

PICTO BENELUX

Old Techniques, Art Today



EXHIBITION ON THE OCCASION OF THE KULTURA NOVA FESTIVAL
27 AUGUST - 4 SEPTEMBER 2022
BOOKSHOP VAN DER VELDEN - VAN DAM, HEERLEN

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ARMAND BENEDIC, CEDRIC MUSCAT, DANIEL BASTIN,
DIRK DE LA MARCHE, HENK VAN DEN BIGGELAAR,
HILDE BRAET, HUBERT DESGAIN, JAN STRIJBOS,
JOZEF VAN LYSEBETH, PAUL FUMIÈRE, RENÉ METS,
ROBERTO TRIOSCHI, ROSEMARY LANEAU, RUDY BOON,
VÉRONIQUE EVRARD



PICTO BENELUX

TECHNICAL INFO



THE BEGINNINGS...

The word “photography”, derived from the Greek words “φωτός” (light) and “γραφή” (writing), was first used by a German astronomer, Johann von Maedler. But it was Sir John Herschel, with his fame and position, who made it known to the world on 14 March 1839.

The optical process behind photography was already described in the 5th century BC by the Chinese philosopher Mo Ti. The first precise description of a “camera obscura” was given by Leonardo da Vinci (Codex, 1502).

It took much longer to find chemical solutions to capture an image on a medium and preserve it permanently. The first successful photograph “Point of View from the Window” was taken by Niépce in June/July 1827 on a tin plate coated with Syrian asphalt. Studies have shown that it required an exposure time of several days.

In 1829, Niépce joined forces with Louis Daguerre. After his death, four years later, Daguerre continued his experiments. His Daguerreotype reduced the exposure time to about half an hour. Details of the process were announced on 19 August 1839. The process, although good, was expensive, and each photograph was unique.

At about the same time (actually a little earlier), William Henry Fox Talbot invented the calotype. It was presented to the Royal Society in London on 31 January 1839. The quality of the early paper calotypes was somewhat inferior, but their great advantage, apart from their cost, was that an unlimited number of positive prints could be made from the original negative.

In 1851, Frederick Scott Archer introduced the collodion process. This reduced the exposure time to a few seconds. The coating, exposure and development of the plate had to be done while it was still wet, requiring the availability of extensive equipment on site.

In 1871, Dr Richard Maddox discovered a way to use gelatin to make photographic plates. This led to the development of the dry plate process. It was no longer necessary to handle cumbersome wet plates, and no mobile darkroom was required.

In the early 1860s, celluloid was invented. It was mainly George Eastman who became famous for introducing flexible film in 1884. Four years later he introduced the box camera, which marked the real beginning of amateur photography.

MAIN PROCESSES PRESENTED IN THE EXHIBITION

Bromoil (1907):

The basics were published by G.E.H Rawlins in 1904, but it was C. Welborne Piper who put them into practice in 1907. A silver image formed by exposing normal photographic paper – under an enlarger or in a printing frame – is bleached, the gelatin being simultaneously more or less tanned in proportion to the amount of exposed silver it contained. The image is then fixed, washed and dried. Before the actual inking, this matrix is immersed in a water bath. As the gelatin absorbs the water, it swells inversely to its tanning, resulting in a slight relief. The matrix is then blotted. Under no circumstances should drops remain on its surface. The inking process uses the principle known from lithography, whereby the fat is repelled by the water.

“Color” process (Sury print - 1911):

This is a colour printing system developed by Joseph Sury, a Belgian chemist. It is a variant of the gum print (see below), in which the emulsion layer, also mixed with pumice powder, can absorb and hold powdered pigments or pastels after development. Like the gum print, this technique is a contact print method in which the negative must have the dimensions of the desired final print. Joseph Sury never fully documented his process. When he was killed in 1944 by a V2 rocket explosion, his secrets disappeared with him. Contemporary “Color” prints cannot guarantee a 100% match with the original process (which must be considered as definitively lost), but are using a very close technique developed after many experiments.

Cyanotype (“blueprint” - 1842):

A process first introduced by the English mathematician and astronomer John Herschel. The paper is coated with a mixture of iron salts, dried and then exposed (contact print under a negative, or under objects to make a photogram). Other substrates are possible: fabric, glass, wood, stone, metal... The substrate is then rinsed in water, and the image appears as an image in the colour of the substrate on a dark blue background. Anna Atkins used this technique to produce the first book illustrated with photographs (British Algae: Cyanotype Impressions), published in 12 volumes from 1843 to 1853. A dozen copies still exist, and are in fairly good condition.

The “wet cyanotype” variant consists in exposing the still wet support, sprinkled with all sorts of ingredients, according to the author's inspiration. The result is quite unpredictable, with sometimes unexpected colours.

Gum Bichromate print (1904):

Mixed with a chromium salt (potassium or ammonium dichromate), gum arabic becomes photosensitive and can be applied to a substrate. The light sensitivity is low; a contact print under UV light is necessary. The emulsion hardens when struck by light and becomes insoluble in water. If the light-sensitive emulsion is coloured before being coated on a sheet of paper, the exposure can produce a coloured image, which can be “developed” by rinsing with water. The character of the image can be greatly influenced by the free choice of paper surface and pigment colour, as well as by the photographer's preparation of the gum emulsion.

The rather blurred outlines and aesthetic qualities of a gum print fully met the wishes of the Pictorialism in vogue at the time.

Gumoil (1990):

The Gumoil process was invented by Karl P. Koenig. He originally called it “polychrome gumoil photography”. The starting point is a positive image on a transparent film. This is brought into contact with a layer of gum bichromate, usually uncoloured, to produce a gum negative print. The oil paint is applied after the gum layer has dried completely. The excess paint is removed after the paint has remained on the paper for some time.

In doing so, the areas of hardened gum are lighter than the areas where little or no gum remained, and where the paint may have penetrated the paper. The print is soaked in water and then either wiped clean and left as is, or “attacked” with bleach to remove some of the gum, exposing the paper underneath and allowing another layer of paint to be applied. Each step of the process is completed by rinsing with cold water to remove excess chemicals and unwanted gum or paint.

Photogravure (1853):

Photomechanical printing method with engraved and inked copper plates. A positive transparency is reproduced on chromated gelatin paper. The gelatin layer is then transferred to the copper plate. When immersed in hot water, it dissolves in the areas not hardened by the light and remains more or less insoluble in the other areas, thus creating a relief. The iron chloride used for engraving then attacks the copper more or less deeply, depending on the thickness of the gelatine. The etched plate is inked and the image is transferred to paper using an etching press. A modern version of photo-engraving consists of laminating a light-sensitive polymer film onto a metal plate (steel or copper). The whole is first exposed under a screen, then under the positive. The development is done in a soda solution. The laminate is inked and printed with an etching press. This technique is less toxic than the traditional version.

