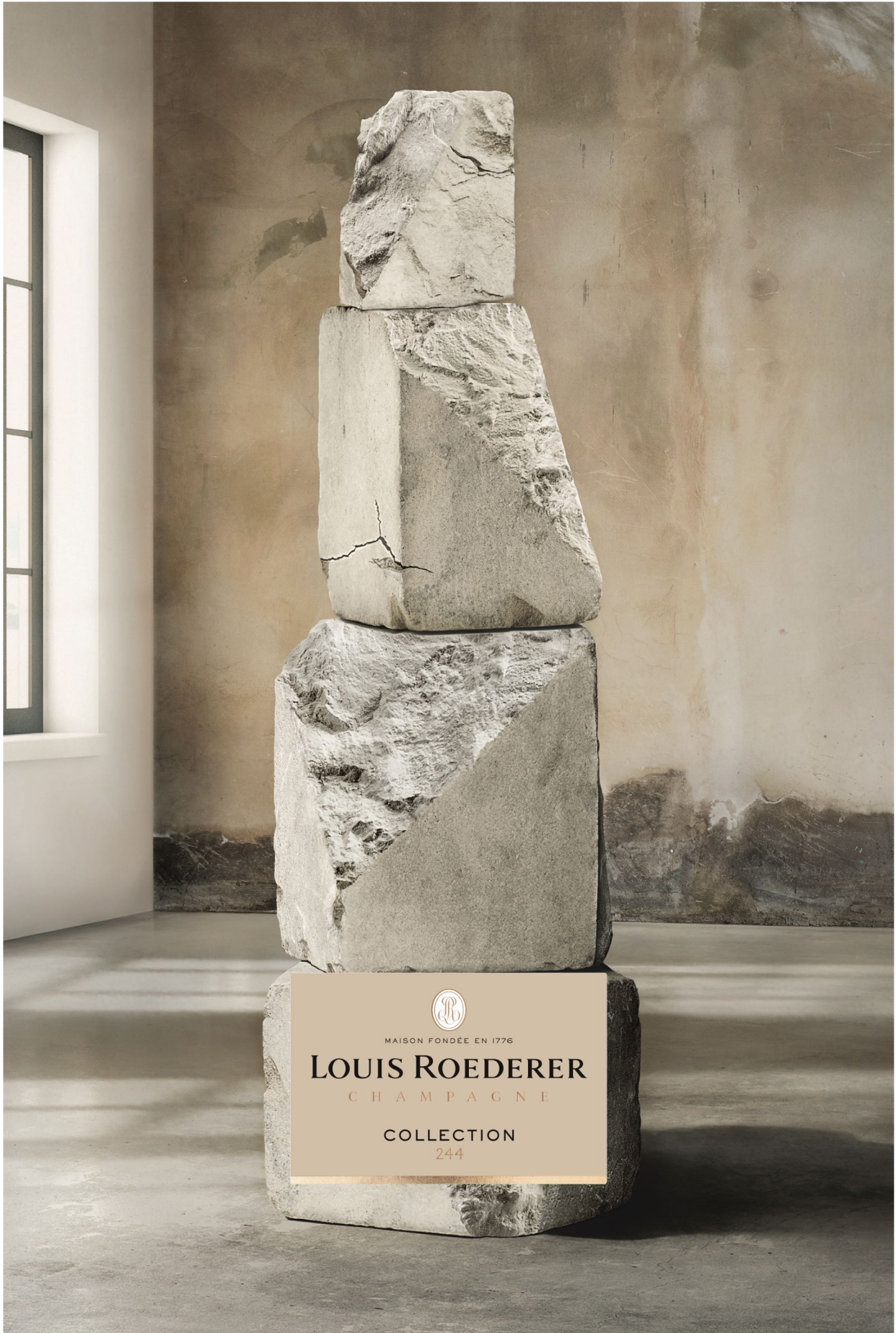




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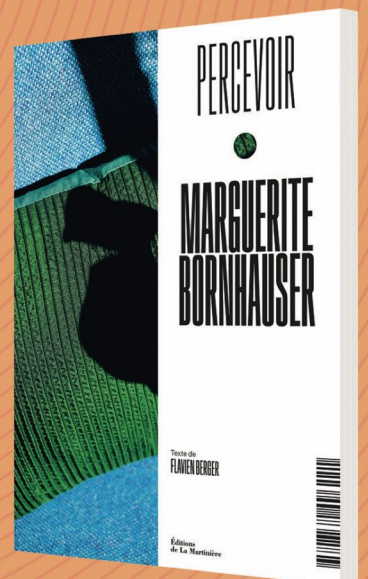
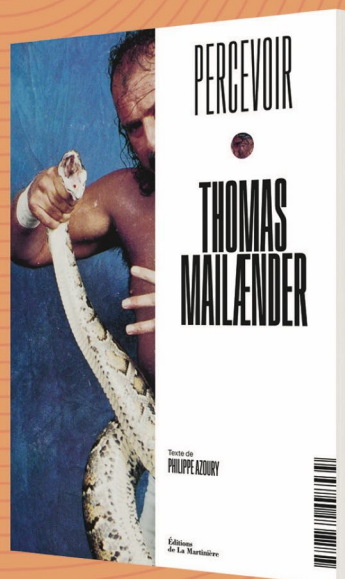
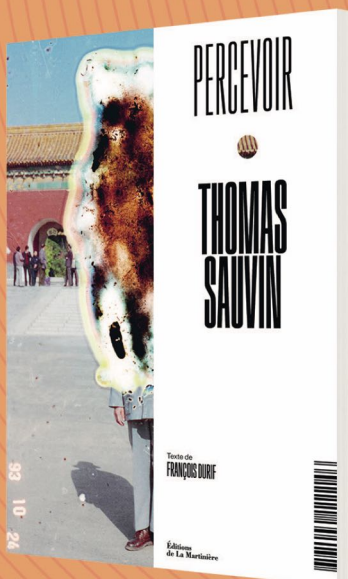
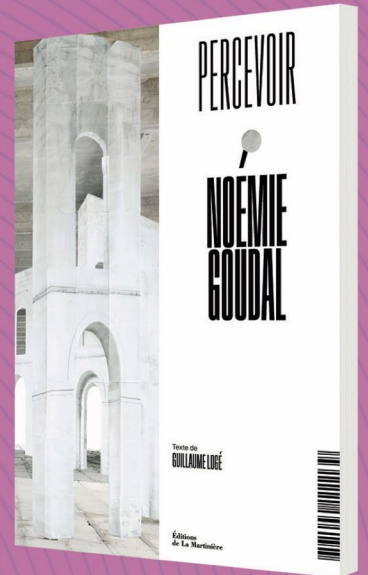
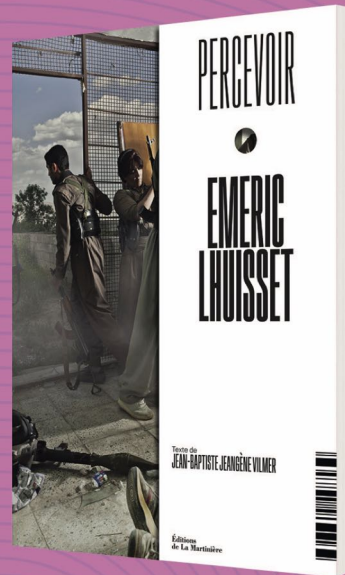


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Landscape Number Ten (Watch Out, 2022-2023), Sheng-Wen Lo

© Sheng-Wen Lo. Courtesy Rencontres d'Arles

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RENCONTRES D'ARLES 2023: A SUMMER OF LUCIDITY

For its 54th edition, from 3 July to 24 September 2023, the Rencontres d'Arles is revisiting its territory and questioning those involved in photography about their vision of a changing and uncertain world.

With 30 exhibitions on the programme and 26 events as part of Arles Associé and Grand Arles Express [see box p.34], the festival's satellite events, an entire region will be in photographic unison for the duration of the summer. This year, the focus is on a number of issues: climate change and the effects of the Anthropocene on both ecosystems and society; the eco-responsibility of an international event that attracted some 127,000 visitors in 2023 [see p.74]; and photographers' views on these new paradigms. "For more than fifty years, Les Rencontres d'Arles has been a veritable sounding board for the state of the world," says Hubert Védrine, President of Les Rencontres d'Arles. "The festival is a laboratory that shapes itself according to aesthetic, technical, political and social developments. On the strength of its experience and aware of how far we still have to go, the association deals with ecological and societal issues on a daily basis."

The glue that holds it all together: the Arles region, its roots in history and the new realities of the climate. The six themes of this year's festival are: From Film to Image, Staging, Revisiting, Geography of the Gaze, Reminiscences and Emergences. A dense programme orchestrated by Christoph Wiesner, director of the Rencontres, and Aurélie de Lanlay, its deputy director [see p.22]. "When we write the programme, it's like a jigsaw puzzle," confides Christoph Wiesner. "You put the proposals side by side and see what you come up with. It's a composition based on research that highlights this or that direction. I've expressed an interest in developing projects linked to the region. The history of the Rencontres is intimately linked to the city and its inhabitants. I also like to do fieldwork and

counter-fieldwork in relation to more contemporary periods to reveal what the area is saying today."

From one image to another

This year, the festival is exploring the not-so-obvious relationship between photography and cinema. At the Mécanique Générale, the "Eveningside 2012-2022" exhibition devoted to Gregory Crewdson brings together a trilogy conceived by the great New York photographer during that decade. "For the past thirty years, Gregory Crewdson has been painting a portrait of middle America, an America whose eyes are wide open to the lights of a dream in exhaustion," says Jean-Charles Vergne, curator of the exhibition co-produced by Gallerie d'Italia in Turin and Rencontres d'Arles. "Another America is emerging, with Gregory Crewdson, who uses cinematographic techniques to create images of a dream in decay, the America of the crisis," notes Christoph Wiesner. It's the culmination of ten years' work. On the evening of 4 July, a performance of images and live music will offer a unique exploration of Gregory Crewdson's work at the Théâtre Antique.

Two exhibitions will honour Agnès Varda, the great pioneering director of the French New Wave, who is often overlooked as being first and foremost a photographer [see p.40]. The exhibition explores this shift from still to moving images through her first feature-length film, *La Pointe Courte*, made in 1954 — four years before the birth of the French New Wave. This patient investigation into the director's archives was carried out by the Institut pour la photographie des Hauts-de-France, which holds the Agnès Varda collection deposited by her daughter, Rosalie, and her son, Mathieu Demy. At the Tour Luma, curator Hans-Ulrich Obrist, co-director of exhibitions and director of international projects at London's Serpentine Gallery, talks about his close relationship with Agnès Varda through a personal reading of his own archives [see box p.42].

Another era, another perspective on the relationship between photography and cinema: Wim Wenders. The German director, whose latest film *Perfect Days* has just won the Best Actor prize at the Cannes Film Festival, has selected a series of polaroids taken during the filming of *The American Friend* (1976) starring Dennis Hopper and Bruno Ganz. In "My Polaroids Friends" at the Espace Van Gogh, he talks about how he used these little snapshots as diaries, the analogue ancestors of today's smartphones. He also explains why he likes to put a camera in the hands of his actors [see p.48]. It's a disturbingly modern exploration of narcissistic obsession and self-image in a world now dominated by social networks and the proliferation of selfies.

This idea of the photographic diary in cinema is also being explored at the Espace Van Gogh with "Scrapbooks: inside the imagination of filmmakers" [see box p.51]. Winner of the 2021 curatorial research grant, the curator Matthieu Orléan looks back at the Anglo-Saxon practice of the scrapbook, a mixture of photo album and diary that can include photographs as well as drawings, stamps, postcards, press cuttings and invitation cards. "The many creative possibilities offered by collage justify the fact that many artists have embraced it as a genre in its own right, in order to create new visual worlds, as in the case of avant-garde filmmakers of the second half of the 20th century, such as Derek Jarman, Agnès Varda, Chris Marker, and more recently Pedro Costa and Bertrand Mandico," explains the curator.

Arles hors les murs

The Rencontres internationales de la photographie d'Arles is aptly named. In addition to its summer schedule, the event has a year-round presence abroad thanks to its international collaborative projects. For example, the Jimei × Arles International Photo founded in 2015 in the Jimei district, near Xiamen in southern China, has presented more than 200 exhibitions from China and the rest of Asia since its inception. Each year, Jimei × Arles takes a selection of Rencontres d'Arles exhibitions to China and produces more than twenty exhibitions by Chinese and Asian photographers. For this new edition, it will run from 24 November 2023 to 7 January 2024. It has also set up a number of prizes: the first women's photography prize in China, the curatorial prize for photography and the moving image and its own Discovery Prize (not to be confused with the one awarded by the Louis Roederer Foundation), awarded each year during the festival in Arles. An example of Franco-Chinese cultural cooperation that runs like clockwork.

And because we need to open our eyes to the vitality of the Asian scene as a whole, the Rencontres have launched the Serendipity Arts Grant, this time based on Franco-Indian cultural relations. This grant for photography, video and new media in South Asia is supported by the French Institute in India. After the first edition in 2020-2022, for which the jury received hundreds of applications, the Serendipity Arles Grant will be renewed in 2023-2024. The winner will receive a grant of INR 1,200,000 (around €14,000) to develop his or her project and present it at the Rencontres d'Arles in 2024.

The extensions of this fusional and complex relationship between the still and moving image can be found in the "Staging" theme, notably in Aurélien Froment's "Optical Theatre" exhibition at the Monoprix. As a medium for the dissemination of popular culture, film set photography is also a point of reference for many artists. Yet little is known about its practice, which is absent from the histories of photography, art and cinema. Through the figure of Pierre Zucca, the exhibition explores set photography as a photographic genre in its own right.

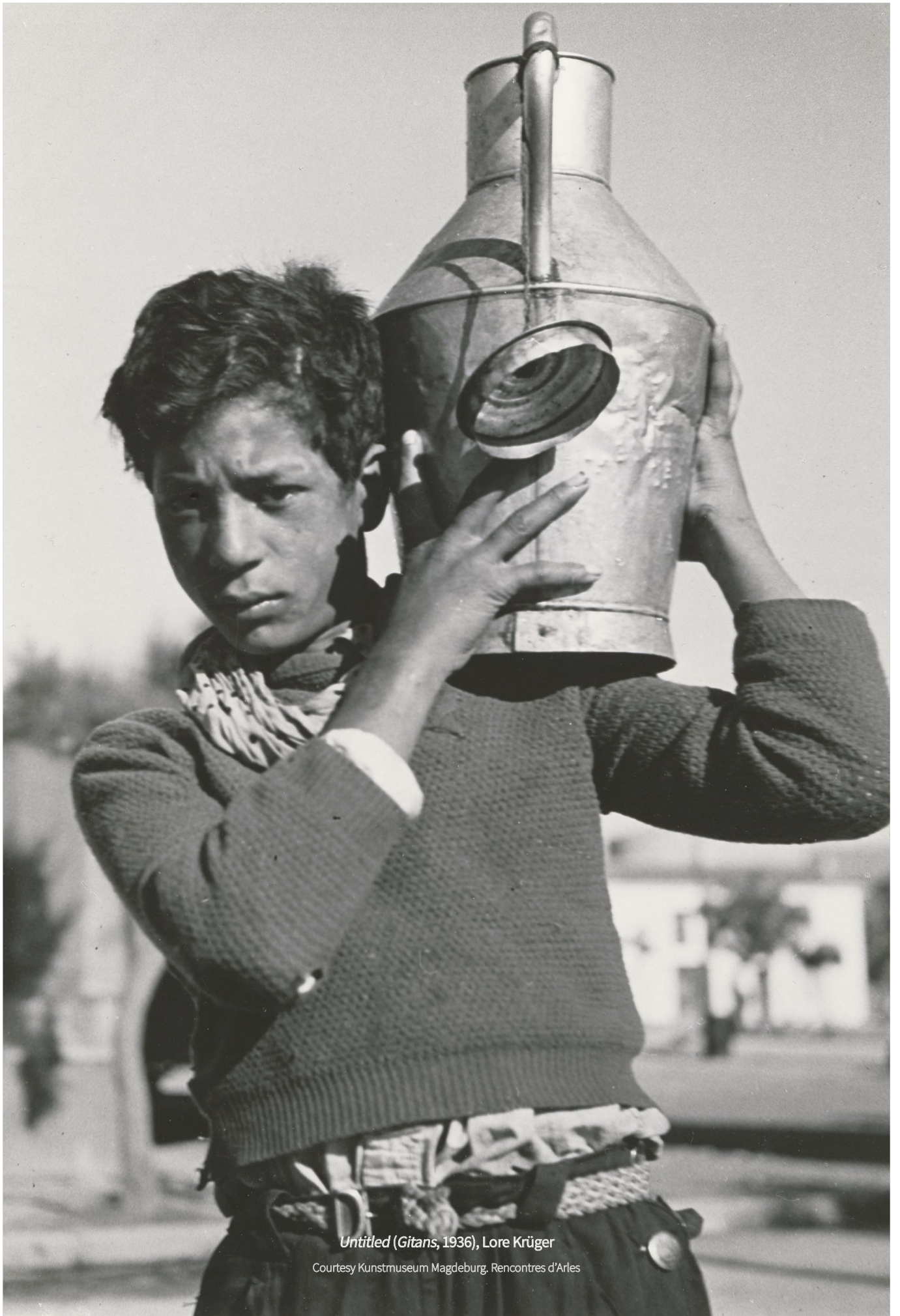
A place for women photographers

At the heart of this programme are the views of women photographers who deconstruct clichés and break free from codes. At the École nationale supérieure de la photographie, students are revisiting the work of Arles-based photographer Nicole Gravier [see p.32]. Oscillating between a conceptual approach, a



Doline 2023, Eva Nielsen

© Eva Nielsen. Courtesy BMW Art Market, Rencontres d'Arles



Untitled (Gitans, 1936), Lore Krüger

Courtesy Kunstmuseum Magdeburg. Rencontres d'Arles

Rosângela Rennó, Women in Motion 2023

“Pop” spirit tinged with humour and autobiographical fiction, Nicole Gravier developed a singular *œuvre* in the context of the political and societal changes of the 1970s. It’s a body of work that has been given a new lease of life as part of a feminist re-reading of twentieth-century art history. With “Soleil of Persian Square”, on show in the Salle Henri-Comte, Iranian artist Hannah Darabi is exploring the visual identity of the lifestyle of the Iranian diaspora in Los Angeles. Finally, the group exhibition “Søsterskap” at the Église Sainte-Anne highlights the crucial role played by several generations of women photographers in the Nordic countries, taking an intersectional feminist look at the famous “Nordic model” [see p.32]. This year, Finnish artist Emma Sarpaniemi has signed the festival poster with her self-portrait. At the Église des Trinitaires, the first French monograph by Zofia Kulik reveals the repertoire of symbols and images created by this Polish artist, who creates complex photographic compositions in the darkroom [see p.68]. These striking black and white montages denounce power games and patriarchy.

