DEPTH OF FIELD

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Guangdong Museum of Art

广东美术馆
The Photographic Gaze
“Depth of Field” (Dof)

Concept / The exposition “Depth of Field” (Dof) shows work by art photographers laboring at the perimiter of their field, investigating the diversity of the photographic medium as we know it. In a sense, these photographers show us how the world appears to them.

In this exposition the term “Depth of Field” indicates the photographer’s control over focus, over the specific elements in each work that are either in focus or are unclear, a fundamental artistic concept. “Depth of Field” is a challenging notion for all photographers. A basic aspect of any composition is where to focus and where to blur. A sharp focus might, like an eagle’s eye, pinpoint a vitally important subject, or it might not. This dichotomy makes the relationship between photography and reality somewhat paradoxical. Focus is the ultimate challenge for the photographers on display in this show: Arno Roncada, Bert Danckaert, Charlotte Lybeer, Elke Boen, Francois Goffin, Jimena Kets and Lena Gasparotto.

For these artists, the real issue is no longer the photographic surface itself, but the relationship among the spaces in each composition within that photograph and how these relate to each other. Photography does not exist independently anymore; it has become an aspect of a new world with a more complex virtual structure. The exhibition shows us an overview of understanding. This show highlights the dialectical connection between the sharp focus and the blur, between the fading and the extremely sharp image One cannot exist without the other. These photographers employ a range of strategies to provoke singular concepts in esthetical and ethical judgment.

If we examine the historical debate between pictorialism (Leonard Misonne) and straight photography (Alfred Stieglitz), we can determine that the works on display by these young photographers demonstrate two things: they stimulate poetic imagination and they create space for new interpretation. On the other hand, their work supports autonomous photography that symbolizes freedom, regeneration and represents, (if such a contradiction in terms actually exists) what we may call an “organized anarchy”. Their pictures amaze us by their lack of convention. They stimulate our imagination.

Conclusion / These photographers are true innovators. For them photography is a tool with which to display their experiences and their philosophies about life in general. In this sense they are akin to their colleagues in painting Michael Borremans and Luc Tuymans. The medium photography contributes to the re-birth of the photographer as a painter-photographer. The battle between an old art, painting, and a relatively young one; the 172-year-old medium photography, may very well be over. The photographer no longer endures the world, but rather conquers it with a new gaze and a new “Depth of Field”. This is an extremely inspiring experience.

Johan Swinnen, co-curator “Depth of Field”
Jimmy Kets
吉米·科兹

Jimmy Kets (*1978, Antwerp, Belgium) studied graphic design and illustration at the Sint Lukas Academy of Arts in Antwerp (B), where his final work was a photo documentary about Nepalese street children. He presently works as press photographer for Belgian newspapers, initially for De Morgen, and presently for De Standaard. He has twice won the Nikon Promising Young Photographer Award as well as the Sabam Award for the Best Humoristic Press Photograph. Recently, Kets put on an exposition at the Flanders Center in the Japanese city of Osaka. His pictures are never staged, a habit common among press photographers. Kets is looking for spontaneous reactions and the authenticity of the image. His pictures are all about chance and coincidence.

Originally, Jimmy Kets was inspired by Martin Parr, William Eggleston and Harry Gruyaert, but in the meantime he has developed his own style. "Colours are important since it makes the pictures stronger". For Kets, photography is like poetry, he shows the images according to his feelings. "Common items are brought to life, and a certain tension is created for the viewer. But at the same time, items that at first sight do not fit, which are out of balance, are interesting. But in that case, the imperfection should be perfect."

吉米·科兹 (*1978，比利时安特卫普) 在比利时安特卫普的圣卢卡斯艺术学院学习平面设计和插图。他在安特卫普美术学院完成学业，毕业后选择了比利时的《De Morgen》和《De Standaard》的摄影工作。他两次赢得尼康“有希望的年轻摄影师”奖以及《SABAM》最佳幽默新闻摄影奖。最近，他在日本大阪的弗拉芒中心举办展览。他的作品从不刻意设置，这也反映了新闻摄影的本质。科兹经常在寻找自发反应和故事的真实性。他的照片充满了偶然和巧合。