Kallitype process (1889):

Although Sir John Herschel developed the Kallitype's basic theory, it was W. W. J. Nicol who patented the process in 1889 and is considered its inventor. The process belongs to the iron-silver family. A suitable paper is coated with a solution of iron oxalate and silver nitrate. After drying, the now photosensitive paper is exposed to a UV light source. This exposure reduces the ferric salt to ferrous salt. After development, this ferrous salt must be reacted with a noble metal to ensure its permanence, replacing the silver metal in the print with another oxidation-resistant noble metal. The metals commonly used for kallitype toning are gold, palladium or platinum. A properly treated kallitype, platinum or palladium toned, is almost identical in tone and colour range to a true platinum or palladium print.

Mediobrome (1938-1943) :

Mediobrome is a hybrid process designed by Léonard Misonne to combine the benefits of the “classic” silver print (simplicity, touch of realism) and those of bromoil (wide margin of interpretation, automatic distribution of inks as a function of the hardening of the gelatin). His goal: a simple technique with an incompletely bleached image acting as a guide for inking, and a matrix reacting to ink as in a classic bromoil print.

Unfortunately, no text by Misonne describing this technique in detail is known to date. However, a few snippets of information can be found in the literature of the time, and some members of the Picto Benelux group have studied them more closely. They were able to obtain quite convincing results, which come close to the particular rendering of Misonne's works. Whether their technique really corresponds to Misonne's method is another question...

Oil printing (1904) :

The oil print was introduced in 1904 by G.E.H. Rawlins as a simplified variant of the collotype process. Robert Demachy, the French pictorialist known for his highly manipulated, painterly prints, used this technique between 1904 and 1911.

The oil print uses a paper on which a thick layer of gelatin is applied, which is then made light-sensitive with potassium (or ammonium) dichromate. After drying in the dark, this paper is exposed to natural light or a UV light source under a negative of the same format, and “developed” with water. The gelatin hardens in proportion to the amount of light received. When soaked in water, the gelatin will start to swell. The swelling will be greatest in the highlights which have been hardened the least. The gelatin “matrix”, sponged on the surface, is inked while it is wet with a thick, oil-based lithographic ink. As oil and water do not mix, the ink will colour the hardened shadows and not, or less, the highlights.

The platinum-palladium process (Pt-Pd - around 1970):

In their search for the ideal photographic process, photographic chemists tried all sorts of metal salts. William Willis was the first to patent the platinum process in 1873 and again in 1878 and 1880.

Between 1880 and 1914, the process enjoyed some success. However, the high cost of platinum after the First World War led to the discontinuation of ready-made platinum papers. Although they returned to the market after WWI, their price remained quite high and platinum printing gradually fell into disuse. Towards the end of the last millennium, the concern for permanence of the photographic image encouraged the revival of the very stable historical manual processes, including the platinum (or palladium) process. Its practice progressed again. Most users ended up combining platinum and palladium. A platinum-palladium print is characterised by an excellent reproduction of fine detail and good contrast between highlights and shadows. Unfortunately, the cost price of platinum and palladium has again increased considerably in recent years...

Polaroid Emulsion Lift :

This process uses Polaroid instant film. An image is exposed on film using a Daylab printer, a suitable camera or an enlarger. The image layer (the emulsion) of the fully developed positive print is removed with hot water. It can then be applied to almost any surface. The transparent emulsion can be altered by shaping, stretching or tearing it, and coloured by hand. Originally, transfers and manual emulsion lifts were made with Polaroid peel-apart films such as 669, 59, 559 and 809, but all of these films have disappeared. The only films still available that might be suitable for this technique are those from The Impossible Project (currently known as Polaroid Originals, or simply Polaroid). Experimentation will be needed to see how, and to what extent, they can be used for this technique...

Van Dyke Brown :

This technique is a direct variation of Sir John Herschel's Argentotype process (the man who also created the cyanotype (1842) in the same year). The name "Van Dyke Brown" did not appear until much later, in the late 1930s - early 1940s. The paper chosen is sensitised in a bath containing ammoniacal iron citrate, tartaric acid and silver nitrate. This is a printing-out process (POP), which means that the image is formed during the exposure without the use of a developer. The basic treatment consists of a wash with running water, followed by a thiosulphate fixing bath.

In the past, the Van Dyke process never was as successful as it should have been. Moreover, it acquired an unjustified bad reputation for instability. Once the formation of iron residues during development and their interaction with the image-forming silver salts is understood, and the fixing and rinsing is done correctly, the process offers all the desired qualities of longevity and permanence. It is very unfortunate that such a fundamentally simple process has met with so much suspicion... Furthermore, this technique is particularly suitable for protective treatment, such as gold toning.

Gelatin Silver printing (1870+) :

Gelatin silver printing is the photographic process that marked the beginning of modern photography. In this process, an emulsion of light-sensitive silver salts, such as silver bromide, is combined with gelatin. The gelatin acts as a binder, with the silver being the material that converts the incoming light into black and white images. Around 1890, gelatin silver print products became widespread; a baryte layer was added, first in Germany from 1894 onwards and then by Kodak in 1900. A layer of barium sulphate gives a very smooth and white surface. A gelatin silver print is made up of four layers: the paper substrate, a layer of barium, a layer of gelatin emulsion, and a protective layer of gelatin or "supercoating". Analogue photographs were originally taken on glass plates. In the early 1860s, celluloid was invented. George Eastman introduced flexible film in 1884; it has been used almost universally since then.

Considering the resounding success of digital photography, which started in August 1981 with the introduction of the Sony Mavica camera, gelatin silver printing in our opinion can now be considered an "alternative" technique.

In 2013, a paper "film" appeared. It is a fully hand-coated orthochromatic film on Japanese Tosa Washi paper (Kozo - 28 gr/m²). Its basic sensitivity is ISO 25, but if a broader tonal scale is desired, exposing at a lower sensitivity is often required. This high-contrast film, with its very pronounced texture, was inspired by the paper negatives of Henry Fox-Talbot (Calotype, 1841). Its purpose is to create a strong graphic effect directly on the negative, reminiscent of the pictorialist aesthetic from the early 20th century. The unique texture of the negative means that the physical base of the film becomes an inherent part of the image.

PICTO BENELUX

Picto Benelux is a Brussels-based group of photographers from the Benelux and neighbouring areas. Our aim : to put historical photographic techniques, including silver gelatine photography, at the service of a truly artistic creation, which is resolutely contemporary and original. But also, within our means, to preserve the rich artistic heritage left by the photographers of the last century.

In no way is it our intention to promote against the grain the use of artistic movements or techniques no longer common in our time, but rather to convince our members that the knowledge of these techniques can serve to express their feelings, and can further their creativity.