Rooted in history

Every year, Rencontres d’Arles provides an opportunity to revisit the currents and movements in photography, as well as its great names, in a historical perspective. At the Palais de l’Archevêché, the exhibition by Saul Leiter (1923-2013), a polymorphous artist who was both a painter and photographer, is being presented for the first time in Arles, bringing together a selection of photographs, drawings and paintings, most of which have never been shown before [see p.88]. In the words of curator Anne Morin: “This presentation invites us to discover a body of work in which languages rub

This year’s winner of the Women in Motion prize is leading Brazilian photographer Rosângela Rennó. Born in 1962 in Belo Horizonte, Brazil, her work with photographs, objects and installations is characterised by the investigation of different politics of representation and photographic absorption, and of the relationship between memory and forgetting, appropriating images from a variety of sources, from junk shops and photos on the Internet to institutional archives.

A monographic exhibition of her work is being held at La Mécanique Générale, the first of its kind to be organised in France. It’s a fitting tribute, and also a fitting anniversary, since ten years ago the Brazilian photographer was awarded the Livre Historique prize at the 2013 Rencontres d’Arles for her work on the stolen photos from Rio de Janeiro’s National Library. Her Women in Motion prize will be presented to her on 4 July at the Théâtre Antique in Arles. She will succeed her illustrious predecessors Susan Meiselas (2019), Sabine Weiss (2020), Liz Johnson Artur (2021) and Babette Mangolte (2022). Initially launched at the Cannes Film Festival in 2015, this prize created by the Kering Group “highlights the creativity and uniqueness of women in the arts and culture”. Initially rewarding both actresses and directors — it has since been extended to other areas of the arts — since 2019 the prize has crowned women photographers as part of a partnership with the Rencontres d’Arles.

shoulders, respond to each other, converse and tell us about the vision of the world of one of the most fascinating artist-photographers of the 20th century.” The exhibition celebrating the 50th anniversary of the newspaper *Libération* at the Abbaye de Montmajour [see p.54] takes us on a journey through the history of our world and current events.

“Light of saints, a photographic pilgrimage” at the Chapelle du Museon Arlaten revisits a photographic history that dates back to the 19th century: the pilgrimage of Travellers to Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer. “The exhibition explores the history of this pilgrimage over more than a century, with its joyous moments, but also its tragic ones. Between vernacular material from archives and the great names of photography, many artists have made the journey, from Chiki Weisz to Lucien Clergue, from Erwin

Blumenfeld to Martine Franck, to encourage us to dream and relive part of the history of the Camargue,” explains Christoph Wiesner.

Ecological awareness

This exploration of the region is inextricably linked with ecological awareness and a commitment to eco-responsibility. These are the two main themes of this 54th edition of the festival [see p.74]. Whether it’s through the eyes of the artists or the eco-design of the programming, this year’s Mapping the eye theme brings together a host of initiatives looking at Arles and the surrounding area. “Aware of its role as a trailblazer, this year the festival, in collaboration with the Cité Anthropocène in Lyon, has set out to explore the territory of Arles and its ecosystem,” explains the director of Rencontres d’Arles. “Scientists, researchers, thinkers and artists set out to discover the area and take stock. Ground Control,



Sainte-Marguerite-sur-Mer, Pays de Caux (2017),
Éric Tabuchi and Nelly Monnier
© Éric Tabuchi. Nelly Monnier. Courtesy Rencontres d'Arles



the former SNCF industrial hall, was chosen as the HQ for this reflection and was at the heart of all the discussions, resulting in a system for reformulating space." At the centre of Ground Control, "Grey sun", by Éric Tabuchi and Nelly Monnier features a monumental installation resulting from the survey work carried out by the two photographers since 2017: *Atlas des Régions Naturelles*.

This year, the former SNCF site is also hosting "Special attention", showcasing the work of three young graduates from the École nationale supérieure de la photographie: Jingyu Cao, Raphaël Lods and Iris Millot. "The River's Children" at the Jardin d'été is another project rooted in Camargue. Marseille photographer Yohanne Lamoulère, who travelled up the Rhône from its mouth against the current, bears witness to the pollution and fragility of the river [see p.32].

Mapping the eye also explores distant lands. These include the work of Peruvian photographer Roberto Huarcaya, a leading figure in contemporary Peruvian photography. The exhibition devoted to him at Croisière brings together three series: *Amazogrammes* (2014-2022), *Andinogrammes* (2017-2022) and *Océanogrammes* (2019). The exhibition also features work by Maciejka Art, a photographer of Polish origin who has shared the life of a community of women living in a difficult and isolated region of Mexico.

The future of the medium

True to its pioneering role, the festival is once again hosting the Louis Roederer Foundation Discovery

Award. Ten projects have been shortlisted, designed by Amanda Antunes and curated by Tanvi Mishra [see p.60]. A selection open to the world and to non-Western scenes. "Once again this year, Les Rencontres d'Arles will be giving pride of place to emerging artists, with the 'Special attention' exhibition bringing together the photographic work of three students from the École nationale supérieure de la photographie, and the Louis Roederer Foundation Discovery Prize at the Église des Frères-Prêcheurs, a showcase for curator Tanvi Mishra's magnificent work on the scene in the great South, which opens up new horizons from Kolkata to Cairo, via Dhaka," adds Christoph Wiesner.

At Rencontres d'Arles, the rhythm of the programme is set by a whole series of events right through to September. But it's really the opening week, which welcomed 18,500 visitors last year, that sets the tone for the summer programme. The Nuits du Théâtre antique kicks off on 4 July with an invitation to novelist Éric Reinhardt to pay tribute to photographer Olivier Metzger, who died in November 2022. A talented portraitist and a native of Arles by adoption and at heart since his studies at the ENSP in 2004, Olivier Metzger was a loyal companion of the Rencontres d'Arles. The evening will also see the presentation of the various book prizes, awarded each year to the best photographic works in the photo-text, historical and author categories. The eagerly awaited Women in Motion Prize for Photography 2023 will be awarded to Rosângela Rennó [see box p.15], while the "Eveningside" exhibition at La Mécanique Générale will be echoed by a musical performance exploring the work of Gregory Crewdson, with a soundtrack by James Murphy (*LCD Soundsystem*) and multi-instrumentalist/composer Stuart Bogie. On 5 July at 10 pm, Arte will be screening a film at Croisière linked to the exhibition "La Casa Susanna", retracing the incredible story of a clandestine community of transvestites in America in the 1950s. Return to the Théâtre Antique on 7 July for another evening devoted to the Prix de la photo *Madame Figaro* Arles 2023 and Prix découverte 2023 Louis Roederer foundation, all in the company of the Rencontres Live Magazine, an ephemeral experience celebrating the power of images. It's all about interrogating the future of the world, while leaving room for the festivities.

Rencontres d'Arles

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Untitled (detail, 2020), Jim Jarmusch

© Jim Jarmusch. Courtesy Rencontres d'Arles





Cosmovisión (2023), Garush Melkonyan

© Garush Melkonyan. Courtesy Rencontres d'Arles

INTERVIEW

Aurélie de Lanlay
Photo Julie Hrnčířová
Courtesy Rencontres d'Arles



“CREATIVE SOBRIETY IS AT THE HEART OF OUR FESTIVAL”

The deputy director of Les Rencontres d’Arles talks about the actions and reflections undertaken by the festival’s teams throughout the year to prepare for a 2023 edition under the banner of eco-responsibility.

After the report, it is time for action. The Rencontres d’Arles 2023, which has long been committed to an eco-responsible approach, is being prepared in a post-Covid context where the imperative need for sustainability in the face of climate change is reshaping the way we think about exhibitions and how we welcome visitors. It’s also a way of showcasing the work of “photographers, artists and curators (who) make us see and perceive, with extreme acuity, the transformations we are experiencing,” in the words of Rencontres director Christoph Wiesner. For photographers have long been bearing witness to the brutal changes facing the world. As festival-goers returned to normalcy, how can we reconcile high attendance, demanding programming, eco-design of projects, local dynamics and the festival’s international reach? Aurélie de Lanlay, deputy director of Les Rencontres d’Arles, explains the delicate balancing act.

Last year, the festival welcomed 127,000 visitors, 25% of whom were first-time visitors. To what do you attribute this success?

Festival attendance is a relatively stable figure. We’ve been doing audience surveys since 2008 and every year we welcome between 20 and 30% first-time visitors. Our last edition was fairly consistent with previous years. On the other hand, what I find particularly exemplary is the loyalty of our festival-goers, with between 70 and 75% of our visitors having come at least three times in the last five years.

What makes them want to come back?

When you come to Les Rencontres d’Arles, you have an experience. The diversity of the programme offers the chance to make discoveries,

to be surprised, to question oneself through emerging work, historical proposals, exhibitions revisiting the great names and great works of photography, projects dealing with the evolution of the medium... But Arles is also the experience of the city. We exhibit in a wide variety of venues that tell the story of the city and show photography in a different light. We’re not in a white cube. Discovering projects in century-old churches is a powerful experience. The Rencontres are also about wandering around a beautiful, warm and friendly city. Festival-goers can nurture their curiosity according to their sensibilities, whether architectural, heritage, literary — Arles is also a city of books — theatrical, musical — flamenco is also very present! It’s the combination of all these elements that makes people want to come back.

Foreign visitors have also made a big comeback...

That’s the remarkable thing about last year’s attendance. During the opening week, we welcome between 18,000 and 20,000 people every year. We usually get 35-40% foreign visitors. However, this figure

is set to rise to 50% by 2022. Of course, this high proportion is linked to the two years of Covid — last year, travel restrictions were still in force for a number of countries. Foreign festival-goers, who were unable to travel in 2020 and 2021, have therefore returned. Above all, this figure underlines the extent to which the Rencontres are a forum for exchange for the entire international photography ecosystem: gallerists, artists, curators, critics, agencies, publishers, etc. It's a great joy, because that's what we're working for: to encourage encounters, create links and facilitate the development of projects that emerge empirically during the opening week. The festival's role continues even after this crisis.

Has the international aspect of the Rencontres been strengthened since their creation?

“Les Rencontres internationales de la photographie d'Arles” is the exact name of the association that runs the festival. That just goes to show how important these four words are. The festival is, of course, a meeting place for works of art and the public, but it's also a meeting place for the players in the photography ecosystem; it's an event that's open to the world, thanks to the international dimension of its artistic proposals, its visitors and the projects that we're going to develop abroad; and finally, the Rencontres are a festival created by Arlesians, in the city of Arles, anchored in its territory. These words all have their place.

What countries do your foreign visitors come from?

The European border countries and North America in particular, but visitors really do come from every continent. We have a special link with China since we created the Jimei x Arles festival eight years ago. Our international reach also depends, of course, on the projects we develop abroad each year.

Attendance is crucial to the long-term future of a festival, but eco-responsibility issues are also fundamental. How do we reconcile these two essential, but seemingly contradictory, imperatives?

This is one of the questions at the heart of the eco-responsibility approach, a question that can be extended to the arrival of artists and works [see p.74]. These two approaches might seem irreconcilable. The question is: what balance can be struck? What steps can we take to try and reconcile them? This year, we decided to set up a working group within our teams to look at concrete ways of addressing these issues. These five members of staff are not just people in charge of production. They come from a wide range of backgrounds, each able to bring their own perspective based on their experience and their role within the Rencontres. In this respect, I would like to emphasise that we are fortunate to have people around us who are very personally committed to environmental issues.

What themes are you tackling in this working group? And what recommendations will be implemented this year?

Mobility, preventive conservation and air conditioning, to give just a few examples. As of this year, we are putting in place a number of levers for action. The first is raising public awareness. We're changing the way we communicate about how to get to the festival by promoting soft or shared mobility. For example, we're reminding people of journey times and car-sharing points, and we're indicating recharging points and bike stands on our maps. This is both awareness-raising and information, because we can't directly influence the way people travel, but we can at least remind them of the issues and the alternatives.

This is why the second lever for action is based on knowledge of the public. If you know your audience well, you can take action. We have been selected to take part in a three-year study called Festivals in Motion, involving fifty festivals in all fields. The aim is to exchange ideas and discuss issues with other organisations that are asking themselves the same questions. We are committed to organising specific audience studies on these issues, so that we can work together to identify the levers for action, how they can be put in place, how they can be developed and how they can evolve. And of course the last but not least lever is the layout of the venues and the exhibitions.

Hot summers are a regular occurrence. What impact do they have on the organisation of the festival?

This is one of our core concerns. Here again, we have to reconcile two things: ensuring the comfort of the visit while keeping in mind the issue of conserving the works. Of course, we could air-condition everything. But that would be totally at odds with our responsibilities. We're taking the opposite approach: how to keep air conditioning to a minimum, bearing in mind that air conditioning lowers the temperature but also creates humidity. As a result, we also have to install dehumidifiers, so it's a complex system. The festival venues are very diverse, so we have to make choices that take all these parameters into account. For example, when we exhibit in a 14th-century cloister with metre-thick walls, the heat can be bearable, but when we exhibit in an industrial hangar built in the 1950s, we can reach high temperatures. So we're going to be looking at natural ventilation systems and scenographic arrangements to let the air through. Another important aspect is the renovation and insulation of the premises. We don't own the buildings, but we can make their owners aware of the work that needs to be done.



Susanna and three friends outside (1964-1969)
Photo AGO. Collection Art Gallery of Ontario
Courtesy Rencontres d'Arles



These issues are complex and involve a multitude of stakeholders. How do you bring all these players to the table?

Our approach is based on dialogue. The first step is the in-house team. For example, we may decide to install fewer walls or use lower walls for our exhibitions. At Ground Control, for example, we're going to install metal uprights to facilitate air circulation, an alternative proposal devised by the scenographer, the production teams and the artists. Then there are budgetary choices. We no longer use plasterboard, because it's a material that doesn't recycle well, and we only use wood for our boxes. We've phased out the use of plasterboard over a period of five years, because as we reuse our materials, the ones that were still reusable were reused right up to the end. We're also going to be testing the use of recycled PVC for our signage. At each location, we're trying to see what can be improved and changed. These are choices and trade-offs, very concrete decisions.

Speaking of the team, what CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) initiatives have you put in place?

For us, CSR defines a set of values defended within the Rencontres. It's a question of transmission, education, mediation and re-use — a practice that began in an empirical way, and is now becoming formalised and structured. But above all, the festival has been tackling the issue of integration and employment for over thirty years. How do you get people who have had a rough patch in their lives to take part in this human adventure, and who now find themselves a long way from employment in a region with a high unemployment rate? We are very active in defending this aspect of our work. We employ our reception, sales and security staff as part of integration schemes that meet their specific needs and those of the Rencontres.

Instead of just having a two- or three-month fixed-term contract for the duration of the festival, they sign a six-month contract that entitles them to unemployment benefits and three months' training in the jobs they will be doing during the Rencontres. We work hand in hand with Pôle Emploi for recruitment. At the end of this experience, the rate of return to employment is high, with 70% of these people finding a permanent contract or a fixed-term contract of more than six months.

3 questions to... Christoph Wiesner

Christoph Wiesner is the Director of the Rencontres d'Arles.

Your 2023 programme focuses on the relationship between photography and cinema. Is this a declaration of love on your part?

In a way, yes. I have a real love for both photography and cinema. As part of the Rencontres, the exhibitions we have chosen this year reflect different angles of the porosity that exists between these two fields, without claiming to cover this vast subject in its entirety. These exhibitions cover different periods, which I also found interesting. The work of Agnès Varda, for example. We often don't realise that she started out as a photographer in the late 1940s, first as an amateur and then as a professional [see p.40]. From the outset, we can see how her vision was shaped by a world she knew, the town of Sète, where she had spent time during the war. From a relatively documentary subject at the outset, it evolves from the still image to the moving image. It's quite fascinating.

Your approach to the Wim Wenders exhibition has been different...

It's a focus on a story, on one film in particular, *The American Friend*, through a series of polaroids [see p.48]. Wim Wenders himself chose this film, which links France, Germany and the United States. These polaroids are snapshots, sketches made during the filming. As he says, today you'd use an iPhone. I love the rawness and immediacy of an image that can be used to create something extraordinary. In this case, the preliminary sketches were used to build the film. And for the anecdote, Wim Wenders lived in the building of the gallery where I worked when I lived in Berlin. Like many people of my generation, he's an iconic director and his films like *Paris, Texas* and *Wings of Desire* have left me with lasting memories.

Speaking of raw images, there's a lot of talk these days about vernacular photography. What role do you give it in your programming?

Photographs are used extensively by researchers in their work. They use images to write history. For the "Light of saints" exhibition, we already knew some of the material about the pilgrimage to Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer, but there's always something mysterious about archive images that resurface. Like the vernacular photo that no one thought of any more and which resurfaces at a flea market. This is the story of Casa Susanna [see p.32]. These photos reveal not only a personal story, but also that of a whole section of society — a community of transvestites who lived in hiding. There's something incredible about these vernacular photos that resurface. Until they are rediscovered, they only exist for a small number of people, or sink into oblivion. In a world of abundant images, we might well wonder what our own vernacular will be...

INTERVIEW

The cultural structures of Arles Associé and Grand Arles Express alone are responsible for 26 exhibitions. How do you work on programming with your local partners?

The Rencontres are infinitely lucky to have the city's and the region's cultural players on board to promote photography during the summer with high-quality proposals. Each institution has complete editorial freedom, but we talk to them all year round to find bridges and links between their projects and the festival. These can be projects that resonate with the artists in the programme, or projects that broaden the approach to photography. All together, we manage to raise the profile of photography. That's what makes the Rencontres so rich, because it's based on the cultural vitality of our region.