吉米·科兹的灵感来自马丁·帕尔（Martin Parr）、威廉·艾格尔斯通（William Eggleston）和哈里·格鲁耶尔（Harry Gruyaert）。在这些影响下，他形成了自己的风格。他认为颜色很重要，因为它强化了图像。"对于科兹而言，摄影作品就如同诗歌，他通过自己的感受来展示这些图像。"他认为，一些看似不适合的，或是不平衡的，却很有吸引力。"但在这种情况下，这种不完美是完美的。"
Elke Boon
埃尔克·本恩

Elke Boon (*1969, Gent/Belgium) is a visual artist who’s been making series of photographs, videos, drawings and installations since 1996. Yet Boon is known best for her portraits of children, young women and men. These portraits show the physical and psychic wounds that float to the surface so that her characters project a certain heroic tragedy.

The plain and somewhat dusty interior that serves as background supports the power of the image. The classical portrait is freed from any hint of glamour. Her photos allude to photography, pornography, documentaries and fashion photography but spurn clichés and commercial aspects.

Boon’s work brims over with recalcitrance against a society ruled by power reflected in the shape of bunkers, tunnels, containers and racing trains. These majestic and aggressive manifestations reveal human beings to be futile and weak. The incapacity to grasp reality flows over into an insurgent urge to analyze and to criticize that same reality. According to Boon, powerful structures limit man’s freedom and self-fulfillment. Vulnerability and pain are far too often associated with failure and are therefore unacceptable in society.

Boon’s photographs caution us against the routine spoliation of the mind resulting from daily manipulation by powerful institutions and the media.

埃尔克·本恩（1969年，根特/比利时）是一位视觉艺术家，从1996年开始以照片、视频、绘画和现代装潢装置等媒介创作一系列作品。以儿童和青年男女肖像摄影而闻名。这些肖像摄影作品表达身体和精神的创伤得以浮现，作品中的人物也由此绽放出原始的纯真色彩。

平原与堡垒般的背景让图像更加有力，经典的肖像从暴力的侵害中脱逃。她的照片指指摄影、情色、纪实和时尚摄影不在于庸俗和商业化的一派。

她的作品洋溢着挑战控制社会的反抗，这种反抗通过地堡、隧道、集装箱、列车的外形得以呈现。这些威严的侵略性的表象展示了人类的苍凉无力，对现实的无力而转向对现实进行分析和批判。他认为，强大的结构使人的自由和自信消失，脆弱和痛苦与失败联系在一起。因而不为社会所接受。

其作品提醒人们警惕制度和媒体的日常操控对人类心灵的污染。
Arno Roncada
阿尔诺•弘卡达

Arno Roncada (1973, Gent / Belgium) does not take photographs; he invents them. His pictures are not a representations of reality, but of his own carefully considered ideas about reality. In his “Peaceful Mountains of Desire” series, for example, a variety of formal interventions makes it clear that these pictures are independent of their specific locations. In his puzzling, imaginary landscapes Roncada quotes from and refers to pictorial clichés, images from films, metaphors, and other elements of the collective memory. In this series he analyses historical photographs and “changes” them with new connotations.

阿尔诺-弘卡达（1973年生于比利时）并不拍摄照片，而是创造照片。他的作品不是对现实的精确再现，而是对其深刻考虑的想法。例如，在他的“和平的欲望山脉”系列中，各种形式的干预使图像与具体的位置无关。在他的困惑、虚构的风景中，弘卡达引用并指出了图片中与动作的抽象与具体元素。在这个系列中，他分析历史照片并赋予它们新的意义。
Charlotte Lybeer

Charlotte Lybeer (b. 1983) is an artist and photographer based in Berlin. Her work explores the relationship between reality and illusion, often using digital manipulation to create surreal images. Lybeer's pieces challenge perceptions of what is real and what is imagined, blurring the lines between the two. This approach allows her to create a sense of disorientation and wonder in the viewer, inviting them to question their own perceptions of the world.

In her latest series, "Dream State," Lybeer presents a series of images that appear to be straight from a dream or a waking hallucination. The photographs feature everyday objects and figures, but with a surreal twist that makes them seem almost Otherworldly. The colors are vibrant and the compositions are slightly off, creating a sense of unease and fascination all at once.