Everyone is welcome, both the seasoned expert and the complete novice. Our ambition is to offer an environment for training and exchange, for solidarity and mutual help, for creation rather than simple use of techniques. To this end, we organise lectures, practical demos, discussion of problem cases presented by members, joint purchasing of hard-to-find or expensive products, contacts with similar groups abroad and participation in exhibitions, both in Belgium and abroad.

The group, founded in 2010, is now known and respected both nationally and internationally.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Jacques Kevers, Beau Site, Première Avenue 7, 1330 Rixensart

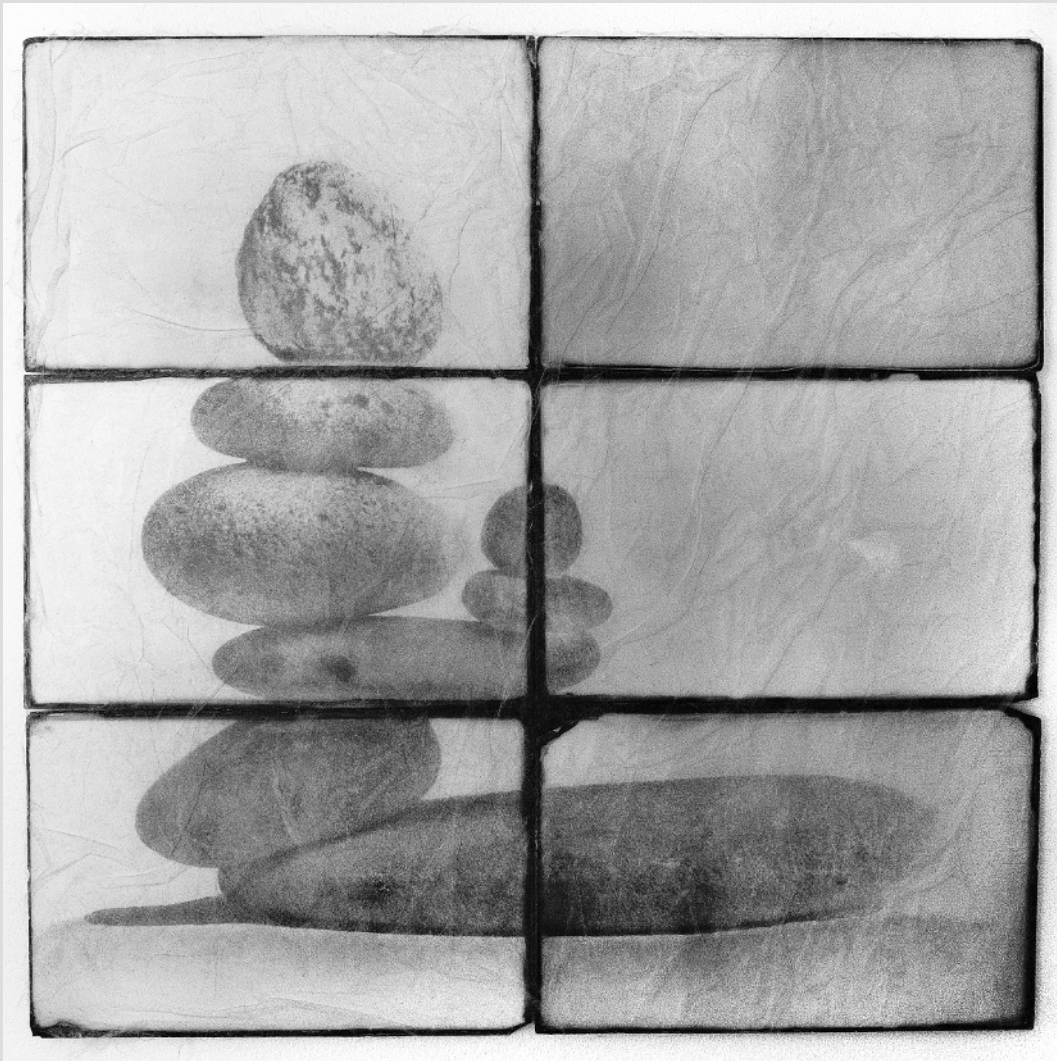
jacques@kevers.org – +32 2 653 56 02

<https://www.picto.info>

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THE EXHIBITORS

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Oil print on tinted gelatin. Substrate: Fuji Japanese paper 3 grams on slate.

ARMAND BENEDIC



After a career as a sailor and later as an installation technician, I now use my free time to explore the technique of oil printing.

I am interested in the interpretation possibilities offered by this medium, well beyond the shooting stage. Technique is necessary, but I consider it only as a tool to express myself and try to retranscribe a certain quietness, a space out of time.

I enrolled at the school of fine arts in my town, the Municipal School of Fine Arts of La Seyne-sur-Mer (France). I am looking for an aesthetic approach above all. The advice given is useful to avoid wasting too much time in various attempts, and to reveal one's sensitivity. The road is still long

Cairn

Cairn left there...

Precariousness in the wind...

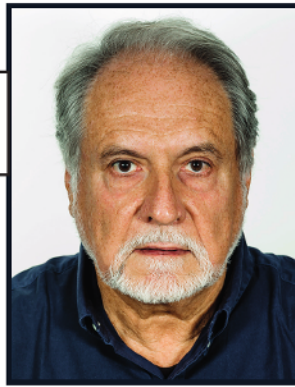
Blood of the mountain...

Isolating an element, glimpsing its path, listening to its message, sublimating its history by adding a touch of sensitivity. The slate support is a reminder of the minerality of the subject. The inking is slightly grainy, emphasising the deep structure of the pebbles. The marouflaged paper, light as a mist, casts a discreet veil over this quiet strength.