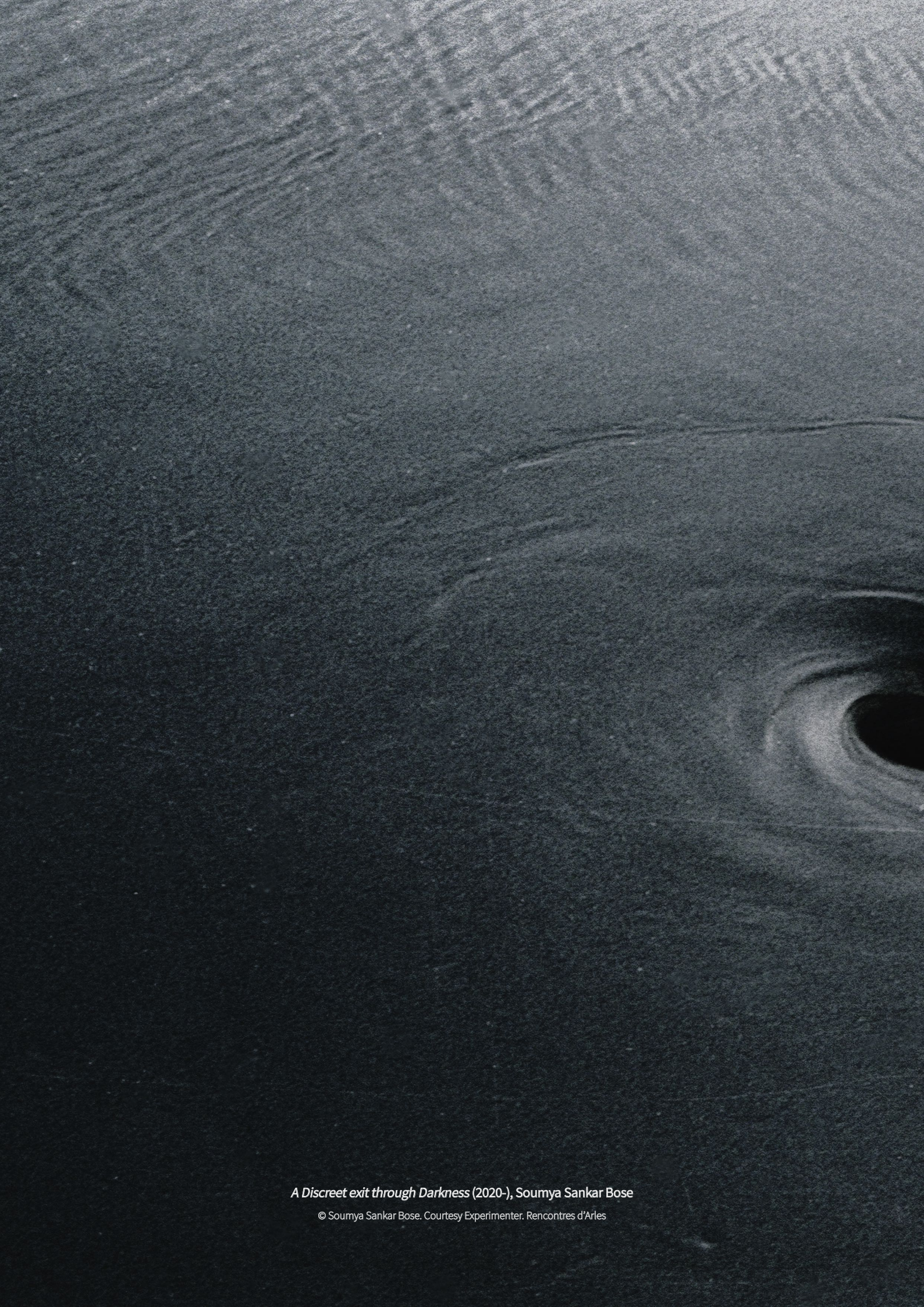
The echoes of the Rencontres also resonate internationally with exhibitions co-produced by the festival. Is this also a way of keeping the Rencontres alive beyond the summer season?

This essential point ties in completely with the question of eco-responsibility. Les Rencontres has always mounted co-productions, but we want to give them a wider scope. Setting up co-productions or projects between several international structures allows us to produce more effectively, to share costs, but also to avoid multiplying the number of exhibitions and therefore to have a more sober approach to production. This means we can help artists more effectively. This pooling also applies nationally. For example, we are going to co-produce an exhibition on Agnès Varda with the Institut pour la photographie, which will be shown first in Arles and then in Lille. It's an aspect we feel very strongly about, and one on which we will be placing particular emphasis in the years ahead.



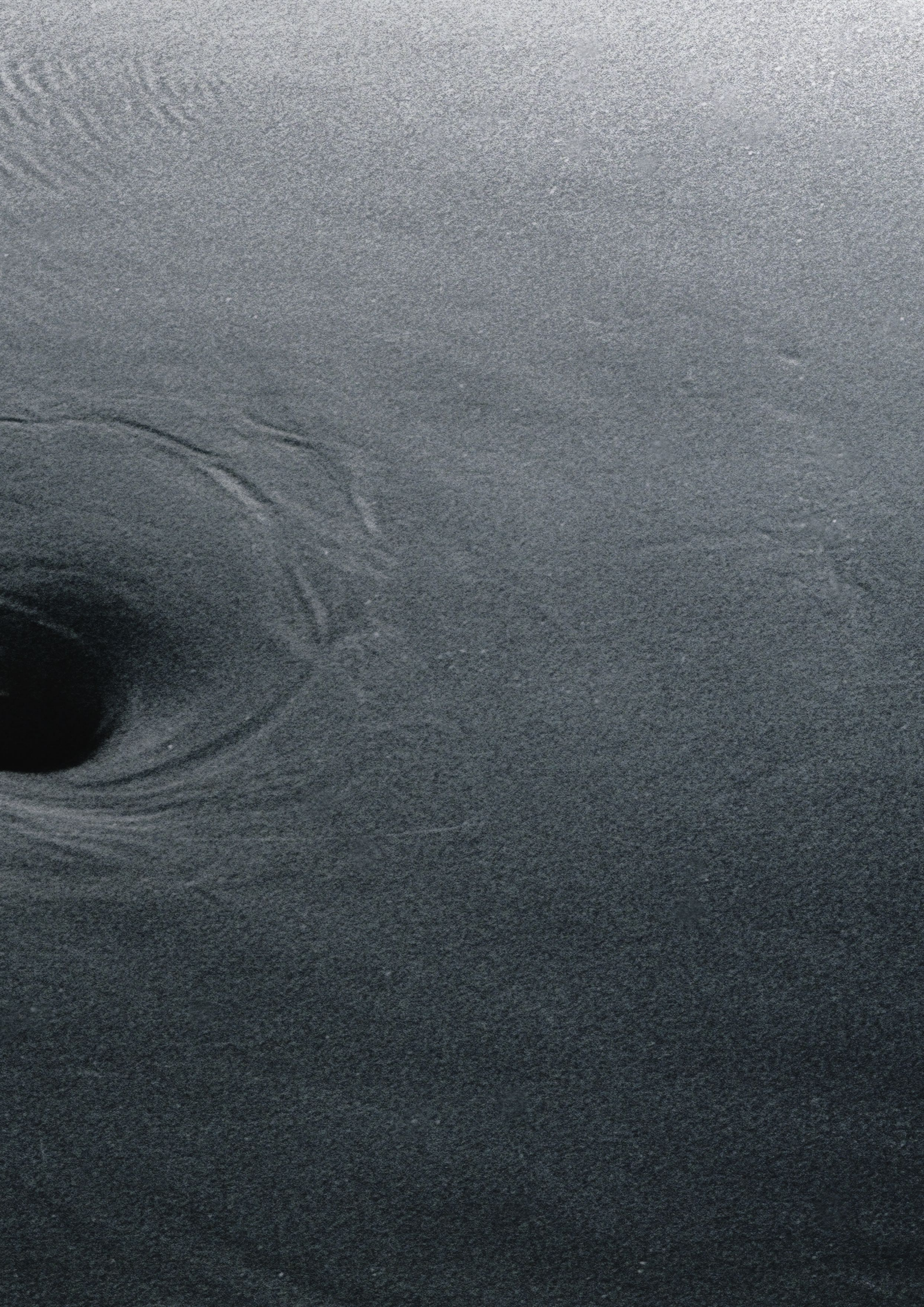
Christoph Wiesner and Aurélie de Lanlay
Photo Julie Hmčirová. Courtesy Rencontres d'Arles





A Discreet exit through Darkness (2020-), Soumya Sankar Bose

© Soumya Sankar Bose. Courtesy Experimenter. Rencontres d'Arles



NO. 1 FEBRUARY

The Child's Hand (2023), Juliette Agnel

© Juliette Agnel. Courtesy Galerie Clémentine de la Féronnière. Rencontres d'Arles

COMMITTED EXHIBITIONS

The 54th edition of the Rencontres is offering a committed programme, looking again at the ways in which man and nature live together, and highlighting the work of women photographers. Here is a small selection of exhibitions.

“Insolare”; Eva Nielsen. **Strates**

This year’s BMW Art Makers Prize goes to the artist/curator duo Eva Nielsen and Marianne Derrien. Here they come together to establish a language in which poetry and science intermingle in an experimental visual project. *Insolare* bears witness to the local landscape of the Camargue, exploring its mutations over time, the natural phenomena of sedimentation and the human imprint on the environment. Eva Nielsen incorporates a variety of media into her observation of these phenomena, including photography, screen printing, painting and printing, as well as a technical process known as insolation, which consists of printing an image on a screen coated with photosensitive emulsion using a light source. Playing on visual and symbolic superimpositions, the works invite us to take a look at the reality of a landscape, both rural and industrial, and the natural forces that govern it.

“Insolare”

Until 24 September
Cloître Saint-Trophime
20 rue du Cloître. Arles
www.rencontres-arles.com

“Casa Susanna” **Gender intimacies**

In 2005, a publication entitled *Casa Susanna* unveiled a collection of photographs found by chance at a flea market. The photographs showed men dressed as women, posing for the camera. The place and people discovered revealed the existence of an

actual network spread across the United States and Canada.. And Casa Susanna, the generic name given to this community that met in a residence in the heart of the Catskill Mountains or in New York for a few days at a time. Most of them were highly educated, married white men, engineers, commissioners, writers... Profiles that “are not at all marginal”, explains Isabelle Bonnet, co-curator of the exhibition with Sophie Hackett. Having written a dissertation on the subject, she traces a complex history, the paths of characters who intersect there, and bring to life an identity rarely understood in the American society of the 1960s. “What makes these photographs so extraordinary is that they do not relate to entertainment, or cabaret, but to an extremely intimate universe,” confides the curator. It’s an opportunity to bear witness to a historical reality, rediscovered by chance and immortalised in the images.

“Casa Susanna”

Until 24 September
Espace Van Gogh
18 place Félix-Rey. Arles
www.rencontres-arles.com

“The River’s Children”, Yohanne Lamoulère. Going back to the source

An island in the Rhône delta. It was in this wild place, crossed by polluted waters, that Yohanne Lamoulère’s project was born; to sail the brown waters back to their source. Embarked on a strange boat, between a caravan and a barge, the photographer reached Lyon in May 2022, then continued her journey by motorbike to Geneva the following month. The final step of the journey, to the Rhône glacier, was completed in 2023. Yohanne Lamoulère returned from her quest with portraits of the people who live on the banks of the river. “What interests me is the porosity between document and fiction,” she says. Her photographs play with the very nature of the image, combining staged scenes accompanied by costumes and props and shots taken without artifice, like *Mister Harold*, a professional clown that she met during one of her stops. The series tells the story of these “river’s children” in a narrative that is sometimes documentary, sometimes marvellous.

“The River’s Children”

Until 24 September
Le jardin d’été.
Boulevard des Lices. Arles
www.rencontres-arles.com

“Grey sun”, Éric Tabuchi and Nelly Monnier. A French itinerary

“A kind of western, and quite demanding photographic work”: that’s how Nelly Monnier and Éric Tabuchi describe their life on the road, which began with the *Atlas des Régions Naturelles* project. Since 2017, the two have been working to depict France and the diversity of its landscapes and buildings, striving for objectivity

in perspective and image. It’s a long-term project, carried out under grey skies, usually in autumn or winter, with soft light used to “reveal the architecture”. As the photographs unfold, the established protocol is revealed, far from the spectacular: no cast shadows, vegetation faded by the season, and the subject always at the centre of the frame. This unprecedented photographic archive will eventually reveal France’s 450 natural regions in 25,000 images, from Strasbourg to Brest, Lille to Marseille. At the Rencontres, seven themed pavilions are providing an overview of the project as a whole, the regions and the architecture they contain. The images are accompanied by grey skies, as if to temper the Arles sunshine.

“Grey sun”

Until 24 September
Ground Control
3 rue Jean Gorodiche. Arles
www.rencontres-arles.com
www.archive-arn.fr

“Don’t forget me”: Silence of the shores

The story opens at the gateway to the Mediterranean, in Marseille’s Belsunce district. This was the home of the Keussayan family, who owned the Rex studio in the last century and witnessed the passage of thousands of men and women from North and West Africa who came to work in France. It was the discovery by collector Jean-Marie Donat of more than 700 photographs left in the studio’s archives, but never recovered, that gave rise to the “Don’t forget me” exhibition project. Without names, nationalities or even dates, the photographs take the form of ‘wallet shots’ taken in the country of origin, passport photos of men in costume, or posed studio shots taken to be sent to their families back home. These images reveal personal and intimate fragments, embedded in a history of immigration that is often downplayed, forgotten or invisible. “Don’t forget me” aims to reconstruct this memory and bring lights on those who generated it.

Grand Arles Express

This year, the Grand Arles Express covers seven towns in Provence. In Aix-en-Provence, the Mediterranean area is the focus of a dialogue between several photographers. In Avignon, the Collection Lambert is unveiling the work of American artist Louise Lawler, who explores the relationship between work, creation and exhibition space. In Marseille, the Centre photographique de Marseille, the Frac Sud and the Mucem are each dedicating an exhibition to photography: the first focuses on the artist Paulien Oltheten, with a selection of photographic fragments and videos that address the boundary between daily routine and ritual, between spirituality and madness. The exhibition includes a preview of his latest work, *Lourdes TV*. FRAC Sud’s “Mnémosyne” exhibition explores photography’s relationship with time and the evocative power of images through three works from its collection. The Mucem, meanwhile, uses the famous *Salon des Arts ménagers*, created in 1923, to show the emergence of a consumer society. The Carré d’Art in Nîmes is back this year with three new exhibitions, ranging from Suzanne Lafont’s montage of images to Martine Syms’s video subversions and Noé Soulier’s film *Fragments*. In Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, the Musée Estrine is showcasing Louise Bossut’s project, which explores the possibility of inhabiting the Earth in a different way. Lastly, the Château la Coste in Le Puy-Sainte-Réparate is offering a plunge into the world of Andy Warhol through shots of everyday life, from the mundane to the glitz and glamour of New York parties.



Léo (*The River's Children*, 2022), Yohanne Lamoulère

© Yohanne Lamoulère. Courtesy Tendance Floue. Rencontres d'Arles



*Imagine prompt: "Two men measuring the land
in Kinmen Island" (2022), Tan Chui Mui*

© Tan Chui Mui. Courtesy Rencontres d'Arles

“Don’t forget me”

Until 24 Septembre. Croisière
65 boulevard Émile Combes
Arles. www.rencontres-arles.com

“Søsterskap”: Nordic model

Søsterskap or sorority in English. At Sainte-Anne church, the Nordic scene is in the spotlight in an exhibition featuring seventeen all-female photographers, active since the 1980s. Their feminist and intersectional perspectives explore the idea of welfare state through the “Nordic model”, which includes Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. A hybrid canon combining capitalist and socialist visions, it stands out for its commitment to social cohesion and the protection of individuals, as well as striving for gender equality. “Søsterskap” examines the place of women, the family, work, ethnicity, colonialism and the gendered division of labour in these countries. Through images that are both documentary and conceptual in approach, questions emerge regarding these systems, which are often considered as exemplary by the rest of the world.

“Søsterskap”

Until 24 September
Église Sainte-Anne
8 place de la République. Arles
www.rencontres-arles.com

“The Child’s Hand”, Juliette Agnel.**Image time**

The cryptoporticoes beneath Arles town hall are opening up to the Rencontres public for the first time with the work, also underground, of Juliette Agnel. After an exhibition on the heights of the Pyrenees in 2017, this time the photographer takes us to the caves of Arcy. Far from the vast starry landscapes, the images

offer a new perspective on the monumentality of a natural, buried territory. As the photographer moves through the site, her body tells the story of a living, inhabited and mysterious space. “This is something that recurs in my work because I work a lot with digital *camera obscura*, which requires a long exposure time. It’s all about getting into time, the time of the image,” explains Juliette Agnel. This temporality echoes the geological forms and immemorial paintings that were rediscovered during a physical and symbolic descent. It’s a poetry of movement and of ages coming together, in stone and in ourselves.

“The Child’s Hand”

Until 24 September
Cryptoportiques. Hôtel de Ville
Place de la République. Arles
www.rencontres-arles.com

**“Cosmovisión”; Garush Melkonyan.
Sounds of the Earth**

1977. Two Voyager space probes are launched into space by NASA. With them the Voyager Golden Record, an encrypted record of sounds and images. As a bottle thrown in the cosmic sea, it was intended to represent human civilisation for a possible extraterrestrial intelligence.

The film *Cosmovisión*, directed by visual artist Garush Melkonyan, depicts the interception of the disc and the arrival on Earth of two celestial entities. In a dreamlike atmosphere, they take on human form and set off on a quest, moving through deserted, empty spaces, the only traces of human presence being buildings and ruins. Through their journey, the artist questions the reality of a world that seems to contradict its representations.

“Cosmovisión”

Until 24 September
Église Saint-Blaise
Impasse de Mourgues. Arles
www.rencontres-arles.com

“Myths and clichés”, Nicole Gravier.**Female mythologies**

This exhibition is devoted to Nicole Gravier, named after one of her series of pastiches of Italian novels, which she used to deconstruct them. Born in Arles in 1949, Gravier’s work is at the heart of the post-war *avant-garde* from the late 1960s to the 1980s, echoing the work of Martha Wilson and Cindy Sherman. Through the prism of the photo booth, mail art and photonovels, she reinterpreted the social condition of women and the societal effects of modernisation

“Grow Up”

A plea for life. At a time of climate emergency, the Manuel Rivera-Ortiz Foundation is offering an exhibition this year focusing on the shaky ecosystems of a natural world subjected to globalisation. Sprawling consumerism is giving way to palm plantations, cocaine and coffee. People are leaving a lasting colonial imprint. In response, the work of some thirty artists from South America, Central America and Taiwan has been brought together to offer new narratives. They reveal a relationship with nature nourished by alternative imaginaries and ancestral practices, from traditional medicine to shamanism. Through their different perspectives, the territories reveal other ontologies that celebrate the exchange between humans and plants. Through “Grow Up”, the Foundation is offering a cross-disciplinary approach to documentary, combining sight and smell in an immersive journey.

“Grow Up”

Until 24 September. Manuel Rivera-Ortiz Foundation
18 rue de la Calade. Arles. www.mrofoundation.org

NOTEBOOK

through photography and the television image. “The exhibition re-inscribes Nicole Gravier’s work in the history of art, but also within contemporary discourses in photography,” explains Damarice Amao. As exhibition curator, she worked with six students from the École nationale supérieure de la photographie d’Arles to flesh out the project for this presentation. Together, they are proposing an itinerary tracing the artist’s creative process in different sections, right up to their meeting with Nicole Gravier. “They developed and documented a relationship that, in the end, is as important as the exhibition itself,” says the curator.

“Myths and clichés”

Until 3 September. ENSP
30 avenue Victor Hugo. Arles
www.rencontres-arles.com

“Just because you pressed the shutter?” **Copyright**

Land titles, digitised maps, old family photos and photos generated by Midjourney or DALL-E, two artificial intelligences that generate text-to-art images from simple texts. In this exhibition, with its puzzling title — “Just because you pressed the shutter?” — no photographs were taken by the artist. Winner of the Jimei x Arles Discovery Award 2022, presented each year to a Chinese or Asian photographer, Malaysian artist Tan Chui Mui explores her Chinese origins and history, guided by a multi-layered approach to land, heritage and ownership. The artist links these themes to the notion of copyright in photography, and questions through the prism of metaphor: who owns the images? The exhibition offers a reflection on the development of new technologies and contemporary photography, revealing the links between art and reality.

“Just because you pressed the shutter?”