Lybeer's work often draws inspiration from her own experiences and the stories she overhears or reads about. She uses these elements to create a narrative that is both personal and universal, inviting the viewer to become an active participant in the story she is telling.

Through her art, Lybeer invites us to question our own perceptions of reality and the boundaries between the physical and the imagined. Her work is a reminder that there is always more to life than meets the eye.
Bert Danckaert

Bert Danckaert (*1965, Antwerp, Belgium) studied photography at the Academy for Fine Arts and the National Higher Institute for Fine Arts (NHISK) in Antwerp (B). Since the mid-nineties, he has been working as a photographer and has shown his work in several solo and group exhibitions in Belgium and abroad. In 1999, Danckaert started the series ‘Make Sense!’ that was published as a book in 2006.

From 2006 on, he has been working on a series entitled ‘Simple Present’. In 2008, his second book Simple Present - Beijing was published.

“We see in Bert Danckaert’s work a strangely familiar universe: that of the unremarkable, undistinguished places in which all of us spend so much of our lives, places we pass through without giving them any notice, spaces that are just trajectories, parts of a line connecting one place with another. Places, in short, that define our lives and that of so many other people in the urbanized world.

Danckaert’s work thus becomes a landmark of intercultural understanding, something that manages not to be trapped in the easy imageries of the exotic-typical, but brings us back to where things begin and end: in real human life. In an age of globalization, such levels of understanding are real, valuable forms of knowledge.”

BERTELT•DANCKAERT (*1965, Belgium / Belgium) studied photography at the Academy for Fine Arts and the National Higher Institute for Fine Arts (NHISK) in Antwerp (B). Since the mid-nineties, he has been working as a photographer and has shown his work in several solo and group exhibitions in Belgium and abroad. In 1999, Danckaert started the series ‘Make Sense!’ that was published as a book in 2006.

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“从贝尔特-丹卡尔特的作品中，我们看到一个既熟悉又陌生的世界。我们生活其中，司空见惯的地方，一个我们曾经或即将奔波的地方，一个看似平凡的空间，不同的地方却彼此发生关联。值得一提的是，地方定义了我们的生活，同时也成为众人在城市化世界中生活的地方。

他的作品因此成为一种文化解构的一座里程碑。它们并没有按照传统风土民情的想象所构建，而是把我们带回到事物原本出现和消失的地方。在全球化时代，这种程度上的解读是真实的，具有价值的。”
François Goffin

François Goffin (*1979 / Liège / Belgium) is a photographer of multiple and variable facets which at times can be rather confusing. Among his peers, Goffin is probably the one who keeps the greatest distance from his subjects, a distance which even, on occasion, seems to border on the suspicious. On the other hand, Goffin excels at showing the unusual, the novelty and the inexhaustible richness of the world. The works on show are from the series “Choses Simples”, his best-known work that has been shown on several occasions and has also been published. Goffin’s inspiration for the title of the series is two-fold: firstly, Goffin’s parents told him to “Keep things simple”, a phrase he has cherished. Secondly, Goffin was profoundly inspired by the record “My Favourite Things” by the jazz musician John Coltrane. Goffin decided to collect a box of memories that depicts the simple things in life, a tribute to beauty in its many forms.
Lara Gasparotto
拉腊•卡斯巴欧托

Lara Gasparotto (* 1988 / Liège / Belgium) This young artist has developed a unique and spontaneous style of her own. It is a mixture of spontaneous photography à la Nan Goldin, yet is analogous to the punk and anarchy waves of contemporary photography, too. Gasparotto is a true natural talent who has developed a kind of “crude” poetry that is complex and sometimes initially shocking. These are pictures that show us part of a story. At present Gasparotto combines her photographic work with drawings, collages and texts.

拉腊•卡斯巴欧托（1988，列日，比利时）是一位年轻有才又别具一格的女摄影师。其风格是效仿南•高汀（Nan Goldin）的即兴摄影，动乱而无规则的现实社会氛围。卡斯巴欧托是一个真正的天才。她发展了一种“原始”诗歌，复杂而有点令人震撼。这些照片向我们展示了故事的一部分。卡斯巴欧托的摄影作品结合了绘画、拼贴画和文字。