Gum print

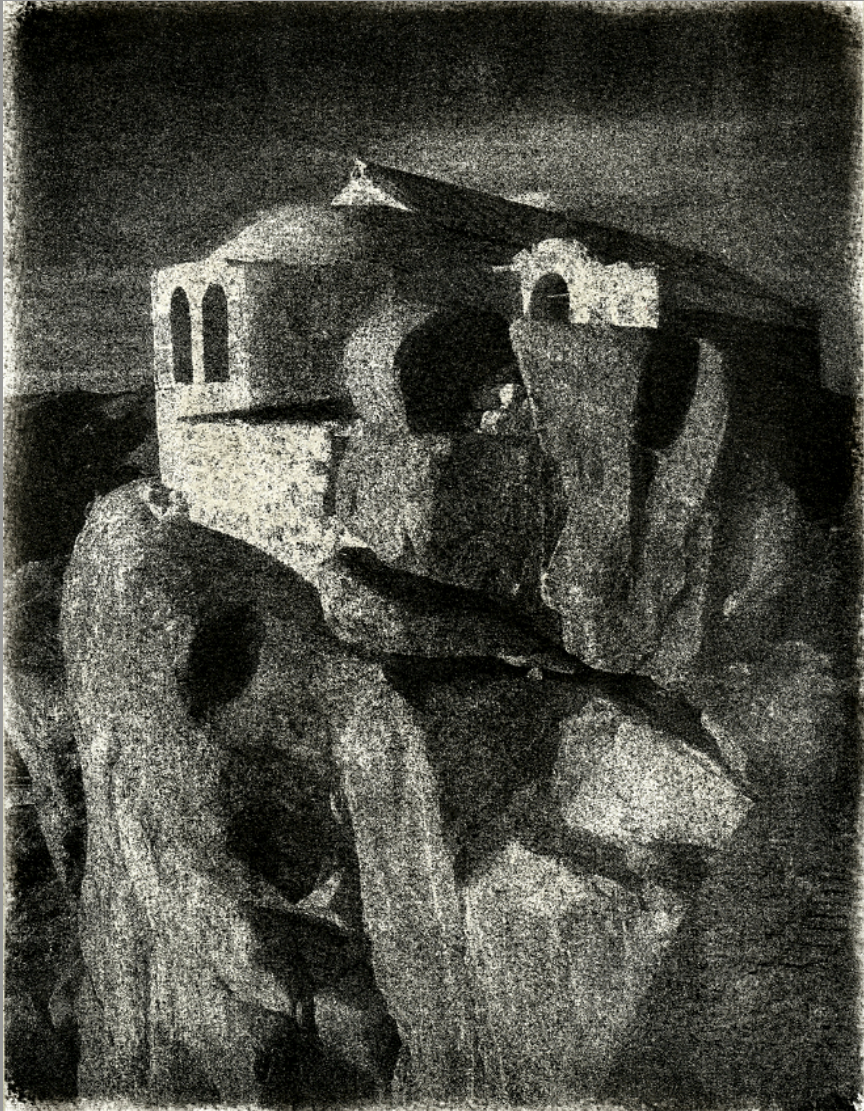
CEDRIC MUSCAT



Cedric Muscat, born in Cape Town, South Africa, got a photoengraving degree in the packaging industry. He worked for several printing companies before setting up his own business, specialising in colour reproduction. He then moved on to Scitex, a leading provider of pre-press systems for the graphic industry, and finally to Leaf Digital Photography, a pioneer in digital backs for professionals. Photography in general and pinhole photography are passions that stick with him. His interest in alternative photographic processes is a direct result of his professional activities. He is particularly interested in gum and oil prints, as well as in the gumoil process. As the name suggests, gumoil is a technique that lies halfway between oil and gum. In this technique, the image consists of gum arabic, chromium salts and oil-based inks or oil paints. It is a meticulous and highly expressive photographic method that combines the unique interpretation of the author with the documentary nature of the photograph.

Chapels ...

These chapels are located at almost opposite ends of the Mediterranean, in rather isolated places that require some effort to reach. Offering the visitor a moment of introspection, sometimes a solace and an escape from our hurried world, they foster inspiration. These places are so important for our mental health and must be preserved for future generations. I created the image of Mount Sinai in gumoil, a process that emphasises the austerity of such a place. I created the image of the chapel of St. Joan in Montserrat, in the hills behind Barcelona, using the gum print process (my favourite) which allows the image to be built up in several layers with colour added if desired. Here, the process was used to create a dark atmosphere, matching the location with its barren hills surrounding the chapel.



Gumoil



DANIEL BASTIN

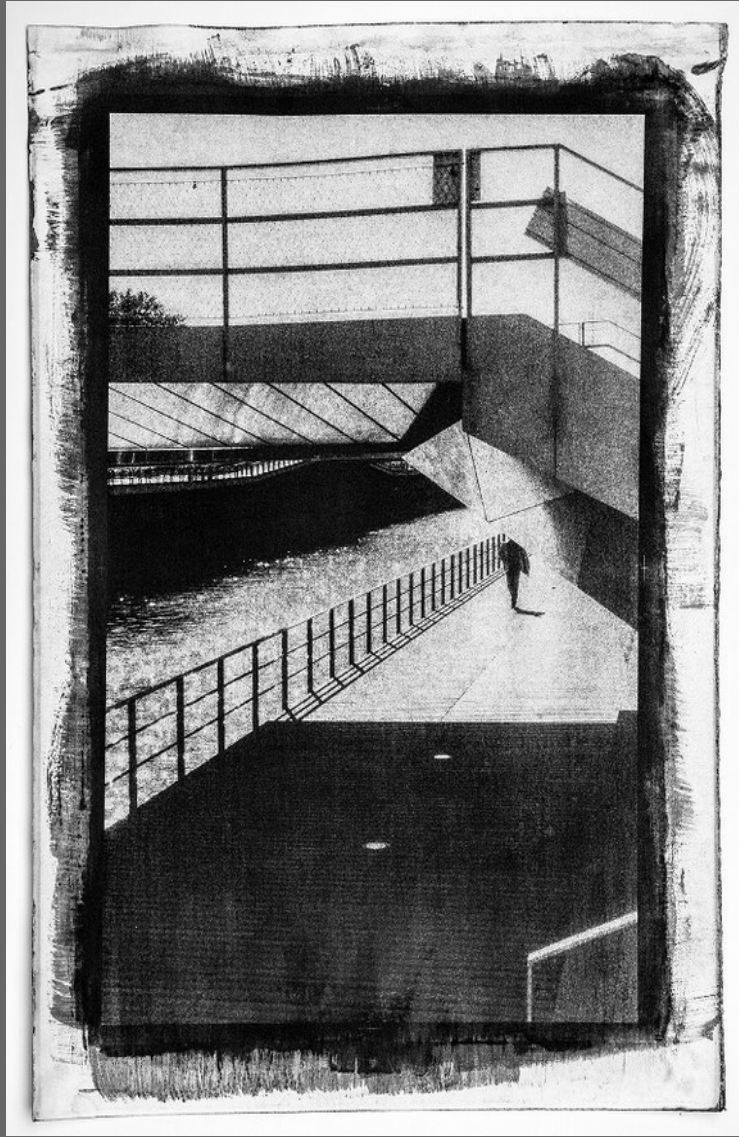
Daniel Bastin was a professional photographer for more than 35 years. He loves to capture people's expressions and their sensitivity. He has put all his know-how into creating portraits full of humanity and sincerity in his studio in Souvret, near Charleroi. But for him, photography is much more than a simple means of earning a living: it is a real passion for over 50 years now. He regularly participates in various art exhibitions.