Until 24 September
Abbaye de
Montmajour
Route de
Fontvieille. Arles



Quand un cheveu est sain il est beau.



TRIBUNE

Reflection on the quays of Sète (c.1950), Agnès Varda

© Estate of Agnès Varda. Rosalie Varda. Courtesy Rencontres d'Arles



FROM ONE LENS TO ANOTHER

The exhibition “La Pointe Courte, from photographs to film” reveals the little-known photographic work of Agnès Varda through the singular story of her visionary movie.

She liked to say that she had had three lives. While Agnès Varda’s career as a filmmaker has often overshadowed the other two, that of photographer and visual artist, the starting point for the six decades of fertile creativity of the three Vardas is a... Rolleiflex. From the still image to the moving image, from art history to the art of storytelling, Agnès Varda combined a lifetime of anti-conformism and radical demands with a singularity that was not devoid of tenderness and mischief.

It is this little-known facet of the great director that Rencontres d’Arles and the Institut pour la photographie des Hauts-de-France are proposing to explore at the Cloître Saint-Trophime in an exhibition that focuses on a body of shots linked to her cult film *La Pointe Courte*. “At the end of the 1940s, Agnès Varda returned to Sète, South of France, after spending the Occupation there. She photographed local life in the working-class district of La Pointe Courte, the premise of her film of the same name, her first feature made a few years later with Philippe Noiret and Silvia Montfort,” says Christoph Wiesner, director of the Rencontres d’Arles. Throughout her life, Agnès Varda retained a special attachment to this town, which was a refuge for her family from Ixelles in Belgium from 1940 to 1943 — they lived there for a time on a boat moored alongside the quay.

She built up a solid network of friends in this southern town and returned every year, feeling that she had been adopted. From 1947 onwards, as an amateur, she photographed the working-class district of Pointe Courte, a timeless enclave of fishermen’s huts nestling between the hills of Sète and the Étang de Thau. Using a Rolleiflex camera, she captures its

inhabitants — the Pointus — her friends, the sailing boats, the quays, the local jousts on the canals... A visual grammar is already simmering. “Today, we no longer know that Agnès Varda was first and foremost a photographer, because her aura as a filmmaker has largely taken over,” admits Carole Sandrin, curator of the exhibition and curator of the Institut pour la photographie, where the Agnès Varda photographic archive has been deposited. “She has reappropriated the world of the Pointe Courte District, adds Christoph Wiesner. Starting out with fairly documentary material, we can see how her images and the way she looks at things are later reflected in her film. It’s fascinating to observe how his gaze evolves from the still image to the moving image.”

After her time in Sète, Agnès Varda — born in 1928 — moved to Paris to continue her studies. She was interested in philosophy — Bachelard was her teacher at the Sorbonne — and enrolled at the École du Louvre. “Agnès Varda was a keen art historian, particularly of 15th century Renaissance painting. Initially,

“My total ignorance of beautiful films, both old and new, allowed me to be naive and cheeky when I launched myself into the image and sound profession. And so I sat in my courtyard on Saturdays and Sundays writing a film project, sometimes while the photos were freezing or drying.” — *Agnès Varda*

she wanted to be a curator, says Carole Sandrin. She has always had an attraction for art history, perhaps even more than for photography or cinema. She talks about it a lot in her interviews from the 1950s and 1960s.” But something was missing. “She then turned to photography, continues the curator, because it’s a practice that blends technique and intellectual work without one or the other taking over too much.” She took evening classes at the École de Vaugirard — a school of photography —, began her apprenticeship in a studio that made reproductions of Rodin’s sculptures and obtained her photographic diploma in 1949. She then embarked on a career as a professional photographer, taking on commissioned work and producing reports for fashionable magazines such as *Réalités*, as well as family albums. Above all, she began a valuable collaboration with Jean Vilar, who offered her a job as a photographer at the Festival d’Avignon. At the time, the immense director had not yet founded the Théâtre National Populaire with its troupe, one of whose leading figures was Gérard Philipe. But Agnès Varda knew him well, and for good reason: native of Sète, he married one of her teenage friends. With Agnès Varda, it’s not Perpignan station but the suburbs of Sète that are at the centre of the world.

Naturally, she followed him on the adventure of the TNP at the Palais de Chaillot when it was founded in 1951, and became the official photographer of the famous stage, immortalising its scenic installations, models, rehearsals and performances. And, of course, her portraits of the

actors. Things really took off that same year, 1951, when her father bought her some old, dilapidated shops on rue Daguerre in the 14th arrondissement. Rue Daguerre would forever be associated with Agnès Varda and Jacques Demy, her future husband. Home, studio, laboratory, production company... It was here that she photographed Brassai, Calder, Dalí, Louis Aragon, Elsa Triolet and Fellini. When she died in 2019, the whole of rue Daguerre would come to pay tribute to her.

“Curious eyes”

It was also on rue Daguerre that she refined her personal practice, which focused on the search for motifs. “In 1954, two months before she began making her first film, *La Pointe Courte*, she organised her very first solo exhibition in her courtyard on rue Daguerre, continues Carole Sandrin. That’s why 1954 is an important year for us, because it was at that time that two languages, two modes of expression, took shape, which would continue to interact in her cinematographic work.”

HUO + AV at LUMA

In the third chapter of his archive presented at the Tour Luma, art critic and curator Hans-Ulrich Obrist looks back on his meeting with Agnès Varda. Entitled “A day without seeing a tree is a waste of a day”, the exhibition focuses on Agnès Varda’s third life: that of a visual artist — even if she refuted the term. These archives reveal the crucial role played by Hans-Ulrich Obrist in introducing Agnès Varda to the world of contemporary art. He talks about their first collaboration: “My relationship with Anne Varda began in the early 2000s, when I worked on an exhibition for the 2003 Venice Biennale called “Utopia Station”. And it was my dream to invite Agnès because we were interested in concrete utopias, and, of course, we had seen her work *Les Glaneurs et la glaneuse*. In 2002, Christian Boltanski, who regularly went to the flea market with Agnès, asked me to join them. I explained to him our Utopia Station project, an art exhibition with a very flexible format, let’s say a platform where there would be numerous possibilities for plug-ins, installations and works. So he introduced us and I explained my *Utopia Station* project to Agnès. She came to Venice to install her *Patatutopia*, a work celebrating potatoes along the lines of her “glaneries”. It was an experimental installation, also sensory, in multi-screen mode, so non-linear, which allowed her to work on the film in a very, very different way from what she had done all her life at festivals. She loved the experience. She dressed up in a potato costume with a little recording, a sound coming out of the potato. Everyone was delighted by this extraordinary performance and Agnès’s presence at the Venice Biennale. And it was the start of a long friendship with her and Rosalie, her daughter.”

“A day without seeing a tree is a waste of a day”


Until 24 September

LUMA Towaer and Parc des Ateliers

Arles. www.luma.org



Agnès Varda in her Lady Potato costume
at the 50th Venice Biennale (2003)
© Estate of Agnès Varda. Courtesy LUMA



Water jousts in Sète (c.1952), Agnès Varda
© Estate of Agnès Varda, Rosalie Varda
Courtesy Rencontres d'Arles

When it came out, his film was a slap in the face for movie fans of the time. “It was a UFO,” confirms Carole Sandrin. “Her film was a complete departure from what was being made at the time. She turned all the codes of cinema on their head. She had a reputation as a stage photographer with the TNP and the Avignon Festival, but she was not at all known in that milieu and she launched herself without ever having followed the classic path of directing through assistant positions, etc.”

To be able to make this film, she launched her own production company, Ciné-Tamaris, in the form of a cooperative bringing together technicians and actors. With her small budget — ten times less than that of an average French film at the time — she shot in 35 mm, filmed on location with little-known actors and “real people”, as she put it, and mixed fiction and documentary. Yet “the result is very professional and very accomplished in both form and content, as it blends two human stories, that of a couple in crisis and that of a fishing village in difficulty,” notes Carole Sandrin. The curator continues: “The narrative structure is very well constructed. Agnès Varda has her technical and aesthetic knowledge as a photographer, but she is steeped in the history of art and the philosophy of theatre. She mentions Brecht in her interviews about her film, she wanted to tell the story of the lives of these fishermen, but she also wanted to juxtapose it with fiction. The graphic aspect of the landscape is very much in evidence in her photos. She wanted to create a sense of distance, so that the viewer could judge the connections to be made. It’s very mature for a first film.”

Great critic and film historian Georges Sadoul called *La Pointe Courte* “truly the first film of the French New Wave”. The director has assumed the cult status of a pioneering film. “*La Pointe Courte* was produced in 1954 and the French New Wave broke out in 1958, so simply in historical terms, it’s a precursor film,” Agnès Varda told ORTF TV a few years later when her films were presented in Sète in 1971. “I was perhaps one of the first to say that it was necessary to shoot cheaply, quickly, with complete freedom of expression and to try to break away from the realism of the films of the time — which, incidentally, I didn’t know very well — but which I didn’t like.” Five years later, Chabrol, Truffaut and Godard would give concrete expression to this new aesthetic. Alain Resnais in particular, who edited *La Pointe Courte*.

Investigative work

A new way of filming, a new way of conceiving a film. The photographs on show in the exhibition are not, therefore, traditional set or shooting photographs, but “reference and location photographs assembled on nine plates that inspired scenes, atmospheres, even still shots,” explains the curator. The Institute for Photography had the idea of looking at the archives of *La Pointe Courte* in particular by exploring Agnès Varda’s contact sheets following the deposit of her archives by her children, Rosalie Varda and Mathieu Demy. Drowned in the 25,000 phototypes in this collection, more than 800 views of Sète and La Pointe Courte District in 6 × 6 format caught the eye of the curators.

“We wondered what their relationship to film was, recalls Carole Sandrin. So we dug around in the archives and found some reference plates, little 6 × 6 photos stuck together, and by comparing them we were able to reconstruct what was purely her photographic practice, pre-existing the idea of the film, and a certain number of images that she made during two preparatory visits at Easter 1953 and in March 1954. In these photos, she created compositions in which she focused on constructing her images by choosing angles, perspectives and shadows that created flat planes and lines, very linear or geometric motifs. In short, what I call photographic quotations that serve as a starting point for her shots or scenes. Some of the photographs are almost identical in the film.” The young director would play with

stillness and movement. Later, Agnès Varda would film static photographs, sometimes creating triptychs combining photography and cinema. An echo of her early experiments on the edge of film and photography.

Rediscovery

After the success of *Cléo de 5 à 7* (1961), Agnès Varda began her second life. She gave up photography and let others photograph her shoots. “This explains why Agnès Varda has not benefited from the renewed look at photography that historians of the 1980s and 1990s were able to bring to bear on the photographers of the 1950s,” says Carole Sandrin. The Lille Institute, which will be getting a facelift in 2024, will be hanging part of Varda’s collection on its new walls. “I was interested in the idea of working with the Institut pour la photographie for several reasons, explains Christoph Wiesner. It’s both a thematic thread on the intersections between photography and cinema, and a way of showing the value of co-productions with institutions in charge of photography, bearing in mind that the Rencontres are also co-founders of this institute. So this exhibition tells a lot of stories...”

The exhibition has also been extended by a publication co-published by the Institut pour la photographie and delpire & co. Although not a catalogue, this second *Carnet* of the Fonds d’archives photographiques Agnès Varda brings together images from the exhibition presented at the Rencontres d’Arles. During the festival, Hans-Ulrich Obrist, co-director of exhibitions and director of international projects at the Serpentine Gallery in London, opens his personal archives to recount his meeting with Agnès Varda at LUMA [see box p.42]. Agnès Varda was an engaging, whimsical and timeless figure. “She was an artist who found every means of expression,” sums up Carole Sandrin.



*Valentine Schlegel and Mr. Mestres on the deck of a sailboat
(detail, c.1949), Agnès Varda*

© Estate of Agnès Varda. Rosalie Varda. Courtesy Rencontres d'Arles



DISCUSSION

Down into the abyss underneath the river Elbe (detail), Wim Wenders

© Wim Wenders. Courtesy Wim Wenders Foundation. Rencontres d'Arles



“POLAROIDS, THOSE STRANGE CREATURES IN BETWEEN”

In the “My polaroid friends” exhibition, Wim Wenders unveils a series of polaroids captured on the fly during the shooting of his film *The American Friend*. A striking, intimate, poetic and immediate “visual notebook”.

It goes without saying that every Wim Wenders film is an event in itself. Palme d’Or for *Paris, Texas* (1984), Prix de la *mise en scène* at Cannes for *Wings of Desire* (1987), Silver Bear for *The Million Dollar Hotel* (2000), a regular Oscar nominee for his documentaries: *Buena Vista Social Club* (1999), *Pina* (2011) and *The Salt of the Earth* (2014), which also won the César for best documentary film... It is often easy to forget that his career as a photographer is just as fruitful as his career as a director. While Wim Wenders’ polaroids have already been the subject of two fine retrospectives, “Instant Stories” at the Photographer’s Gallery in 2017, and then at the C/O in Berlin in 2018, the filmmaker has chosen to present at the Rencontres d’Arles a selection of shots taken during the filming of his 1976 film *The American Friend*, the screenplay for which was adapted from Patricia Highsmith’s novel *Ripley’s Game*. “My Polaroid Friends” exhibition at the Espace Van Gogh brings together these snapshots taken during rehearsals and location scouting. Having just won the Best Actor prize at the Cannes Film Festival for his latest film, *Perfect Days*, Wim Wenders confides about his very special relationship with these images-objects.

Major retrospectives of your polaroids have already been organised. Why did you choose to present only polaroids of *The American Friend* at Arles?

Quite simply because Arles wasn’t so much interested in showing polaroids as such, but wanted to expand the subject more into the context of working on a film. And in the shooting process of *The American Friend*, polaroids were used extensively, both by me and by the lead actor, Dennis Hopper, in his part as Tom Ripley. I very much liked Christoph Wiesner’s idea of being more specific with the options that polaroids

offered at the time. I could also have chosen *Alice in the Cities*, or *Kings of the Road*, but in *The American Friend* you see such a wide range of applications that I chose this film.

Technical tools of scripting or location scouting, archives, experiments, memories of film shoots, personal practice... Where do your polaroids fit in?

I guess they come in as all of the above. But by 1976, the year we shot the film, polaroids had become such a regular practice that you could hardly call its use “experimental” anymore. They were part of daily life, probably in that decade more than before. They were a visual notebook, they were instantly available and actual physical things that you could easily share. Well, not in the sense that you would “share” photographs today, of course. Polaroids were physical objects and therefore presented a certain “value” that you might also call an “aura”, insofar as they were one of a kind unique specimen. You’d lose one, or give it away, and it was gone. Nobody made copies of polaroids, at least not at the time. Before and after, in the history of photography, you had prints, vintage



8.12.

The American Friend himself, Wim Wenders

© Wim Wenders. Courtesy Wim Wenders Foundation. Rencontres d'Arles

Polaroids were a true *thing*, a singular object of its own, not a copy, not a print, not multipliable, not repeatable. You couldn't help feeling that you had stolen this image-object from the world. You had transferred a piece of the past into the present.

— Wim Wenders

prints, mass prints, whatever, but in that short window of time there were these strange in-between creatures, like predecessors of digital photography, insofar as they were instant, but still clinging on to the physical aspects of an ancient time.

Did you compose them or were they purely spontaneous gestures?

"Gesture" is a good word for the way polaroids were used. You see such a gesture in the installation of Dennis Hopper taking endless selfies in one scene from the film. A polaroid camera was still a viewfinder camera, you had to look through a lens, it didn't have any display. So you had to point it to its object, and as the viewfinder was a bit clumsy, many people just vaguely aimed it in that direction. When you were good at taking polaroids, your body knew how to frame the picture and then it truly became a gesture that your arm and your hand could do on their own. Ever since cameras have displays — and now even lenses on both sides — that gesture has been lost.

The famous scene in which Tom Ripley photographs himself with a Polaroid is reminiscent of the narcissistic obsessions of selfies. Its atmosphere is itself reminiscent of Edward Hopper's paintings. Is this multi-layered reading, characteristic of your films, reflected in your polaroids? Or do they convey more direct messages?

"Narcissism" is the best word referring to that specific moment in which Patricia Highsmith's best-known villain Tom Ripley deals with his remorse and his self-doubts after having manipulated his innocent victim Jonathan Zimmermann (played by Bruno Ganz) into killing a man. It is indeed quite a multi-layered scene. In the way Dennis Hopper plays it, you can't help but thinking of the American expression for taking pictures which is "to shoot". And in a way, he does shoot himself, as if he was pointing a gun at his head, like Bruno Ganz does it in a later scene of the same film.

"Scrapbooks"

Born of an Anglo-Saxon practice combining photo albums and diaries, scrapbooks can include photographs as well as drawings, stamps, postcards, press cuttings and invitation cards. Avant-garde filmmakers of the second half of the 20th century such as Derek Jarman, Agnès Varda and Chris Marker seized on the creative possibilities of these collages. The exhibition, designed by Matthieu Orléan, curator at the Cinémathèque française, presents some of the finest scrapbooks by these directors, who were also photographers, poets and illustrators. "This group exhibition focuses on artists with a radical practice, pushing the boundaries of autofiction to the limit — extended today by uses such as Instagram, of which the scrapbook is perhaps the little-known ancestor," writes Matthieu Orléan, winner of the 2021 curatorial research grant from Les Rencontres d'Arles.

"Scrapbooks: inside the imagination of filmmakers"

Until 24 September. Espace Van Gogh

18 Place Félix-Rey. Arles. www.rencontres-arles.com

As in *The American Friend* or *Perfect Days*, it seems that you like to put a camera in the hands of your actors...

Is this a game with them?

(laughs) I haven't even thought of that. Well, come to think of it, Philipp Winter in *Alice in the Cities* is the first of these actor-photographers, and Hirayama in *Perfect Days* the latest [Kōji Yakusho was awarded the Best Actor prize at the 2023 Cannes Film Festival for this role, editor's note]. It might be actually not so much a "game", but a variation of the "point of view" that these films embraced or incorporated. What I mean is: I like showing the close-up of an actor and then cut to what he (or she) sees. This creates a strange identification between the actor and the viewer, insofar as the viewer learns to see like the character. The camera in the hands of the character even intensifies that relation.

One can sense that you have a certain fondness for these polaroids. Do you still use them today?

No, I don't anymore. Lately, I was given a polaroid camera by someone who wanted me to take a picture of him with it. I did it quickly, and my body remembered really well. But it felt strangely nostalgic. Like sitting in one of these photo booths that have popped up again everywhere. That's also quite anachronistic. All the fun is in that discrepancy, in that conscious act of pretending to go back in time. I mean, I do understand people who still decide to shoot on film. That is a conscious choice they make, and they mostly have their reasons. But I'd have a hard time accepting that reason in the case of polaroids. That is indeed pure nostalgia, and I am not really a nostalgic person. I did and do still love things from the past. But not any more as a contemporary process.