He learned the gum printing technique from Jean Janssis, the well-known Liège photographer whose work is regularly exhibited in Europe. The way in which the paper and pigments give an almost tactile thickness to the subjects really is what seduced him to this technique, which he now uses regularly for his personal work.

Charleroi, daughter of the Sambre

I travel a lot with my partner on all the rivers of Europe. To combine my photographic work with our travels, I started with the Sambre, a river that flows through our region and among others through our city of Charleroi, which is experiencing a revival after more than forty years of decline.

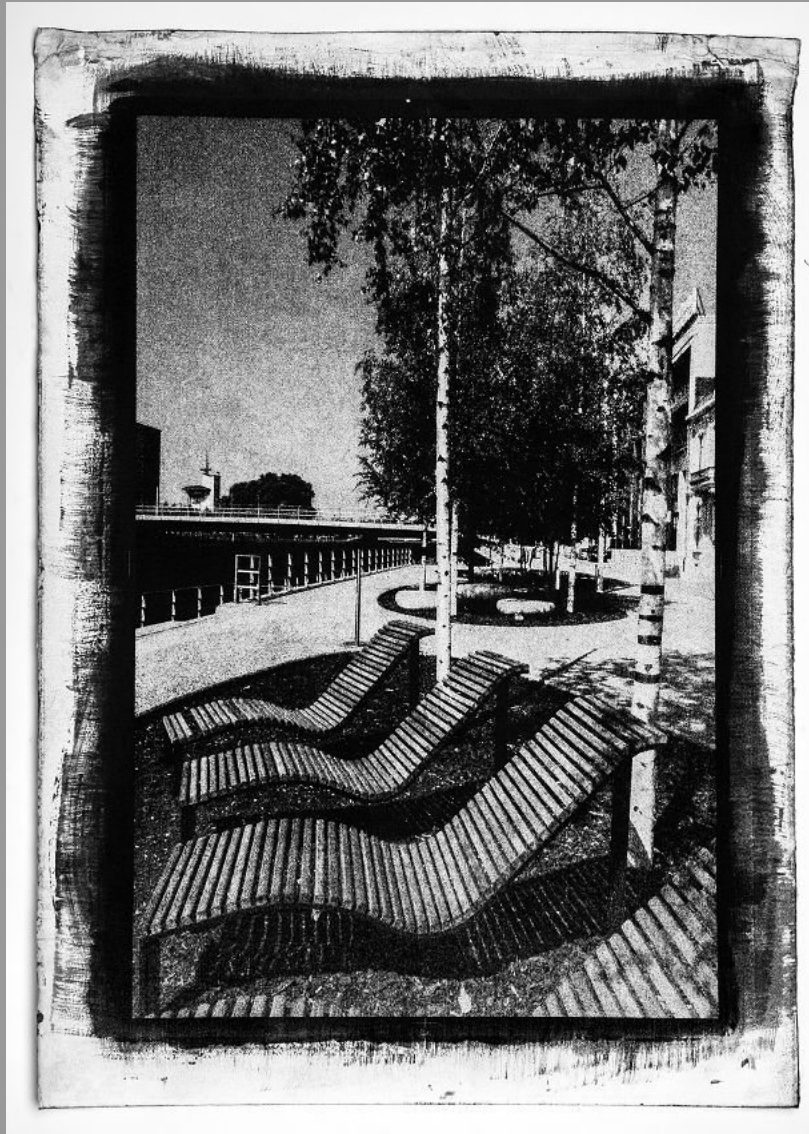
I wanted to emphasise this aspect of rebirth, harmony and dynamism, rather than the dark industrial past that sticks to the skin of a region often described as the “dark country”. The prints presented were made using the gum printing technique.



Gum print



Gum print



Gum print



DIRK DE LA MARCHE

Dirk de la Marche is actively interested in photography since more than thirty years, mainly to better understand the place of man in the world, from a personal point of view and using photography as a frame.

After starting out in the traditional “wet” darkroom and a brief stint in the digital world that never convinced him when it came to printing, he returned ten years ago to the origins of photography by seeking a more tactile and artisanal method of printing. These pre-industrial processes offered him what he was looking for. Today, the combination of slow film shooting, a contemporary method of transforming film into digital negatives, and old-fashioned printing techniques allows him to make prints that are closer to what he sees and feels. These prints are a personal, two-dimensional translation of a three-dimensional reality. For his images, he mainly uses small format cameras, 6x6 cm (Holga) cameras, 6x6 cm pinhole cameras, as well as 18x24 cm view cameras.

Some images from France

The prints on display do not really have a common theme, except that they all evoke a region of France that I particularly like. The 24x36 mm film shots have been converted into digital negatives. The printing techniques used are cyanotype (blueprint) on Arches Aquarelle paper, and Van Dyke Brown on Fabriano Artistico paper.



Cyanotype



Van Dyke Brown

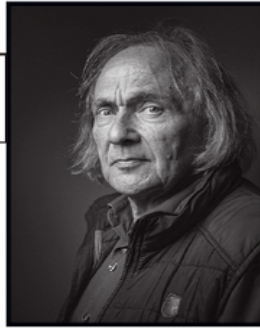


Van Dyke Brown



Platinum/Palladium Print

HENK VAN DEN BIGGELAAR



Training: Academy of Fine Arts in Hasselt, and various workshops in Vienna (platinum/palladium printing), Munich (large format Linhof), and at the M.E.P. Paris (Looking at photography). Member of the photo group Abedia and the photographic collective Picto Benelux. Exhibitions in Heerlen, Valkenburg, Hasselt and other places.

On his 13th birthday, Henk received a 4x4 cm. camera from an acquaintance. At a school friend's house he saw how to develop, print/enlarge, present slides, make photo books with holiday photos by himself. He loved it and is convinced that it is also the basis of his love for photography. This led him to join the Foto Academie in Hasselt. In the meantime, his darkroom has moved from the kitchen to the attic, then to a room in his sister's house, back to the attic, and finally to a new darkroom in his house.

He tries to deal with many subjects through photography, the chosen technique supporting the image as a whole. In general, landscape is his favourite subject. This exhibition presents two polymer prints (a modern and more ecological version of photogravure) and two platinum/palladium prints.



Platinum/Palladium Print



Photopolymer Print



Cyanotype on Fabriano Liscio 5 (watercolour paper)

HILDE BRAET



Hilde Braet graduated in photography at the KASK (Koninklijke Academie voor Schone Kunsten - Royal Academy for Fine Arts) in Ghent. She then specialised at the Fotovakschool (vocational training school for photography) in Apeldoorn and at Kees Brandenburg's Polychroom in Middelburg (old processes). For her, photography is a powerful tool for telling stories and challenging conventional wisdom. This is reflected in her latest book 'LIJF-elijk ANDERS' (ASP, 2022), in which she explores (visually) women's experiences of sexuality. To give her work even more depth, she followed a Cultural Sciences course, with the Visual Culture option. Her thesis was awarded the Max van der Kamp Prize (Utrecht, 2011) and resulted in the book "The power of a photograph" (Garant, 2012).

"Anatomical blueprint" :

Fascinated by my analogue X-ray films that I had collected, I decided to recycle them into Prussian blue and make intimate self-portraits. I added something personal like a glove or a lace sleeve, a boa, a piece of lingerie. The Vanitas theme never is far away.

"Fallen" :

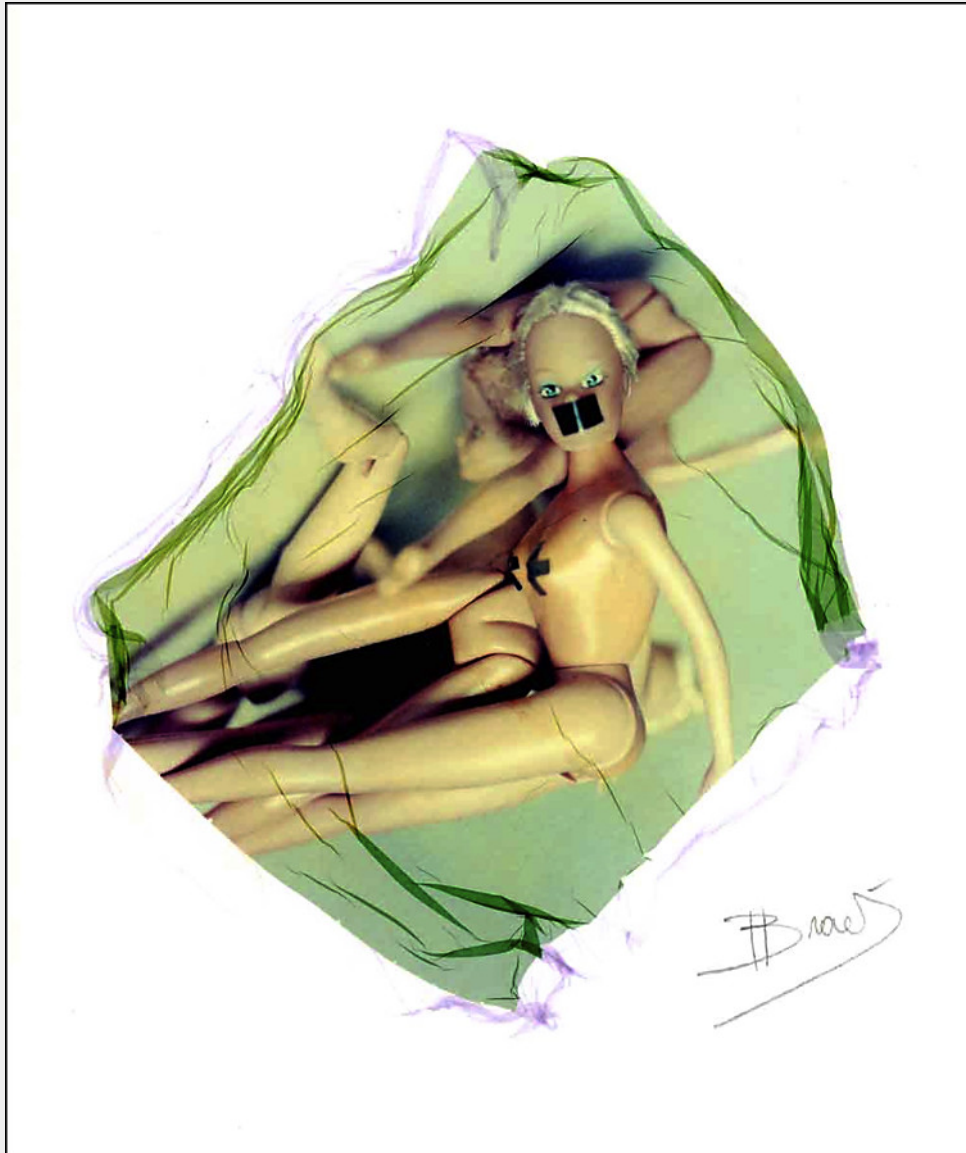
Barbie has long been the symbol of the Western ideal of beauty. By stripping these dolls of their long blonde hair, placing them in vulnerable poses, literally taping their mouths shut and making their nipples "Facebook-proof", the toxic beauty norms, hypocrisy and sexual double standards of female representation are challenged.

"Dissolving" :

Gasping for breath... Survival... Against the grain... In vain ...
A feeling of absurdity, of discouragement while sailing against the grain...



Polaroid Emulsion Lift on watercolour paper



Polaroid Emulsion Lift on watercolour paper



HUBERT DESGAIN

Once familiar with the processing and printing techniques of black and white and colour analogue photography, Hubert Desgain became interested in the history of photography and the old "alternative" processes. Their possibilities opened up new horizons for him. The evolution of photographic technology did not leave him indifferent and he gradually began to use digital techniques for recording and processing images. But for his prints, he sticks to the old methods. His favourite processes are bromoil, oil prints and mediobrome, which he appreciates for the wide latitude they leave for interpretation and creativity. His current work is a mixture of digital (for shooting and making large negatives) and analogue (for printing) techniques.

"Rural atmospheres"

The scenes with a distinctly rural atmosphere presented here are clearly inspired by the Pictorialist movement. The light and the composition of the image are of primary importance here. The techniques used, namely bromoil, oil printing and mediobrome, are typical of this period. The latter technique was developed by Leonard Misonne and used by him between 1935 and 1943; he never did explicitly describe it, however. Here is my interpretation, based on the little information I was able to glean from the specialist press.



Oil Print



Bromoil



Mediobrome



JAN STRIJBOS

Ever since he undertook his educational journey at the Technical College of Photography in Antwerp, the Artistic College of Photography in Brasschaat and the Academy of Photography in Antwerp, Jan Strijbos showed a great interest in old photographic processes. His interest in the history of photography and his awe for early photographs led him to experiment with old processes such as gum printing, carbon printing, photogravure and wet collodion. As a member of the photographers' collective Vision 4, he has also regularly presented these old techniques in numerous exhibitions. He also participated in the "Summer of Photography", with "Works in Progress" for "Antwerp City at the Stream" and in the "Flanders Photocircuit" with prints under the title "Line 12".

"Flowers" & "Surrealist Dreams"

Here, it is the wet collodion technique that was used. In this process, the coating of the plate, its exposure and processing must be completed before the collodion has dried. Collodion is a viscous liquid composed of cotton, bromide and iodide salts dissolved in ether and alcohol. The iodides are used to sensitise the light and the bromides to modulate the tonal scale. Although the process has considerable limitations, especially when working outdoors, it also has important advantages: a very high degree of sharpness, an almost total absence of grain and a very special rendering that creates an almost timeless mood, particularly suitable for still life or portraits. Wet collodion creates an atmosphere of imperfection where the black and white contrasts create a magical image.