Wim Wenders

Courtesy Rencontres d'Arles



ANTIFASCISME



Anti-Le Pen demonstration at Place de la Nation, Paris, 29 April 2002 (detail), Guillaume Herbaut

© Guillaume Herbaut. VU' Agency. Courtesy Libération. Rencontres d'Arles

“50 YEARS THROUGH THE EYES OF *LIBÉRATION*”

Les Rencontres d'Arles is opening its walls to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the founding of *Libération*. At the same time, they're celebrating the historic relationship between the festival and the daily newspaper. *Joyeux anniversaire !*

There are the front pages of *Libération*, with their headlines that hit home. And above all, there are the photos, with their offbeat tone and sharp eye for current affairs. In short, a unique style that has been the newspaper's hallmark for half a century. To celebrate the newspaper's anniversary, the Rencontres d'Arles has entrusted the curatorship of the exhibition “50 years through the eyes of *Libération*” to Lionel Charrier, head of the newspaper's photo department and co-author of the eponymous book published by Seuil last April.

At the Abbaye de Montmajour, the photographs on display, both silver and digital, all come from the newspaper's archives. They have been commissioned or published by *Libération* since it was founded in 1973. “They bring to life, or relive, half a century of immediate history, of passions in France, of conflicts, of political conquests... Like a film of our memory, both intimate and collective. A stroll through history, told through the eye of *Libération* — from decade to decade, diving into each era — from the 1970s to the present day. From Sartre to Macron, from Lip to the feminist glue girls,” says Lionel Charrier in his exhibition presentation.

“Breaking codes”

War reporting, fashion photography, historical images and portraiture all collide and respond to each other. Summing up fifty years of news coverage in one exhibition is a huge undertaking. Lionel Charrier recalls: “The *Libération* style was forged under the impetus of Christian Caujolle in the 1980s, with a single watchword: break the codes. Using

photographers against the grain, putting forward a different perspective, a singular style. Even if it meant sometimes going beyond the frame or cutting off heads.”

Rather than simply being used to illustrate the newspaper's articles, *Libération's* photojournalists are encouraged to use their images to make a point and take a look at current affairs, as the newspaper's columns reminded us at the Rencontres d'Arles 2022. Their tone and intentions are based on “original framing and singular writing”. We often talk about the quirky side of *Libération's* photographers,” says Lionel Charrier in a video recounting the importance of images in the newspaper with photographer Cyril Zannettacci. We've had this culture right from the start with Christian Caujolle and then Laurent Abadjian, the paper's photo directors. The photographers don't take a purely traditional approach to illustrating articles, but rather take a different view of the news, sometimes with an offbeat slant.

Intersecting stories

The link with Les Rencontres d'Arles is obvious: two former heads of the newspaper's photo department have headed up the artistic direction of the festival: Louis Mesplé from 1991 to 1993 and Christian Caujolle in 1997. Christian Caujolle undeniably left his mark on the visual history of *Libération* and the festival. "All those who succeeded him at the head of the newspaper's photo department (Louis Mesplé, Roland Allard, Jean-Pierre Montagne, Laurent Abadjian) contributed to the history of images at *Libération*, but it was Christian Caujolle who set the rules: photography exists independently, it tells a different story from the text, sometimes it is stronger than the text," wrote Serge July in 1997.

An author, critic and curator all rolled into one, Christian Caujolle was President of World Press Photo in 1990, and is a kind of tutelary figure for French photography. Trained alongside Michel Foucault, Roland Barthes and Pierre Bourdieu, he became director of photography at *Libération* in 1981, before embarking

on the adventure of creating Agence VU in 1986 and "VU' La galerie" in 1998. Ten years later, he founded Polka magazine. His signature appears at the foot of a host of reference monographs: Lartigue, Klein, Salgado, Depardon...

The ambitious approach of the big names at VU' Agency has always been to "relive immediate history in a vivid way", says the agency with no false modesty, referring to the place occupied by its photographers in the visual discourse of *Libération*. They have undoubtedly made a major contribution to the *Libération* style, covering major events such as the coup d'état in Mali by Françoise Huguier, the Beijing Spring in China by Davy, the Orange Revolution in Ukraine by Guillaume Herbaut and Red Square in Moscow during the fall of the USSR by Claudine Doury.

The exhibition is also an opportunity to recall the history of this underground newspaper founded in July 1941 by the journalist Emmanuel d'Astier de la Vigerie, along with Jean Cavaillès, Lucie

Aubrac and Georges Zérapha. The hard core of a resistance movement called "La dernière colonne", then "Libération-Sud". The publication quickly reached a peak circulation of between 120,000 and 200,000 copies between March and August 1944. From then on, *Libération* lived up to its name. In 1973, the title was taken over by Jean-Paul Sartre and Serge July. From an alternative newspaper, the daily became a generalist. The DNA of the Resistance remained in the background. From being the voice of the anti-fascist struggle, it became alternative, non-conformist, synonymous with independence and freedom of the press. The spirit of May 68 hovered in the air. The newspaper's charter was a *manifesto* advocating "the expression of a direct democracy where the people speak to the people". 1981 was a turning point. A revamped *Libération* celebrated François Mitterrand's victory. The break with Sartre was complete. Later, *Libération* switched to colour. It was a mixed success in terms of readership, but it opened up new visual possibilities for its photojournalists. Serge July eventually left the paper on 30 June 2006. This year, as the paper celebrated its fiftieth anniversary, Serge July took up his pen again to write mood pieces. From co-founder to columnist.

The Rencontres exhibition offers a visual interpretation of this unique title in the history of the press, which has accompanied the upheavals of our time. But it's impossible to list the myriad photographers and photojournalists who have worked with *Libération* over the last fifty years: Henri Cartier-Bresson, Raymond Depardon, Françoise Huguier, William Klein, as well as collectives and young photographers. "They have shaped a certain idea of press photography. A photography of authors, serving the news," sums up Lionel Charrier.

"Bloodbath nation"

At Croisière, the association du Méjean devotes an exhibition to photographer Spencer Ostrander and Paul Auster, famous American author, around a premise: what makes the United States the most violent country in the Western world? For two years, the photographer travelled extensively across the United States to photograph the sites of more than thirty mass shootings that have taken place in recent years. In the exhibition "Bloodbath nation", he presents a series of black-and-white shots of massacre sites emptied of all human activity. It is from these images of lifeless places that writer Paul Auster traces the history of gun violence in the United States. In the banality of these now-deserted supermarkets, schools and places of worship, the terrible recurrence of mass killings in the United States resonates. The writer's account, punctuated by "photographs of silence", as he describes Spencer Ostrander's work, takes stock of an issue of public safety — and even health — that has divided the country into two irreconcilable camps since its inception.

"Bloodbath nation"

Until 24 september. Croisière

65 boulevard Émile Combes. Arles. www.rencontres-arles.com



*Borderline Bar and Grill, 13 dead, 16 injured (1 shot, 15 in the ensuing chaos),
Thousand Oaks, California, 7 November, 2018 (detail), Spencer Ostrander*

© Spencer Ostrander. Courtesy Rencontres d'Arles





*Act III of the Gilets Jaunes movement,
Avenue Friedland, Paris, 1st December 2018, Bobby*

© Bobby. Courtesy Libération. Rencontres d'Arles



MOM 2/2

Skin remembers, Riti Sengupta

© Riti Sengupta. Courtesy Rencontres d'Arles

A TASTE OF INDIA

Indian photography is a reflection of the subcontinent: multiple, complex and breathtakingly vibrant. Whether street, documentary or social photography, or a hybrid of techniques, Les Rencontres d'Arles has long been questioning its incredible diversity.

This year, the festival has entrusted the selection and hanging of the ten projects shortlisted for the Louis Roederer Foundation Discovery Prize to Indian curator Tanvi Mishra. Far from being just a selection of Indian photographs, the exhibition showcases the work of photographers from countries that are rarely represented on the international scene. Of the ten projects selected, five come from India and Bangladesh, and five others from Egypt, Kuwait, Jamaica, Vietnam and Ecuador [see box p.62]. What do they have in common? The deconstruction of stereotypes and post-colonial discourse, the undermining of patriarchy and social conventions, and the questioning of identity. Tanvi Mishra, curator and member of the first World Press Photo International Advisory Committee, who is particularly interested in the visual history of South Asia, research methodologies in image creation and the notion of fiction in photography in the current political context, comments: “The common thread running through this exhibition is not a theme, but a proposition: that the shifting relationship between the public and the image is conditioned by individual memory and the viewing device.” She wonders: “What images do we anticipate when we talk about death in an oppressed community? How do we imagine patriarchy in everyday life, at once impalpable and hegemonic? Can images attest to a crime that no one witnessed?”

“An authentically Indian mode of expression”

The history of photography — like the history of art as a whole — has been written and theorised according to Western canons and discourses. Its techniques too. For a long time, India was no exception to this doctrinal and ethnocentric rule. Yet the history of photography in India is almost

as old as that of the medium itself. The first appearance of a camera in Calcutta dates back to 1840, exactly seven months after Daguerre publicly presented his invention in Paris. It was British merchants who first introduced them. “Subtly, photography worked its way into local culture to become an authentically Indian mode of expression,” writes Judith Mara Gutman, a professor at the New School for Social Research in New York, in her essay, *Through Indian Eyes: National Photographic Art in the Subcontinent* (1992). She continues: “Indian photographers, or, really, artist/photographers (and they called themselves that well into the twentieth century, at a time when the Western world was already using the new Leica) produced another characteristic kind of photograph, the painted photograph. It was probably the most popular and, in Indian terms, the most ‘natural-istic’ photograph in nineteenth and early twentieth century India. Also the most exuberant. Sometimes these photographs were so completely painted that little trace of a photographic look was left, though more often they were partially painted. And with vivid colours.”

Between fiction and tableaux, visual research and new media, the artists venture beyond the direct interpretations that often characterise documentary practice. They distort, divide and mark the photographic image, inducing meaning on its surface — *Tanvi Mishra*

Les Rencontres d'Arles had already taken an interest in these hybrid images in 2007, when it unveiled the wonders of the Alkazi Collection of Photography in New Delhi, one of the largest collections of Indian photographs in the world. This tradition of painted photographs reached its apogee in the first half of the twentieth century. The echoes of Mughal miniatures are omnipresent. Before becoming popular thanks to the multitude of studios that were soon to spring up across the country, it was primarily the maharajas and their retinue who rushed to the camera. Assembled in albums, these images from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries tell the story of daily life in the princely courts. These images bear the seeds of a desire for modernity, a desire that would soon translate into a desire to break free from British rule.

For a long time, Indian photography was to be identified with the unique practice of painting on photography, shimmering and surprising to the Western eye. Later, this play on mixing and hybridising techniques was to be found in the contemporary works of artists such as Vasantha Yoganathan.

Contemporary explorations

A few years later, the Rencontres continued their exploration of Indian photography by focusing on its current expressions. In 2022, the Rencontres showcased the GoaPhoto festival with an exhibition on the theme of hair. "The Unclipped Lives of Indian Hair" presented a selection of recent photographs by Priyadarshini Ravichandran, Indu Antony, Aishwarya Arumbakkam, Shivani Gupta, Janhavi Sharma and

Kapil Das. This was an opportunity to address contemporary social realities in India, such as the obsession with beauty, gender identity, belonging to a community or social class, and the commodification of bodies. At the same event, festival-goers could discover the work of Sathish Kumar at the Cloître Saint-Trophime in the exhibition "Town boy", "a collection of ordinary moments captured over time, reflecting the slow movements

of daily life in South India", according to this photographer, winner of the Serendipity Arles Grant 2020.

Les Rencontres d'Arles has given concrete expression to its interest in this thriving scene by creating a grant for photography, video and new media in South Asia, an initiative supported by the French Institute in India [see box p.12]. Open to photographers from Afghanistan,

Louis Roederer Foundation Discovery Prize

In her selection, Indian curator Tanvi Mishra has chosen projects that give visibility to artists from countries that are rarely represented in international competitions and festivals. Where the emergence is vibrant. And that's just as well, since that's the aim of this prize, which enables all exhibition venues — galleries, arts centres, associations, independent venues and institutions — to promote the projects of the young artists they support in Arles.

The project by Ibrahim Ahmed, born in 1984 in Kuwait City, and Lina Geoushi, born in 1990 in Cairo, presented by Tintera (Cairo-London), explores the links between the image and the embodiment of masculinity and femininity, using archives, both personal and collective, as subjects. Through performances, the artists propose to integrate new representations into their starting material, in line with their own conception of their respective gendered positions. Jamaican artist Samantha Box, presented by Tiger Strikes Asteroid (New York), questions her African, Indian, Jamaican and Trinidadian roots. Aware of the widespread tendency to idealise the notion of homeland, she shatters the myth of the origins story, in order to allow herself to exist in multiplicity. Hien Hoang, born in 1990 in Uông Bí in Vietnam and presented by Florida Lothringer (Munich), begins with a letter written by her aunt assuring her that "Everything is fine on the other side of the ocean". Underlying this falsely enthusiastic statement are stereotypes about Asian people, the difficulties they face in integrating and the discrimination they suffer. Presented by Peckham 24 (London), Spanish artist Nieves Mingueza takes a stand against sexist crimes, citing a figure that is as alarming as it is familiar: one woman in three suffers gender-based violence in her life. Finally, Isadora Romero, born in 1987 in Quito, Ecuador, and presented by the Magnum Foundation (New York), recounts a discovery: her ancestors were seed-keepers. The artist's research raises the following question: how does the loss of ancestral memory and indigenous knowledge — a consequence of colonisation, forced displacement and racism — lead to the disappearance of seeds at a frantic pace? A personal reflection on environmental issues, the main theme of this 54th Rencontres d'Arles.



Untitled (ಮರಣ Marana, detail), Vishal Kumaraswamy

© Vishal Kumaraswamy. Courtesy Rencontres d'Arles



A Discreet exit through Darkness (detail, 2020-), Soumya Sankar Bose

© Soumya Sankar Bose. Courtesy: Experimenter. Rencontres d'Arles

Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, the grant was renewed for the second time this year. “This grant is the fruit of the collaboration between Serendipity Arts and Les Rencontres d’Arles to support and promote the diverse creative expressions of the South Asian region,” said Sunil Kant Munjal, founder and patron of Serendipity Arts, at the launch of this second edition. The first edition of the grant

showed us the possibilities that emerge from this association and the second will demonstrate our commitment to supporting artists from the region and helping to promote their work on a global scale.” Christoph Wiesner, Director of Les Rencontres d’Arles, added: “I am delighted to continue this collaboration. Through its exhibition, the SAG offers the winner international visibility, as well as opportunities for

exchange with the practice of the lens, and enables the festival’s professionals and general public to discover and delve deeper into the richness of the South Asian scene.”

“There is a growing ecosystem of supporting organisations and collectives that are working to support photographers, Tanvi Mishra continues, even the hard truth is that economic resources in India or South Asia, and further in the global South, are limited for culture. Despite the available cultural funding, photography finds it difficult to compete with contemporary art.” Pathshala South Asian Media Institute in Dhaka was the first school in the region for photography and new media (founded in 1998) that continues to provide education at international standards. The curator continues: “The region can boast of multiple internationally renowned photography festivals like Photo Kathmandu (Nepal), Chobi Mela (Bangladesh) and Chennai Photo Biennale (India). There are multiple foundations like the Alkazi Foundation for the Arts (Delhi, India), Shergil Sundaram Arts Foundation (Delhi, India), PhotoSouthAsia (India) or galleries such as Experimenter (Kolkata) and TARQ (Mumbai) that support photography through grants or the commercial market. As for the market, there is still a much higher market for contemporary art than photography but the medium can be seen more and more in commercial galleries over the last decade or so.”

3 questions to... Tanvi Mishra

Tanvi Mishra is the curator of the Louis Roederer Foundation Discovery Prize.

What was your curatorial vision for the selection and exhibition of the Louis Roederer Foundation Discovery Prize?

What the exhibition is proposing is that the way we — as the audience — read images differs from one individual to the next, and from one perspective to the other. How we receive and interpret meaning from images is in part decided by our personal experiences, memory and conditioning and in part by how the images are presented to us. The apparatus that I speak of is the mode in which we view the images — in a museum setting, in public installations, in publications, in artist books, in social media streams, through news channels etc. Whether the image is shown as evidence or artwork, as traditional document or one that is marked and manipulated. How do some sources make us believe what we see as “true” versus other as “fake”. The scale, the structure, the context are all constructions that affect the viewer’s perception. The selected artists use various strategies to shift our perspectives on issues previously seen or spoken about.

What were your scenographic choices?

The choices regarding scenography are primarily in the flow of works in the church. Philippe Calia’s project works as an “activator” as his series on Indian museums addresses this very notion of how residual memory and the apparatus of viewing impact our “ways of seeing”. Many of the artists use performance and self-portraiture to address issues around identity, and to shift a mainstream opinion about how their communities are seen or shown. We also use scale as a device repeatedly in the show — to work with the monumentality of the church and also to proclaim certain artistic statements around perception, gender violence and personal identity.

Most of the artists selected come from “historically under-represented territories”. What do you mean by this?

At least 80% of the artists in this show identify with the great South. All artists in the show privilege narratives and perspectives distinct from mainstream perspectives — be it in terms of regional representation (non-Western) or in terms of issues they are addressing for gender based violence or caste oppression, all from an insider or personal perspective. These points of authorship are distinct from those that we have for long seen in photography — that of the roving Western White Male — and binds these artists together in a unique grouping. All of them also use the image to subvert meaning beyond what it visibly displays — they split the image, others mark or collage it, while even others compose it through experimental technologies.

Intimacy and subjectivity

At the Église des frères prêcheurs, Indian artists — or those living in India — exhibited by curator Tanvi Mishra in competition for the Louis Roederer Foundation Discovery Prize 2023 bear witness to the richness evoked by Christoph Wiesner. With “A Discreet exit through the Darkness”, photographer Soumya Sankar Bose takes as her starting point

ZOOM

a family trauma — the disappearance of her mother, who went shopping and was not found until three years later — to question memories and their changing nature. Moving to the limits of fiction by recreating compositions inspired by real events, Bose's practice exploits photography's complex relationship with memory and truth. For his part, Vishal Kumaraswamy uses experimental technologies to represent the mourning process in the human body as it moves through public space during a funeral procession. Using 3D scanners and photogrammetry, the artist maps movements, transforms them into data and reinterprets them in the form of generative images and videos.