In this respect, the "Surrealist Dreams" images, which are out of the ordinary with day-to-day elements as their subject, illustrate what wet collodion is all about.



Wet Plate Collodion



Wet Plate Collodion



Wet Plate Collodion



JOSZEF VAN LYSEBETH



His photographic life started only recently. After a busy career, he entered the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Dendermonde. During his last year of training, he became interested in historic photographic processes. This curiosity was aroused by the teacher who, during her own studies, was taught by Roger Kockaerts, a photographer, gallery owner and lecturer specialising in the conservation and restoration of photographic material, and a member of Picto Benelux. This is how Van Lysebeth came into contact with this group. The many examples he was shown prompted him to look further into such techniques as Van Dycke Brown, wet plate collodion, Kallitype and others.

“Still Lives”

The still lives exhibited here were created with the Kallitype process. The intention was to take advantage of the very wide tonal and colour scales of this process, which are quite similar to those of actual palladium or platinum prints. Kallitype was a rather underrated process, created a decade after platinum printing which enjoyed enormous prestige, and just before the very user-friendly “gaslight” papers. The process uses iron salts which make the watercolour paper sensitive to light. This paper is then exposed to a digital negative under a UV lamp and developed with ammonium citrate (among other things, several other developers are available). If properly treated, the permanence will be more than satisfactory.







Borealis - Norwegian wanderings

For long I dreamed along the fjords

But I had no pencil !

In summer here day and night

Get married to the sun

Boiling and foaming

The flood shows its power

The glacier - unfortunately ! - melts

And becomes like a spring

Every day I sit and watch

Every day an exalted light

Invades my camera, hits the film

And so a new image gets born

PAUL FUMIÈRE



Paul Fumière was born in the Congo. He received his first camera in 1962. In 1973 he started to take pictures with an old Leica IIIC from 1948. From 1979 to 1982, he took photography courses at the “Le 75” photography school in Brussels and then started working as a freelance photographer. He uses analog cameras with medium and large format film (120 film and 10x12, or sometimes 13x18 cm). This is in keeping with his approach to photography, which favours calm and leaves room for the admiration of the environment. Landscapes are his favourite subject.

He taught photography at the Constantin Meunier Academy in Etterbeek from 1989 to 2016. He has held numerous exhibitions both in Belgium (Brussels, Genval, Tourinnes-la-Grosse, Waterloo...) and abroad (Cluj and Brasov in Romania, Prague in the Czech Republic, Paris in France, Crans-Montana in Switzerland...).

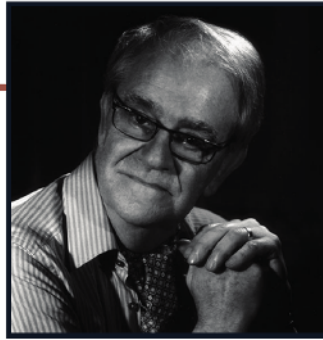
The negatives (generally 6x17cm or 10x12cm) are processed by himself, and during the printing process, he pursues the highest possible archival quality: baryta paper, gold chloride toning which covers the silver grains with a layer of gold and protects them from atmospheric fumes, archival quality washing, and mounting for which only pH neutral materials are used.



Silver gelatin print on baryta paper



Silver gelatin print on baryta paper



RENÉ SMETS

René Smets is an interior designer with a background in furniture design and manufacture. An exhibition devoted to Léonard Misonne, seen during a chance visit to the Nicéphore Niépce Museum (Chalon-sur-Saône - France), was the starting point for his interest in historical photographic techniques. From 1982 onwards, he experimented with bromoil printing; after many failures, he gradually obtained his first satisfactory results. He then undertook alone the study of most of the other old processes. At the same time he built all the necessary accessories and a number of cameras: 4x5 inch, pinhole, 360° panoptic camera, etc... In 1996 he became a guest lecturer at the department of photographic conservation-restoration of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp. He was an active member of the Daguerrian Society in the United States and the International Society of Bromoilists. He is also co-founder of Picto Benelux.

“Three historical photographic techniques”

- Bromoil: here the photographic image is replaced by an oil-based ink image, entirely handmade by the artist. This requires technical mastery, pictorial skill and a great artistic sense to harmoniously distribute light and shadow in the image: “The subject is nothing, the light is everything”, said Leonard Misonne...
- Oil printing: With the discontinuation of Kentmere Document Art paper, the production of bromoils became problematic. Oil printing was an obvious alternative: the inking is done in the same way as for bromoil. But the paper had to be made light-sensitive and a large contact printing negative had to be made.
- The “Color” process developed by the Belgian chemist and photographer Joseph Sury is a variant of gum printing in which the emulsion layer, which is also mixed with pumice powder, can absorb and hold powdered pigments or pastels applied manually to the paper after development.



"Color" process (Sury)



"Color" Process (Sury)



Bromoil



Van Dyke Brown

ROBERTO TRIOSCHI



Roberto Trioschi was born in Lugo (Ravenna), Italy. After studying visual communication at the Albe Steiner School in Ravenna (1991-1994), he worked as a photographer in an advertising and industrial photography studio in Ravenna, Italy, until 1999. Since then he has moved to Brussels where he currently works as a freelance graphic designer and photographer. He is also actively engaged in his personal photographic projects and research. He obtained a diploma in image printing, specialising in photography, at the Constantin Meunier Academy in Etterbeek, Belgium. He is a member of Picto Benelux since 2014.

“Wild Vasteloavend”

During “Vasteloavend” (Shrove Tuesday), South Limburg is abuzz with excitement. The world of carnival has always interested me, especially the very local, almost confidential festivities, where you can feel so close to the participants.

So it was natural for me to present images that suggest the atmosphere of carnival. A wild and colourful carnival in the south of France. The characters and their masks are from Brussels. They have been torn from their natural environment and introduced into an unusual landscape. This creates a contrasting, strange and surreal dialogue. The “Van Dyke brown” technique further enhances the effect...



Van Dyke Brown



Van Dyke Brown



Wet Cyanotype

ROSEMARY LANEAU



Rosemary enjoyed analogue photography since she was a child. After graduating from the photography school “Le 75” in Brussels, she joined the visual arts educational service of the province of Namur. For 25 years, she has familiarised the participants of her workshops with analogue photography, and more particularly with pinhole photography. The latter allows for a playful photography, without rigid rules, and which reexamines our relationship to time, instantaneity and reality. Every year she organises events around Brussels for the Worldwide Pinhole Photography Day and also participates in a project in which the inhabitants are invited to take photos and process them on the spot in a pinhole camera caravan, installed in public spaces.