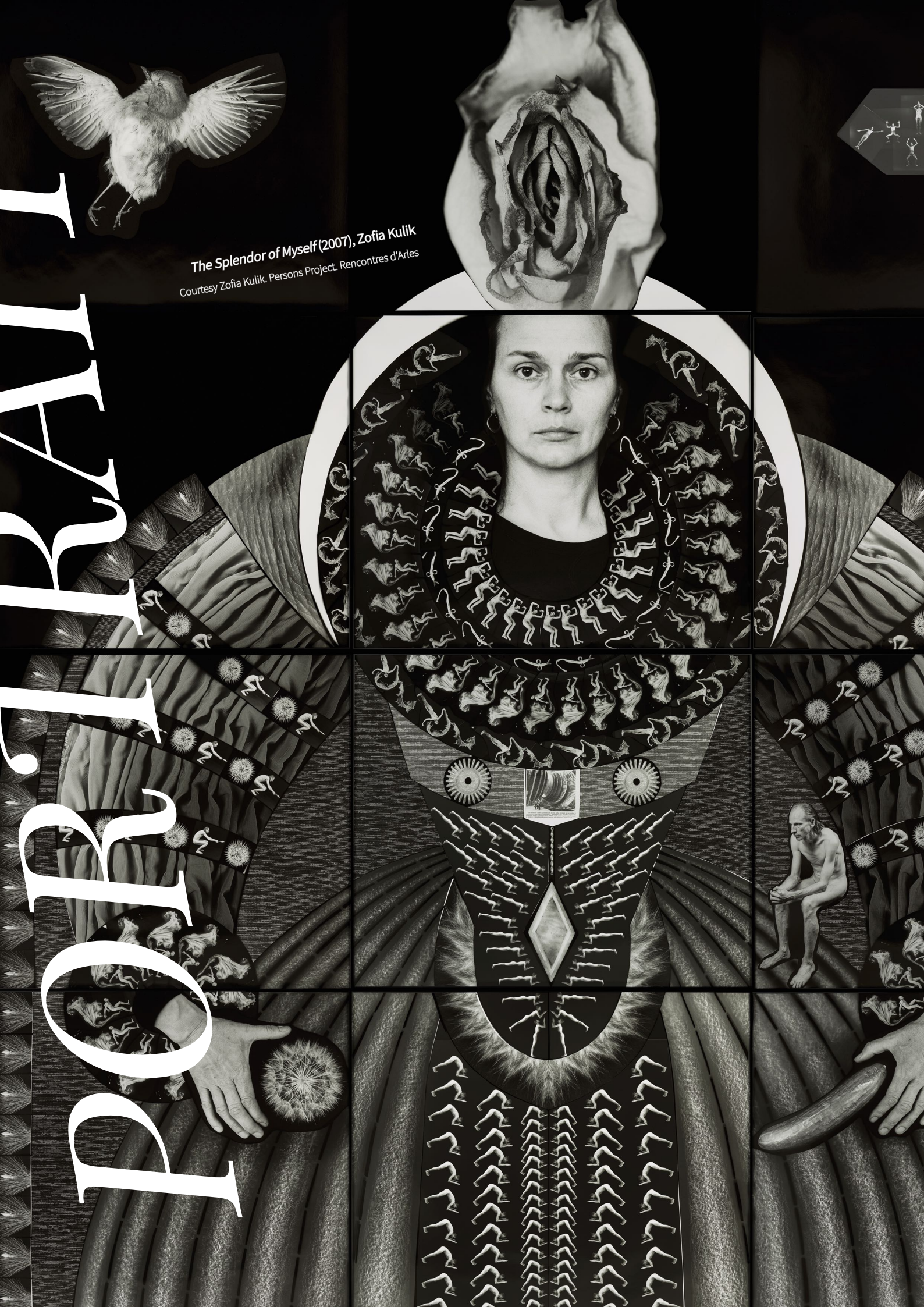
Born in 1993 in Kolkata, the young photographer Riti Sengupta recounts how she returned to live with her parents during the pandemic. It was then that she realised the extent to which the dynamics of her family are imbued with patriarchal mechanisms, which are expressed in the details of everyday life. "Things I can't say out loud" becomes an intergenerational dialogue between mother and daughter, when the two women meet inside the home. Md Fazla Rabbi Fatiq, from Bangladesh, also translates his Covid experience in "Home", when he has to leave the capital Dhaka to return to his village. The anguish, unease and discomfort are palpable in his shots of the everyday objects with which he is confined. Finally, Philippe Calia, a Frenchman who has lived and worked in India for the past fifteen years, explores the Ajaib Ghar archive, which brings together images taken in exhibition galleries and comments taken from visitors' books in India. "By sacralising objects and taking them out of context, museums lock societies into a certain vision of history," he says. A subjective relationship between the public and the image.

Home (detail, 2020), Md Fazla Rabbi Fatiq
© Md Fazla Rabbi Fatiq, Courtesy Rencontres d'Arles



REAL LIFE FOR ALL

The Splendor of Myself (2007), Zofia Kulik
Courtesy Zofia Kulik. Persons Project. Rencontres d'Arles





ZOFIA KULIK: SHAPING ARCHIVES

Celebrated for the first time in France in a monographic exhibition, the work of Zofia Kulik stands as a pioneering influence in the neo avant-garde scene of the early 1970s Poland. Deeply influenced by her country's history, her practice invokes power structures through the prism of her personal experiences.

At the Église des Trinitaires, in the heart of Arles, Zofia Kulik's solo show displays a body of work spanning more than 35 years. Starting from the late 1960s, it explores the story of the Polish neo avant-garde and its ensuing transformations, as well as the evolution of the artist's practice, rooted in photography and collecting. Revealing Zofia Kulik's process of creation and very own techniques elaborated in her darkroom, the exhibition also unveils both a relentless archival work and photographic compositions constituted of symbols, motifs, and personal imageries referring to art and political histories.

Zofia Kulik was born in 1947, the year of the establishment of the Polish People's Republic. Her artistic journey follows an itinerary imbued by the country's social transformations, from a communist regime to the transition towards a democratic system and market economy, engaged in 1989. It is in 1965 that she started studying art at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, along with Przemyslaw Kwiek, who would later become her partner. After her diploma, they started working as a duo, only to end their collaboration in 1987. "I had three periods: one before the duo which ended right after my diploma, the second was the KwieKulik duo, and the last one started after 1987, until now," explains the artist.

The development of a neo avant-garde

A student at the Department of Sculpture, Zofia Kulik began practicing as early as fourteen years old. The teaching, however, remained formal, using traditional forms and materials, and keeping disciplines divided without possibilities to switch or combine media. The artist recalls:

"We [the students] wanted to reform the art studying. We had a very scientific approach to sculpting, and we came to the conclusion that art schools should be put together with film schools, for instance. That the students should have the possibility to go from clay to the camera, from drawings to graphics. We did not realise that the whole system was configured in such a way and that we would, later, as working professionals, be divided into such disciplines, of pure sculpture, of monuments, of propaganda decoration, etc."

In such a context, stemming from social criticism as well as the need to push the boundaries of these traditional artistic forms emphasised in art schools, came a Polish neo avant-garde movement that started from the late 1960s to the 1970s — the Wrocław '70 Visual Arts Symposium notably organised by Polish art critic and theoretician Jerzy Ludwinski stands as a landmark for the movement. Conceptual and experimental art developed, incorporating new media and materials, as well as the need to bridge the gap between art and life.

“I don’t like to use such heavy words as “communism”, or “regime”. Living there at the time, we used more detailed notions. I remember, after 89, how difficult it was when the system was changed to explain all these nuances. — *Zofia Kulik*

In the same way, Zofia Kulik aimed at emancipating herself from strict forms and divisions. She rapidly developed her practice of photography, continually collecting images, historical ones, personal ones. Initiated in 1968 through the collect of images — the artist usually uses two dates in her works, the first one marking the beginning of the creative process, the second one, its completion —, her 1971 diploma project marked the junction, in her work, of sculpture and visual archives with the projection of about 500 diapositives on three different screens, conveying her deep interest for juxtapositions, analogies,

Kulik and Kwiek developed “open form” projects based on the 1959 theoretical concept by architect, urban planner, and theorist Oskar Hansen. It notably redefined the role of the audience within the work and considering the documentation of the creative process as more important than the final result. And in the duo’s minds, the growing consciousness of a system pervaded by propaganda and the impossibility for artists to live independently, without government institutions. “You could not criticize the government, or the Soviet Union, or you would have immediately had a ban for everything,” recalls Zofia Kulik.

Actions and their documentation stood as two equally important parts of KwieKulik’s art. In 1987, when the couple parted ways, more than 200 events had been led and recorded, ephemeral works, in opposition to objects that they linked to propaganda tools: “We were sculptors, and we earned money by making propaganda objects such as plates, letters on memorials, decorations for official demonstrations, and so on. We applied to survive. And we started involving these jobs, which we hated, into our actions to make them our own.”

“Juxtapositions have an important role. And structures: my works are very strongly structured. But the architecture of it, I think, is rather connected to my sculptural education. — *Zofia Kulik*

and correspondences through the selection and disposition of images. “I was very well trained in sculptural objects, after ten years of studying. And I remember wanting to make a study of a nude, and while looking and turning around the model, my perception could remember what I had seen before, as in a cubist perspective. It was the base of my idea for the diploma. I started documenting different profiles of the object, combined with other documentary elements that I had collected.”

KwieKulik: a period of contestation

As the first period of Zofia Kulik’s practice was achieved with her diploma, the artist entered in her second era as part of the KwieKulik duo. Deeply influenced by the contestation of object-based art,

As early as 1972, KwieKulik started creating and documenting situations involving their newborn son, as well as different actions inside and outside their home. In one of the two rooms of their apartment in Warsaw’s Praga district, the duo opened their Studio of Activities, Documentation and Propagation, an alternative space open to the public, both an underground laboratory and a documentation centre dedicated to their “activities”. The space allowed them to display their projects as well as a Polish alternative scene discarded by an ongoing censorship, between performances, video installations, films, or photographs. *Monument Without a Passport*, a 1978 performance, highlighted such restrictions when the couple failed to obtain their passports from the government, which citizens were not allowed to keep.

In 1978, Zofia Kulik’s *Plea for Pardon* stood as her first public solo action. As if announcing a shift to come, which would effectively occur nine years later, this initiated a need for the artist to withdraw from the duo’s performances, as well as the acknowledgement of a discomfort in their dynamic. In 1982, she departed from the noise of Warsaw to live in an old house in Łomianki-Dabrowa. Performances yet went on with Polish Duo in 1984, Hammer-Sickle in 1985, or Banana and Pome-Grenade in 1986, until their definitive split in 1987.

Self-revolution and emancipation

In her encounter with a younger generation of 1980s post-conceptual artists, Zofia Kulik found a new momentum, an “accident” triggered by the tide of post-modernism



Zofia Kulik

© Zofia Kulik. Courtesy Rencontres d'Arles



Interference in a photograph (detail, 1969-1971), Zofia Kulik
Courtesy Zofia Kulik, Persons Project, Rencontres d'Arles



Conceptual art was so strong in Poland because it did not criticise directly, as it was rather about discussing theories. — *Zofia Kulik*

sweeping over Europe that shaped a new consciousness in art at the time. Between Solidarity, a Polish trade union founded in 1980, and the martial law imposed by the government in reaction to this anti-authoritarian movement, artists found themselves more and more active in the country's political development. "This new generation stimulated me with new ideas and vocabulary, another philosophy for existence and for art." In 1987, the artist began experimenting, initiating her *Archive of Gestures* series portraying a nude model — Polish artist Zbigniew Libera — in various positions, that would later be used in her collages and photo collages elaborated through her multiple-exposure technique.

I joined these two existential postures. Sharpness and soft drapery." The "Splendor of the Artisan", the title of the Arles exhibition, then, arises as a tribute for her mother, and the continuity of the existential heritage of the feminine condition: "I am a feminist artist because of the way I work. My work is to sew and stitch, just like my mother."

Commenting on Zofia Kulik's third period, Sarah Wilson was writing in 2001: "Kulik questions, through parody and replication, all systems of ordering, of hierarchy, of discipline and punishment, of control over minds, over bodies (of women, especially) together with the demand for self-sacrifice and self-repression." In her black and white kaleidoscopic

photographs, the artist indeed subverts a totalitarian aesthetic, using endless repetitions of symbols as well as sculptural compositions to outline power structures, whether they be political, patriarchal or religious.

Acknowledging the importance of her solo work, Zofia Kulik was chosen to represent Poland at the 75th Venice Biennale in 1997. She was also selected in 2007 to be showcased in Kassel's Documenta. Perpetuating her archival work, she will have a room dedicated to the KwieKulik Archive in the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, as the largest private archive of materials related to the alternative scene in Poland communist era's visual culture. It is to be inaugurated in the upcoming year.

Poland was considered as the most 'free' country in Central Europe at the time. The Warsaw Autumn International Festival of Contemporary Music, for instance, was one of the most important and contemporary festival, with Western and Eastern Europe countries gathering in the city. — *Zofia Kulik*

In 1989, her first solo exhibition in Warsaw's Mała ZPAF Gallery displays a radical change from her previous productions, reflected by her photographic closed-form artworks.

On the other hand, Zofia Kulik was going through major transformations in her personal life that led her to reconnect with her own history: "I started discovering myself as a solo artist, as an individual, going back to my childhood. My father was an army officer and I grew up in army barracks. My mother was a seamstress. If you compare these two elements, you will see the most radical opposition.

"Splendor of the artisan"

"Splendor of the Artisan" is the first ever solo show of Zofia Kulik in France. Curated by Karolina Ziębinska-Lewandowska, Polish art and photography historian, and director of the Museum of Warsaw, the exhibition displays the artist's work from the very beginning of her practice at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw to her latest compositions. "It is divided into two parts," explains Karolina Ziębinska-Lewandowska: the main one presents iconic works, black and white compositions in large formats, exploring Zofia Kulik's iconography, references, and vocabulary. The second part is dedicated to the working process of the artist, allowing to discover her approach to photography. Detaching from the KwieKulik period and her work as a duo, the exhibition focuses on Zofia Kulik's individual production, displaying some of her pieces for the very first time.

"Splendor of the artisan"

Until 24 September. Église des Trinitaires
36 rue de la République. Arles. www.rencontres-arles.com

ECCOLOGLI



ECO-RESPONSIBILITY: TIME TO MAKE CHOICES

Welcoming the public, the logistics of works and exhibitions, surveying the area... In the face of the climate emergency, Les Rencontres d'Arles is deploying a whole arsenal of eco-responsible measures infused by the thinking of its photographers and teams. Here's an overview.

How can an international festival like Les Rencontres d'Arles reduce its environmental impact? What social role can it play in its local area? How can we defend the way photographers look at global change? The festival did not wait for the scorching summer of 2022 to question its practices and raise awareness of these issues within the photography ecosystem. Eco-design is, so to speak, part of the DNA of this festival, which was designed from the outset to take place outside its walls. Churches, cloisters, industrial wastelands... all places that have to be rethought and adapted for photographic display every year, without altering their heritage identity. The opposite of a white cube.

Olivier Etcheverry, the historic scenographer of the festival's exhibitions, who sadly passed away on 3 March last year, championed the "fairground", sober and thrifty side of the event. By re-using material from previous exhibitions each year, he was constantly reinventing the way in which the works were read and displayed, long before the virtues of eco-design became common knowledge. "Reusing scenographic material is both a constraint and a desire, he confides. Playing with the ephemeral is part of the festival's genetic make-up. This diversity is also what opens up people's curiosity. The important thing is that they look at the images on the show, not necessarily the spaces." It's an approach based on sensitivity and common sense that he has passed on to Amanda Antunes, who is now in charge of the festival's scenography, and to all the production teams [\[see box p.76\]](#).

"The festival is a laboratory that shapes itself according to aesthetic, technical, political and social developments. On the strength of its

experience and aware of the road still to travel, the association deals with ecological and societal issues on a daily basis," says Hubert Védrine, President of Rencontres d'Arles. As a result, in March 2022, Les Rencontres d'Arles joined the Collectif des Festivals Éco-responsables et Solidaires (COFEES) and the Festivals in Motion national project, which aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions linked to festival transport, with 80% of the carbon impact coming from public and staff travel. This year, the management of Les Rencontres d'Arles has set up a working group to implement practical eco-responsible actions before and during the festival [\[see p.22\]](#).

A festival is a complex machinery where environmental impact lurks in the smallest gaps. The works of art are no exception. Frames, inks, paper, prints, wallpapers... Cécile Nédélec, head of the exhibition production, explains: "For the events we produce, we work closely on these issues upstream with our service providers in Arles and Paris to find out what we can and can't do, or simply to make more eco-responsible choices.

“There are no miracle solutions, but mitigation strategies are possible. Because if we wanted to solve things suddenly, we’d put air conditioning everywhere, full stop.”
— *Valérie Disdier*

We have a very fluid dialogue with them, whether they are photo labs or framing and laminating workshops. For example, Atelier SHL, our service provider in Arles, is very sensitive to these issues. They give us precise information. We know that for a given print run, the paper will be 70% agave fibre and 30% cotton with no optical

additives, that for the wallpaper the ink will be a Greenguard-certified HP latex ink made in France, and that the natural wood for the frame mouldings will be oak sourced from a certified forest in France.” For her, traceability becomes more complex when it comes to inks. “It’s not very well documented, even though

customers are increasingly asking their suppliers for the origin of their products. We’re never safe from greenwashing...”

To manage the large stock of frames, the team has developed an optimised inventory and stock system to make it easier and easier to reuse them. “This is especially true for historical exhibitions, which feature classic vintage prints in relatively standardised formats, she continues. We made the CIRCAD workshop in Paris aware of the need to reuse the frames they had produced from one year to the next for the festival. This approach requires more work on our part, because it often takes longer to reuse them than to place an order. But this year, as we have a lot of archive exhibitions, we’ve decided to focus on that: we’re going to reuse more than 200 frames for the classic photos.”

The question of frames is fundamental, and with good reason: the festival receives between 2,500 and 4,000 works each year. And with them, a mountain of bubble wrap. The aim is zero loss: works that arrive already framed are protected and sent back in their original packaging. “We have a fairly strict policy on repackaging frames,” adds Cécile Nédélec. Our technical teams are aware of this issue. It’s one of the tasks of the surveyors, who created a specific inventory system a few years ago to avoid wasting bubble wrap. We also try to share transport between exhibitions, and we have grouped shuttles that leave Paris to bring the works. We are dependent on volume, but we already have a number of tools at our disposal for rationalising exhibitions, which we use on a daily basis.”

3 questions to... *Cécile Nédélec*

Cécile Nédélec is the Exhibition Production Manager of the Rencontres d’Arles.

How do you define the festival’s eco-responsible specifications or priorities?

We take a different approach depending on whether we’re producing the exhibition or hosting one that’s already been mounted. As part of our production work, we choose a main focus each year, which can vary depending on the project and our workload, because these are very time-consuming processes. For example, last year we put together an exhibition that calculated its footprint from A to Z. This year, we’ve set ourselves the target of reusing and inventorying frames. Our former art administrator, who now works in CSR, has helped us to think up calculation tools and indicators, including for the transport of works, which we have discussed in our working groups. We haven’t put them in place yet, but that will be the next stage.

What are you doing in terms of scenography?

Since 2021, we’ve done a huge amount of work to switch everything over to wood and stop using plasterboard. For economic reasons, the festival has been designed around a system of reuse, with the construction of modular caissons that make up the picture rails. It’s a rationalised, standardised system that we keep from year to year, on which we place the wood, which is also recovered from year to year from our storage at the Étienne paper mills. We set up a system for storing and packaging the assemblies. The big improvement came in autumn 2019 with the creation of a Filemaker database for inventorying the exhibition furniture — not the picture rails — i.e. the display cases, pedestals, benches, etc. We’re lucky enough to have a team of fitters for the picture rails and a carpentry team for the furniture. This is also one of the special features of the Rencontres, as we have the capacity to build things “made to measure”.

How do you work with artists and other cultural organisations?

This database is very useful for discussing scenographic proposals with the artists. Each piece of furniture has its own identity card, well packaged, with a photo and an inventory number. We also sometimes make loans to museums, like the Musée de la Camargue, for example. We’re very open to this kind of sharing between cultural players.



We Exhale (detail, 2022-2023), Tanja Engelberts

© Tanja Engelberts. Courtesy Rencontres d'Arles

Wind. Map of the pollution direction
(Hunting the Tarasque, 2022-2023), Mathieu Asselin
© Mathieu Asselin. Courtesy, Rencontres d'Arles



The region is extremely rich, attracting a wide range of photographers to explore its ecosystem. It’s a point of convergence: we’re questioning Arles, its history, the festival and its commitment to society, artistic proposals, anthropocene, climate change — environmental concerns are very present in young photography. — *Christoph Wiesner*

Field survey

To think about the overall eco-responsibility of a festival like Les Rencontres d’Arles, which welcomes more than 120,000 visitors a year, you need to take a certain height of vision. Rooted in a territory that is fragile from both an ecological and a social point of view, the festival cannot simply be a “laboratory” detached from its contextual realities. This is why Rencontres d’Arles has joined forces with the Cité Anthropocène in Lyon to carry out a transdisciplinary study of the Arles area in February 2023. Scientists, researchers, architects and artists looked at the ecosystem of the Rhône delta with, in mind, the idea of making new recommendations for summer habitability for Ground Control, a former railway site and familiar exhibition venue for the Rencontres d’Arles. The site, which had to close last year for a fortnight due to the intense heatwave, is this summer hosting the exhibitions “Grey sun” by Éric Tabuchi and Nelly Monnier [see p.32] and “Special attention” with Jingyu Cao, Raphaël Lods and Iris Millot.

Sentinel territory and mitigation strategies

Ground Control serves as a test area for implementing the solutions devised as a result of the survey. “We put together a heterogeneous group of around fifteen people from very different disciplines — urban geography, biodiversity, agro-ecology, microbiology, etc. — because when we talk about climate change, we need to reorientate the way we do science and the way we see the world, using a variety of approaches,” explains Valérie Disdier, Chair of the Cité Anthropocène. For a fortnight,

the team carried out a field study in Camargue, meeting local players from users to firefighters, including elected representatives, ENSP students and festival employees. The Rhone delta is a sentinel area, a fragile territory where the acceleration of change is felt even more than elsewhere. “We started from the basic assumption that the heatwave summer of 2022 was not a one-off episode. The second assumption was to come up with recommendations that were not based on hypertechnology, but rather on a form of frugality — for example, what solutions could be found to avoid air conditioning? For example, an already built-up site like Ground Control has its advantages and disadvantages. How can we make the most of it?”

If we were to take this line of reasoning a step further,

the recommendations could be extended to the opening hours of exhibitions or the working conditions of reception staff, with, in time, the very temporality of the festival being called into question, which would have a domino effect on the entire local economy. A scenario that is not on the agenda, but which inevitably raises the question of the medium — or long-term viability of major cultural and tourist events in high-risk areas. “The myth of summer as we’ve known it since the 1950s is not working. Arles is almost a seaside town from an economic point of view, notes Valérie Disdier. Environmental awareness is undeniable, including among elected representatives. But, as is the case everywhere, you often have to hit the economic wall to get people to react. Let’s not forget that simple, sustainable solutions already exist.”

A look at the impact of the Anthropocene

At Monoprix, the “Here near” exhibition presents three projects dealing with the nuisances that threaten the ecological balance of Arles and the surrounding area. Mathieu Asselin, Tanja Engelberts and Sheng-Wen Lo have been carrying out field research since 2022. Industry, transport, animal life, water distribution networks... the Anthropocene is having a major impact on natural ecosystems. “In the context in which we live today, it is essential to look around us, to observe our place in the environment and in space, our relationships with human and non-human living things. And to realise the extent to which all these elements and beings are interconnected,” says Dutch curator Daria Tuminas. “In this exhibition, I’m looking to create connections between spaces. It’s not just about Arles, but also Camargue, Switzerland, where the Rhône comes from, Indonesia, where the Tarascon paper mill is based, and so on. Everything is interconnected. This interconnection between all forms of life and all regions is one of the keys.”

“Here near”
 Until 24 September
 Monoprix. Place Lamartine. Arles
www.rencontres-arles.com





MIKA SPERLING
DE NIEUWSTE PUNT DE TAIL

HAVE DONE NOTHING WRONG

MIKA SPERLING is a Dutch artist who works in various media. She is known for her work in sculpture, photography, and video. Her work often explores themes of identity, memory, and the human condition. She has exhibited her work in various galleries and museums around the world.

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STREET



BEYOND THE SMOOKIES

The San Quentin Project
Nigel Poor

Olga Bushkova
How I Tried to Live

PHOTO BOOK PUBLISHERS: BETWEEN INNOVATION AND RESILIENCE

As the Arles Book Fair, organised by France PhotoBook, opens its doors as part of the Rencontres d'Arles, photo book publishing professionals talk about the challenges they face and how their profession is changing.

Photobook publishers play a crucial role in promoting the photographic medium by showcasing the work of emerging artists and rediscovering and presenting the work of established photographers in new ways. In a constantly changing environment, these players are seeking to reinvent themselves while maintaining a sustainable and dynamic ecosystem. Here's what some publishers have to say.

The biggest challenge facing book publishers, particularly those dedicated to photography, is undoubtedly the continuing rise in production costs. "It's quite simple: since Covid, prices have risen by 30% every year. So a book produced today costs twice as much to produce as it did before the pandemic," points out Benjamin Diguerher, cofounder of Poursuite. The price of paper soared during the pandemic, because a large proportion of the factories were reallocated to the production of cardboard boxes for deliveries, but also energy — especially electricity, which printing consumes a lot of — and staff, both in-house at publishers and throughout the production and distribution chain.

Finding solutions whatever the cost

Even if the situation may seem particularly difficult at the moment, the equation for photographic books has always been "acrobatic", not to say precarious. "The economics of photographic books have always been fragile, and producing them is by its very nature expensive. The various price increases have added to the burden," explains Géraldine Lay of Actes Sud.

So what can we do about it? Unfortunately, there doesn't seem to be any miracle solution. "Publishing a book is a headache every time. Even if you're convinced by a project, even if you think it's necessary to publish it. There are a number of publishers out there. We're all looking for solutions, we're all knocking on the same doors!" says Emmanuelle Kouchner, Editorial Director of delpire&co.

Benjamin Diguerher points out that the search for partners, whether private or public, is one of the most important avenues of research. "We apply for all the financial support our projects might qualify for, and unfortunately we take fewer risks in our publishing choices," he confides. "As funding for these books becomes increasingly difficult to find, publishers often turn to the luxury goods industry for financial support," adds Emmanuelle Kouchner. "Especially as most of these companies have set up their own publishing houses."

“We are constantly exploring new paths, especially when it comes to eco-responsibility. Our goal is to offer books printed on more environmentally friendly papers and to keep up with the evolving market in this transformative phase.— *Véronique Prugnaud*”

Innovating to overcome economic challenges is also an alternative. To meet these challenges, photo book publishers need to focus on innovation and experimentation. “We are constantly exploring new avenues, particularly in terms of eco-responsibility. Our aim is to offer books printed on more environmentally friendly paper and to keep pace with this fast-changing market,” says Véronique Prugnaud. This search for new, more ecological and more economical production processes, as well as the use of technological advances, are essential to ensure the long-term future of the sector. “Technical advances in printing have made it possible to reduce print runs and associated costs, making it possible to produce viable works in smaller numbers of copies. This is contributing to the growth and diversification of photographic publishing,” says Géraldine Lay.

The quest for multiple sources of income is also a solution in times of crisis. Some players have other parallel activities that enable them to get through the difficult times. This is particularly true of The Eyes. “We’re a publishing house, but we also do consultancy work, which enables us to finance part of our production, because, let’s face it, very few books allow us to make a living. Above all, it’s a job we’re passionate about. For us, it’s a commitment and it’s also part of our DNA,” explains an enthusiastic Véronique Prugnaud, co-founder and co-director of The Eyes.

Against this backdrop, many publishers have had to scale back their catalogues, concentrating more on core projects and supporting artists. “As far as I’m concerned, I work on the basis of envy. Encounters play an important role,” confides Véronique Prugnaud. “Today, we’re really making choices from the heart, where we choose to get involved and support the artist rather than making books for the sake of making books. That’s why we’re reducing our catalogue,” she continues.

Reducing the size of the catalogue for a while, concentrating on certain authors, managing it better and diversifying it are just some of the avenues being explored by players in the sector. “It’s vital to identify relevant projects and authors with strong potential,” admits Séverin Cassan, deputy managing director of La Martinière, stressing the need to combine big names and young talent to ensure an attractive and varied catalogue: “We try to combine the big names, the established values,

Errances

Errances, a 228-page landscape-format book. *Figures, Mirages, Impressions, Fin de jours, Graphite...* these are just some of the series that make up the catalogue of Mickaël Pijoubert’s work. Since his first exhibition in 2018 at Galerie Entredeux in Millau and his participation in Fotovefer in Paris, the photographer from Avignon has never stopped working and expanding his palette. Through his contact with nature, which he loves so much, he has developed a unique way of looking at landscapes, capturing their infinite nuances and mobility through contemplation. Nature, light and the ephemeral make up his palette. The artist seeks to capture the fleeting, to render the immobile mobile, to imprint movement. Mickaël Pijoubert likes the idea that nothing is ever set in stone, and nature provides him with a wonderful terrain for experimentation. For reasons of taste or shyness, he prefers landscapes to portraits. A former rock climber, he is a contemplative man who doesn’t say much. “With photography, you can do without words,” he confides. With *Embrassements* and *Impressions*, the photographer continues his work on illusion. He questions reality. Attempting to capture the elusive, the shifting flight of light, the passing of time. Under the photographer’s eye, the landscapes of the South of France dissolve, shapes dissolve, contours dissolve into vast abstract expanses, luminous, dark or diaphanous. Time stands still, silence imposes itself. With their ethereal beauty, these images soothe, question, dream or reality.

Errances

Mickaël Pijoubert. Art Society Editions
€79. french.editions.artsociety.mc



ARN Vol. 1, 2, 3, 4 (2023), Éric Tabuchi and Nelly Monnier

Courtesy Poursuite

“Our work, but I think it has always been the case, does not stop when the book is published and released in bookstores. It needs to be supported beforehand and continued to be promoted sometimes long after. That’s really the key to success. Perhaps publishing fewer books, but certainly providing more support and promotion for each one.” — *Géraldine Lay*

3 questions to... Séverin Cassan

Séverin Cassan is the Managing Director of Éditions de La Martinière.

How have you adjusted to rising production costs?

Like all industrial players, La Martinière has been affected by inflation. We have had to adapt our strategy by anticipating our paper purchases and our planning bookings with printers, and by increasing our selling prices in a targeted way, depending on the segment. However, we have been determined to maintain the quality of our books, even if it means postponing or cancelling certain projects. Our aim is to maintain an irreproachable level of quality for our books in order to meet the expectations of our readers.

Do you seek external funding for the production of your books?

Some publishers approach brands or partners to support their projects, but most of our publications are still financed through the traditional bookshop channel. While pre-purchases are obviously sought after, they are not a *sine qua non* for the publication of our books. What’s more, our production department has expanded the pool of printers we work with to adapt to economic changes.

How do you select photo book projects?

When we select projects, we take into account the intrinsic quality of the project, the originality of the subject matter, the potential to appeal to a defined readership and the author’s reputation or ability to reach an audience. What’s more, we take care to balance our editorial programme by publishing a variety of projects: both tried-and-tested titles and more daring approaches, such as our Percevoir collection dedicated to young talent. Even in more difficult times, we try not to mortgage the future of the company by making choices that are too short-sighted. Finally, we try — whenever it makes sense — to link our publications to exhibitions or events... that’s the icing on the cake!

and a more daring approach with young talent, which is interesting and diversifies the publishing landscape. When selecting projects, we take into account the author’s reputation, his or her ability to unite a community or reach an audience.” The public, in fact. The public’s passion for beautiful books, those that accompany a lifetime, is still there, even if the crisis and purchasing power have put a strain on the sector. While the economic equation remains tricky, paradoxically demand is holding firm. Despite rising prices, the public’s appetite is still there, and is even evolving. Readers are curious to discover new works and new authors. This is often achieved through exhibitions, which forge the link between the public and production. “Support for exhibitions is crucial for promoting photographic books, because without an exhibition it’s difficult to attract the attention of the media and — indirectly — the public,” says Emmanuelle Kouchner. “Today, there isn’t an event in the world of photography — a fair or festival — that doesn’t have a book fair associated with it. It’s clear that publishers play an important and now recognised role in the photography ecosystem,” concludes Géraldine Lay. The photography book, long after the event, is the one that remains, to our great delight.



HISTORICAL BOOK AWARD 2021

CLAUDIA ANDUJAR

To Make Their Own Way
in the World
Barbush, Eugene, and Willie
aperture

NIGEL
AT GET
MUSÉE CARNAVALET HISTOIRE
ARIS MUSÉES

David S. Sacks Owen Thelander

DATA

Saul Leiter

© Saul Leiter Foundation. Courtesy Rencontres d'Arles



SAUL LEITER

A singular and admired figure, Saul Leiter was one of the great names in post-war American photography. Also a painter, he pioneered colour street photography in New York in the 1940s. Rediscovered.

2023 is the year of a double celebration. The centenary of his birth in Pittsburgh — the same year as Diane Arbus. And the tenth anniversary of his death in New York in 2013. Along with Robert Frank, William Klein and Diane Arbus, Saul Leiter was one of the four pillars of the movement known as The New York School of Photography. Above all, Saul Leiter was one of the pioneers of colour photography. With him, street photography was illuminated and brought to life. For Leiter was not just a photographer: he was also a painter. And there's something of Hopper in his unusual framing and his muted, sharp colours.

The artist had been interested in these two media since he was a teenager. The son of a renowned rabbi, he was a brilliant theology student in Cleveland, but his creativity was restricted by his family. At the age of 23, he decided to abandon his studies and move to New York to devote himself to his initial passion: painting. Influenced in particular by painter Richard Pousette-Dart, he began to take an interest in photography. In 1947, after visiting the Cartier-Bresson exhibition at MoMA, he decided to become a photographer to earn a living, without giving up painting and pastels. "Close to abstract expressionism in his colour photographs, we can already feel the temptation of abstraction in his first black and white images," writes Agnès Sire, curator of the Saul Leiter exhibition at the Henri Cartier-Bresson Foundation in 2008, the first major retrospective devoted to the artist in France during his lifetime. "Saul travelled the streets of New York, capturing images in black and white, then very quickly in colour from 1948 onwards, using slide film such as Kodachrome." Agnès Sire continues: "His relationship with time,

his deep intuition of the moment when you surrender yourself, his taste for disorder, solitude and the fleeting nature of things make him an artist apart, with little concern for fitting into a particular trend."

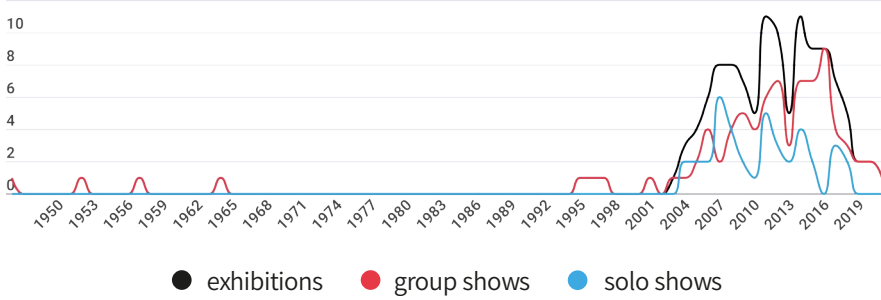
Recognition came quickly. In 1953, Steichen, then chief curator of photography at MoMA, selected 25 of Saul Leiter's black and white prints for the exhibition "Always the Young Stranger", and in 1957 he included around twenty of his colour images in a lecture he gave at MoMA, "Experimental Photography in Color".

In 1957, Saul Leiter began working for magazines such as *Esquire* and *Harper's Bazaar*. While his commercial career was taking off, he continued to take street photographs, mostly in his Manhattan neighbourhood. At first, he was more famous for his fashion photographs, remaining more discreet about the artistic aspect of his other creations.

Exploratory galleries

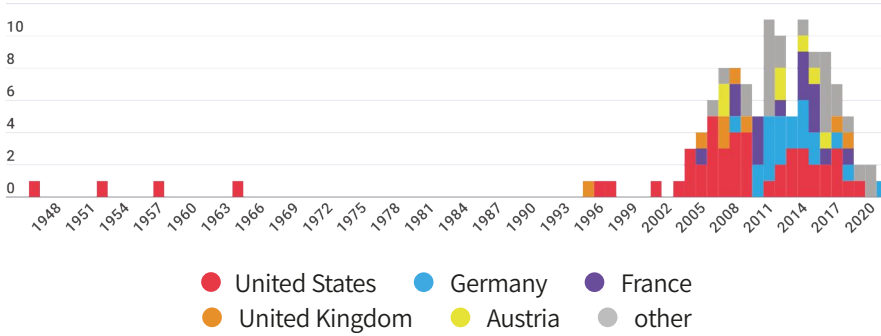
His street work, which is much more personal, was not rediscovered until the late 1990s. That's why his first

Evolution of the number of exhibitions by type



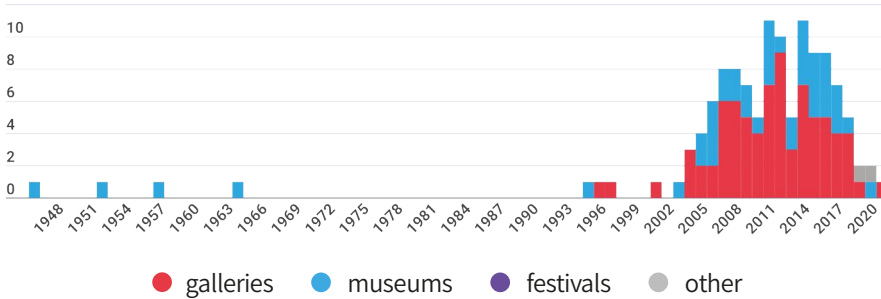
● exhibitions ● group shows ● solo shows

Evolution of the number of exhibitions per country



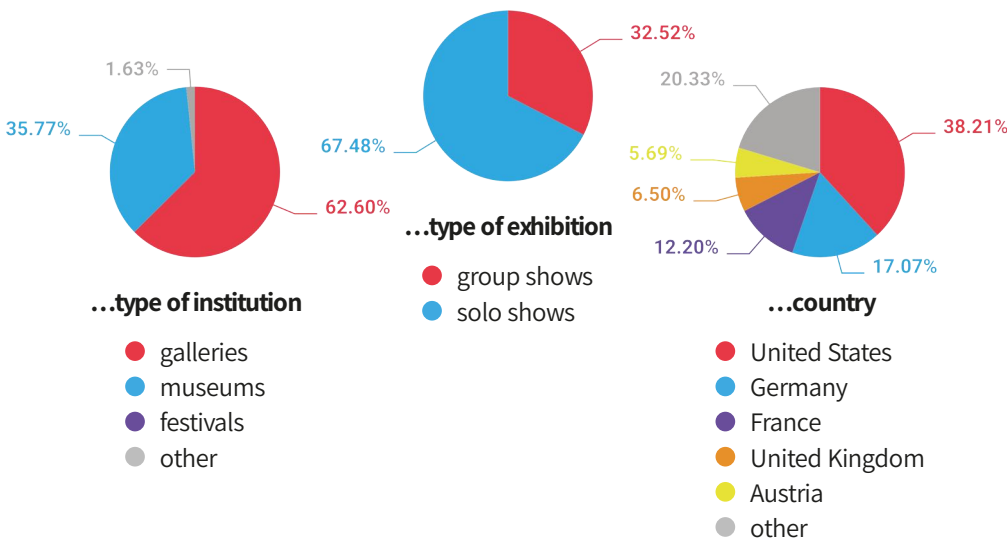
● United States ● Germany ● France
● United Kingdom ● Austria ● other

Evolution of the number of exhibitions by institution type



● galleries ● museums ● festivals ● other

Distribution of the number of exhibitions by...