Wet cyanotype

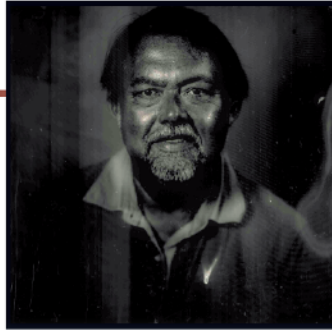
Cyanotype is one of my favourite techniques. The products needed are quite harmless, so I often use this process in the workshops I organise for children. It is also very easy to make very large prints on canvas using this process. Recently, I discovered the “wet cyanotype” : a variation of the traditional method. Wet cyanotypes can be made on dry photosensitive paper (or any other substrate of your choice) prepared in advance by adding a series of kitchen chemicals and other ingredients (salt, soap bubbles, juices from various plants, etc.) to the cyanotype emulsion which is moistened at the time of exposure, or by preparing the substrate entirely at that time. This disrupts the process and leaves interesting stains and colour schemes. Wet cyanotype is unpredictable and the results are random, which is exactly what I like.



Wet cyanotype



Wet cyanotype



RUDY BOON

Since his childhood Rudy Boon was fascinated by photography. It allows him to capture and share his impressions of the world and its inhabitants in a personal way. He considers photographic techniques and equipment as mere tools and enjoys working with a wide variety of materials, both digital and film. He exhibits his work mainly as paper prints and has extensive experience in printing with historical techniques, as well as in colour management and making artistic digital prints. The history of photography is his favourite area of study. As a photographer he is particularly interested in the social landscape: people and/or their environment. Exhibitions (solo and group): Halle, Gooik, Kester, Uccle, London, etc.

“Images of silence II : The Hoëgne”

Our living environment is constantly changing, and humans are disturbing nature and silence. Concrete and noise make people hard and numb. For those who are willing to look for them, there are still places where the steamroller of technology and digitalisation has not yet had an impact. I found such a place in the Belgian Ardennes, in the nature reserve of the Hautes Fagnes, along the banks of the Hoëgne, where I enjoy a soothing silence, with only the swirling of the water as background noise. I took my time to capture these impressions, working on a tripod and adjusting the focus for maximum depth of field. To render the rich tones with all the nuances, I used the Kallitype process and paid particular attention to ensure the permanence of the image (platinum toning and several other baths).



Kallitype



Kallitype



Kallitype



Washi film printed on Ilford Multigrade Art 300 paper

VERONIQUE EVRARD



Over time and through encounters, photography became for Véronique Evrard the ultimate access to the others. She furthered her technical knowledge of analogue and digital photography at the Agnès Varda school of photography and visual techniques in Brussels. With a resolutely humanist approach, Véronique Evrard develops a poetic realism tinged with both nostalgia and optimism in her photos. People in the reality of their daily life and their environment is for her a source of inspiration of the highest order. Her work has been shown in several exhibitions in France and Belgium. She has won several prizes in Belgium and abroad, among others at the Rencontres Photographiques d'Arlon 2022, with the 2nd prize of the jury.

In this series, chance is an essential element that entirely determines the final result and the rendering. A feeling emanates from these images that reality is elusive. This photographic construction between reality and fiction is an invitation to invent and sketch stories, to explore nameless places populated by faceless people. Strange and ambiguous places, places that we can recognize but cannot clearly locate. I chose to add a form of timelessness to the randomness through a special rendering, made possible by the Zeiss Nettar 6x6 camera combined with a handmade Washi film. This film, coated on a Japanese paper, gives a unique fibrous texture to the negatives that contributes significantly to the desired mood in the image.

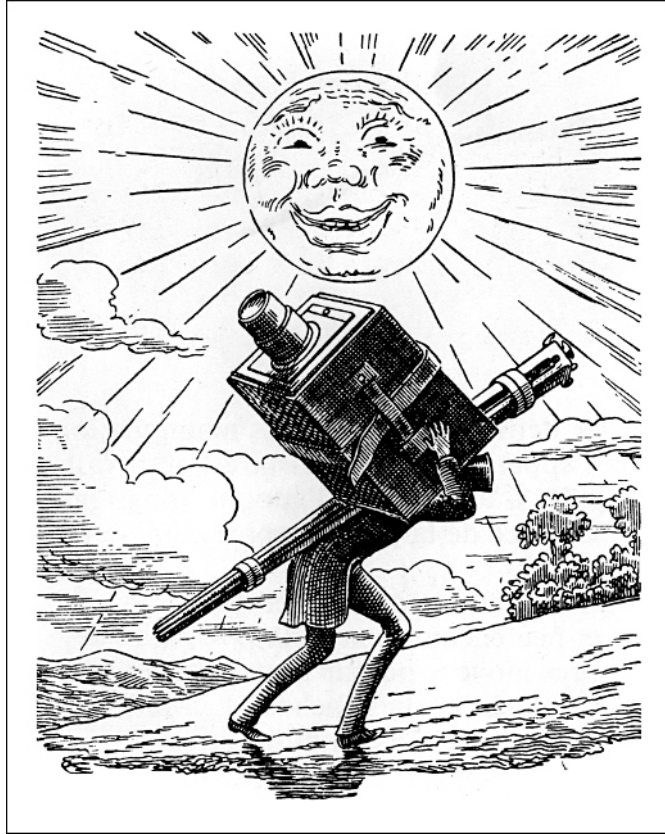
<https://veradaphoto.jimdofree.com/>



Washi Film printed on Ilford Multigrade Art 300 paper



Washi film printed on Ilford Multigrade Art 300 paper



...I am always myself and must naturally be present in my work. The beards and eyebrows of the old masters cannot grow on my face. The lungs and bowels of the old masters cannot be transferred into my body. I express my own lungs and bowels and show my own beards and eyebrows. If it happens that my work approaches that of some old painter, it is he who comes close to me, not I who am imitating him. I have got it by nature, and there is no one among the old masters whom I cannot follow and transform....

Tao-Chi (Chinese Buddhist monk, calligrapher and landscape painter, 1642 – 1707)

PICTO BENELUX

Old Techniques, Art Today

ARMAND BENEDIC, CEDRIC MUSCAT, DANIEL BASTIN,
DIRK DE LA MARCHE, HENK VAN DEN BIGGELAAR,
HILDE BRAET, HUBERT DESGAIN, JAN STRIJBOS,
JOZEF VAN LYSEBETH, PAUL FUMIÈRE, RENÉ METS,
ROBERTO TRIOSCHI, ROSEMARY LANEAU, RUDY BOON,
VÉRONIQUE EVRARD