...type of institution

● galleries
● museums
● festivals
● other

...type of exhibition

● group shows
● solo shows

...country

● United States
● Germany
● France
● United Kingdom
● Austria
● other

gallery shows didn't appear until the end of the twentieth century: at Sarah Morthland in 1997, then at Jan Kesner the following year. In 2006, it was the Fifty One Gallery that dedicated a monographic exhibition to him, focusing on his first colour photographs. Fifty One Gallery has devoted a total of 6 solo shows to his work, but "only" seven group exhibitions (representing 10.6% of all exhibitions and 17.1% of gallery shows). Hackel Bury, F5,6 für Fotografie and Camera Obscura each devoted two solo shows to the photographer. In all, 16 different galleries devoted at least one solo show to the artist, compared with just ten institutions.

So, although Saul Leiter has a strong presence in museums and foundations, galleries have played a fundamental role in the analysis and recognition of his art: of the 123 exhibitions devoted to the photographer, 62.6% were organised by galleries, compared with 35.8% by museums and foundations. The discrepancy is even more glaring when it comes to monographic exhibitions: only one fourth of the exhibitions took place in institutions, compared to 75% in galleries.

It was undoubtedly Howard Greenberg in New York that enabled Saul Leiter to achieve international stature as an artist and painter by organising an exhibition of his black and white photographs in 1993. Since then, the Howard Greenberg Gallery has presented his work on numerous occasions, and over the last ten years his work has become widely known. It devoted another exhibition to him in 2002, and in 2005 included him in an exhibition devoted to Henry Wolf, the legendary artistic director of *Esquire* and *Harper's Bazaar*, on the occasion of his death, before dedicating its first solo show to Saul Leiter in December of the same year. Howard Greenberg is the gallerist who has given Saul Leiter the most exposure, with no fewer than 23 exhibitions, including six solo shows (30.3% of all gallery exhibitions and no less than 18.7% of all exhibitions).



Red Curtain (1956), Saul Leiter

© Saul Leiter Foundation. Courtesy Rencontres d'Arles

This late rediscovery also explains why group exhibitions featuring works by Saul Leiter were rare until the mid-2000s. From 2005 onwards, there was an increase in the number of exhibitions (and initial solo shows), reaching a peak of twelve exhibitions (i.e. five solo shows) in 2012, and again in 2015, before a significant drop in the number of presentations since Covid. Although the number of group exhibitions is greater than the number of solo shows, the ratio is more balanced than for most artists (one third of solo shows for Saul Leiter).

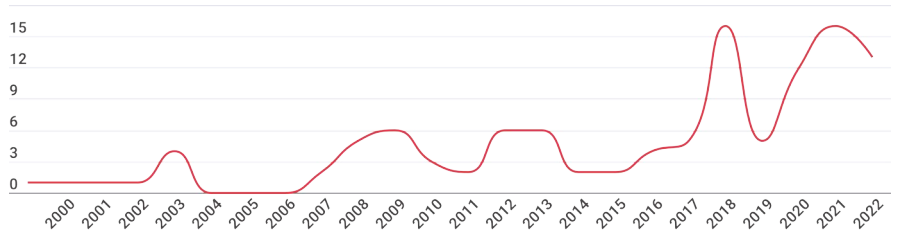
Collections and institutional presence

Today, Saul Leiter's work can be found in numerous museum collections: the Albertina Museum in Vienna, the Amon Carter Museum in Fort Worth, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Baltimore Museum of Art, the Milwaukee Museum of Art and the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, not to mention the art museums of Houston and New York, the National Gallery in Washington, the Staatliche Museen Zu in Berlin, the V&A in London, the Whitney Museum in New York and the Aforce Finance collection in Paris.

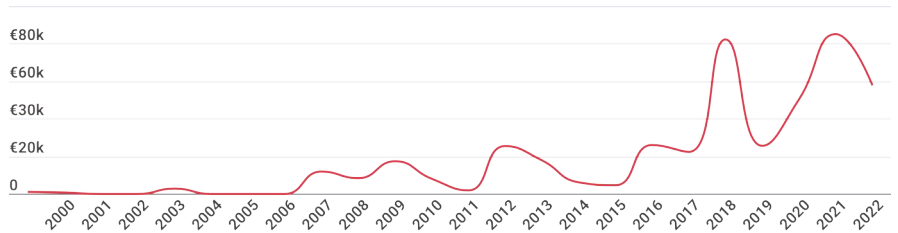
He first appeared at the Art Institute of Chicago at the end of 1947 in the annual exhibition dedicated to American art. In 1953, 1958 and 1965, MoMA included it in three of its group exhibitions. In 1996, the Cartier Foundation included it in its "By Night" exhibition. In 2006, the Milwaukee Art Museum (MAM) dedicated its first retrospective to him, entitled "In Living Color", before the UMMA (Maine) took over the solo exhibition at the Fifty One Gallery.

In 2008, the Henri Cartier-Bresson Foundation devoted its first major retrospective to his work in France. It presented around a hundred colour and black-and-white images taken between 1947 and the end of the 1960s, most of them period prints — the black-and-white prints were made by Saul Leiter himself — borrowed from the Howard Greenberg Gallery and private

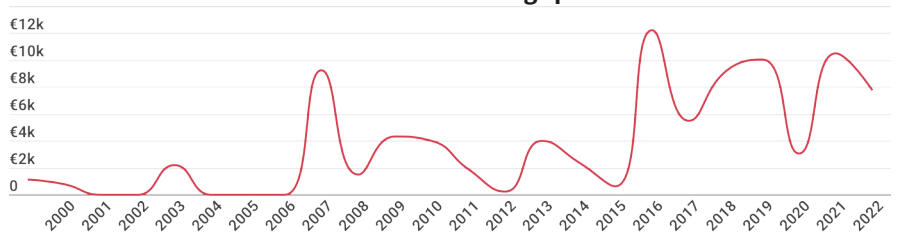
Evolution of the number of lots offered for sale



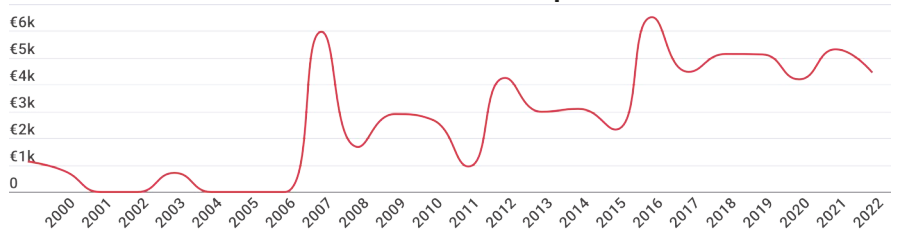
Evolution of the annual turnover



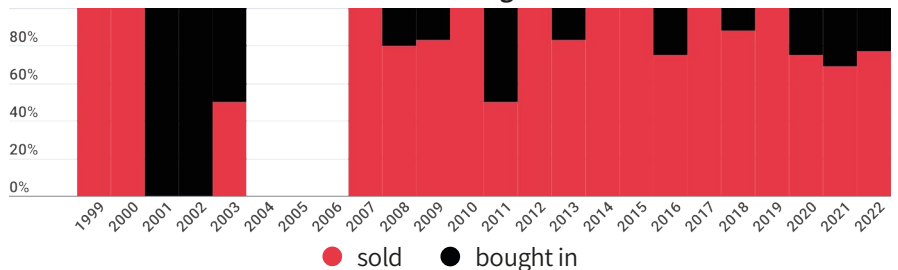
Evolution of the average price



Evolution of the median price

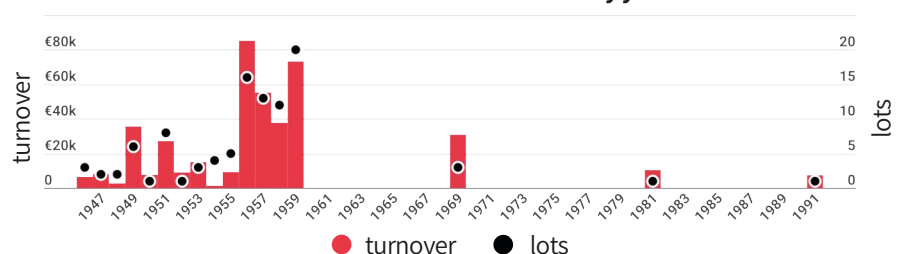


Evolution of the bought-in ratio



● sold ● bought in

Evolution of the number of lots and turnover by year of creation



● turnover ● lots

collections. Saul Leiter was exhibited at the Musée Nicéphore Niépce the following year, then at the Fotografie Forum Frankfurt (FFF) in 2014. In 2023, Les Rencontres d'Arles will be the first festival to devote a retrospective to the photographer [see box p.96]. But despite the success of exhibitions dedicated to Saul Leiter, no institution has devoted more than one solo show to the photographer. As is often the case, museum exhibitions last longer: three months (90 days), compared with just under two months in galleries (56 days).

With almost fifty presentations (47), the United States accounts for a large third (38.2%) of Saul Leiter's exhibitions, and barely less (30%) if only solo shows are taken into account. Germany — with 21 presentations (17.1%) — is in second place. It also accounts for 15% of solo shows (6), as many as Belgium, which hosts only 9 group exhibitions (for a total of 15 presentations, 12.2%). Next come France and the UK, with 8 and 7 group shows respectively (6.5% and 5.7%), and four solo shows each (10%). It should be noted that two of the three exhibitions hosted by Italy were solo shows, including one at the Centro Internazionale di Fotografia in 2012.

a relatively low unsold rate of 19.8%. Unsurprisingly, prints dominated the sales, despite the artist's practice as a painter: apart from photographs, one drawing and two works in volume went under the hammer, representing just 0.65% of the photographer's turnover.

Only nine lots (7.9%) sold for more than €10,000, representing 23.4% of total sales (€108,878). The most expensive, *Snow* (1970), was sold on 19 May 2021 in London by Phillips for £15,000 (or €17,407, €18,900 or €21,933 with fees). At the second highest auction, *Waiter, Paris* (1959), found a buyer in New York on 19 October 2017 at Swann Galleries for \$20,000 (€16,894, \$25,000 or €21,118 with fees). Exactly one year before, a work by Saul Leiter also exceeded €10,000 in London at Phillips: *Lanesville (Variant, 1958)*, sold on 19 May 2016 for £9,500 (or €12,215, £11,875 or €15,269 with premium). Also at Phillips, *London* (1950), was sold on 6 April 2022 in New York for \$12,000 (or €11,001, \$15,120 or €13,861 with fees), while *House Bar, Harlem* (1960), just passed the €10,000 mark on 10 November 2021 in Paris at Yann le Mouel, the same amount having been achieved a few weeks earlier at Piasa with *Red Umbrella*

The first work by Saul Leiter to appear at auction was in 1999 at Sotheby's for a 1957 Cibachrome depicting a shoe advertisement. The lot fetched \$1,200 (\$1,380 with fees). In December of the following year, at Friends Without a Border — an NGO that supports sick children in Southeast Asia — an *Untitled* photograph of New York in the snow (1955) sold for "only" \$700 (€785). In April 2003, two photographs by Saul Leiter were presented by Bonhams on the West Coast of the United States in Los Angeles: one sold for \$700 (€644, or €757 with fees) while the other went unsold. Saul Leiter's first presentation at auction in Europe took place in Berlin at Grisebach the following month; *Lanesville* (1958) sold for €2,200 (€2,596 with fees), while *Ohne Titel* (c.1955) remained unsold for a much higher estimate (€4-5,000). *Greenwich, Connecticut/Soames as Gypsy Queen/Girl in Carriage*, sold by Christie's New York on Valentine's Day 2007, broke the \$10,000 barrier for the first time: \$12,000 (€9,239, €11,087 including fees). Yann le Mouel sold Saul Leiter's first photograph in France at Drouot for €2,000 in May 2008.

I like it when you're not sure what you're seeing. When you don't know why the photographer took a photo and when you don't know why you're looking at it, all of a sudden you discover something that you start to see. I like this confusion.

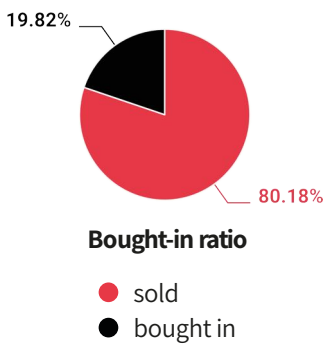
— Saul Leiter

The late blossoming of his market

As a result of this late arrival in the media spotlight, despite recognition of the quality of his work by photography aficionados as early as the 1950s, Saul Leiter's market is also recent. As a result, only a small number of lots went to auction, generating total sales of €465,065, with an average price of €5,225.50. Of the 114 lots offered, 89 found buyers, representing just over 80% of the works offered under the hammer and

(1982), sold on 23 September 2021 in Paris for €10,500 (€13,650 with fees). Two prints of *Through Boards* (1957) were sold respectively for €9,000 (€10,293, €11,250 or €12,866 with fees) on 18 May 2018 in London by Phillips and \$11,000 (€10,040, \$13,750 or €12,550 with fees) on 2 October 2019 in New York at Christie's. Finally, the last work to reach €10,000, *Taxi* (1957) was sold on 17 May 2012 in London by Phillips for £8,000 (€10,028, £10,000 or €12,535 with fees).

Apart from these lots, the main cohort of Saul Leiter's photographs sold at auction were prints sold for between €5,000 and €10,000, which alone accounted for almost half of sales (49.7% or €231,249), divided between 32 lots (28.1% of lots). Conversely, only four lots sold for less than €1,000 and only twenty for less than €2,000 (€26,928, 5.8% of sales).



price): €128,280 (27.6%) generated with fewer than twenty lots. In comparison, Germany, with exactly the same number of lots, achieved half as many results: €64,500 (13.9%), an average price of just €4,300. France presented Saul Leiter eight times at auction, with an average price

market duopoly of Christie's and Sotheby's came a very close second, selling as many lots as Grisebach, yet achieving sales of €86,191 (average price €5,746). Sotheby's achieved comparable sales to Grisebach, with only ten lots. In all, around fifteen operators offered photographs by Saul Leiter.

“Photographs are often seen as important moments, but in reality they are small fragments of an unfinished world.” — *Saul Leiter*

50s photographs drive the market

It was from the early 2000s onwards that Saul's photographs appeared on the secondary market, although their numbers remained modest. It was not until 2018 that the photographer was represented more than ten times a year at auction (16 lots in 2018 and 2021). The sales curve strictly follows that of the number of lots presented (peaks in 2018 — €82,268 — and 2021 — €85,092), while the average and median prices rise fairly linearly (with a peak in 2016 at over €11,000). The small number of transactions by the photographer makes it difficult to analyse particularly significant periods (some years of creation are represented by just one lot), but the period from the late 1950s (between 1956 and 1960) is by far the most liquid (57.9% of all lots), with an average price comparable to (and very slightly higher than) the overall figure (€5,327 compared with €5,225.50). Earlier works (26.3% of lots) sold less well at an average of €4,955.

The United States is clearly the photographer's main market, accounting for 57% of lots and almost half of sales (49.8% of sales, i.e. €231,540 and an average price of €4,725). The United Kingdom is the country where Saul Leiter's photographs sell at the highest price, with an average price of €7,545 (44.4% above the general average

of €5,317 and 6.9% of total sales (€31,900). The photographer also appeared at auctions in Canada, the Netherlands and Sweden.

Among the auction houses, Phillips was by far the best seller of Saul Leiter's photographs, with 38% of sales (€176,638) and an average price of €7,360 for just 27 lots sold. Poster specialist Swann Galleries achieved sales of €67,557 (14.5%), with the same number of lots (average price: €3,753). Grisebach, the Berlin auction house, achieved sales of €55,900 (12%) from 17 lots (14.9%). The art

Saul Leiter died in 2013, at the height of his success. In 2006, *Early Color*, his first book of photographs, revealed the artist as a master of colour photography from the late 1940s. Two years after his death, photographer François Halard visited Saul Leiter's almost empty flat in the East Village. He took photos of the decrepit walls, the empty cupboard and what Saul Leiter had left behind. The result will be a book in memory of Saul Leiter, published in 2020. It's a fitting tribute to an artist whose work has inspired numerous books and exhibitions around the world, and above all several generations of photographers.

Saul Leiter at the Rencontres d'Arles

The festival is opening the doors of the Palais de l'Archevêché to rediscover the work of Saul Leiter through the “Assemblages” retrospective. Co-produced by Les Rencontres and Dichroma Photography in collaboration with the Saul Leiter Foundation, the exhibition, presented for the first time in Arles, brings together a selection of mostly previously unseen photographs, drawings and paintings. “It invites us to discover a body of work in which different languages rub shoulders, respond to each other, converse and tell us about the vision of the world of one of the most fascinating artist-photographers of the twentieth century,” says Anne Morin, the exhibition's curator. It retraces sixty years of studio work, and technical and optical experiments on the tireless motif of New York streets. “The kaleidoscopic richness of Saul Leiter's retrospective invites us, between black, white and colour, to wander through the streets of New York,” sums up Christoph Wiesner, director of Rencontres d'Arles.

“Assemblages”

Until 24 September. Palais de l'Archevêché
18 place Félix-Rey. Arles. www.rencontres-arles.com



Untitled, Saul Leiter

© Saul Leiter Foundation. Courtesy Rencontres d'Arles





Ana (c.1950), Saul Leiter

© Saul Leiter Foundation. Courtesy Rencontres d'Arles



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