

Press Release

PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBITION

GD4PhotoArt – Photography meets Industry

Bologna, National Art Gallery

Via Belle Arti, 56

30th September – 2nd November 2010

Photography meets Industry, an exhibition dedicated to industrial photography. A journey through the works of the four winners of the second edition of the GD4PhotoArt competition. The representation of the female body in the everyday working environment by French artist Olivia Gay, which won first prize, and the works of the other three finalists: the desolate Siberian landscapes by British artist Justin Jin, Italian photographer Alessandro Sambini's project on heaps, and the images of the Svalbard islands by Dutch artist Niels Stomps.

The exhibition, promoted by G.D and the Isabella Seragnoli Foundation, is accompanied by a catalogue, edited by Giovanna Calvenzi and published by Damiani Editore.

Olivia Gay

After completing a degree in Art History at the University of Bordeaux III (1993/95), Olivia Gay studied photography at the New England School of Photography in Boston (1995/97), then soon after headed to Cuba to produce her first photographs: prostitutes in Havana.

Returning to France in 1998, she started working for the press: Libération, The New York Times, VSD, and Le Monde.

A photographer and author since 1998, Gay has studied the construction of the female body in social or professional environments, through posture and body language. She has explored the female form in scenes set in a factory, in a lace workshop, at a supermarket, at home, and soon she will feature the farming women of Normandy.

For Olivia Gay, the photograph must capture humanity in a gesture or a look. After immersing herself in a place, spending several weeks or months at a time there, she uses her images to recreate the encounter that has taken place between her and her subject.

The Lacemakers of Calais

This project for GD4PhotoArt illustrates the women at work in the Noyon mechanical lace factory in Calais. Founded in 1919, Noyon - Dentelles is a family-run business with 445 employees. It was recently named a "cultural heritage enterprise" alongside luxury businesses including Baccarat, Dior, Hermès.

Borrowing the daily gestures of the lacemakers, their hands, their working environment, she offers a reflection of the female body moulded by work.

Through the use of a classic aesthetic form which offers a clean reading of the image, she concentrates on details, the precision of a movement, in order to "... recover the lost unity, the profound me, from under the many layers of habit".* (* Marcel Proust, The Past Recaptured)

Justin Jin

For more than a decade, Justin Jin has worked as an independent photojournalist for leading magazines and newspapers, specialising in reaching people in hidden, harsh or sensitive situations.

Whether tackling themes such as authoritarianism in Russia, exploitation in China or illegal immigration in Europe, he aims to get inside the worlds of the people involved. Through his photography and writing, he challenges preconceptions, exposes hypocrisy and condemns abuse, as much as he celebrates strength and humanity. For the past four years, he has been based in Moscow, reporting and carrying out corporate assignments in Russia, China and beyond. Previously he worked in Western Europe while based in Amsterdam. He speaks Russian, Mandarin and Cantonese Chinese, English and Dutch. Some of his projects are commissioned, while others are self-initiated. He applies the same passion, persistence and discipline to all. He also exhibits in galleries and museums, including the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, which has collected a body of his work. Previously he worked as a Reuters correspondent, covering China from Beijing and managing a bureau of financial reporting in Shenzhen city. Before that, he was at Cambridge University, reading Philosophy and Political Sciences. He was born in Hong Kong in 1974.

Zone of absolute discomfort

Justin Jin's project focuses on an arctic population, with its hopes, love and ability to survive in an icy plane dotted with crumbling cities, where conditions are very hard but habitable enough to keep alive the mines that extract millions of tons of oil, gas and minerals trapped beneath the tundra. The photos were taken in Murmansk, the largest arctic city in the world, the nearby abandoned village of Teriberka – where Gazprom wants to build a gas processing plant for the Shtokman field – and to the east towards the city of Norilsk, one of the most polluted cities in the world, where nickel is produced. In addition to these images, other photos taken in Vorkuta, where the coal mines are firing the workers as they can no longer justify the costs of supporting the Arctic communities.

Alessandro Sambini

Alessandro Sambini was born in Rovigo in 1982. He was recently awarded an MA in Research Architecture by the Visual Cultures Department of Goldsmiths College in London. He began his photographic career in 2005 with a reportage entitled *Dov'è il Polesine*. In 2009 he won the XXIII Gallarate Visual Arts Prize for his photographic project "Ghe Pronto!".

He is currently working independently on two video projects that explore the relationship between images created by the traditional media, the viewer's re-appropriation of these images, their subsequent manipulation and the creation of alternative forms of narrative based on such material. The first project takes as its subject the inauguration ceremony for Dubai's Burj Khalifa Tower. The second focuses on the murder of five women in Pittsburgh in early August, 2009, by a man called George Sodini. Sambini has recently finished a 40-minute documentary entitled "Bona Fide" on the subject of female domestic workers from the Philippines.

'Na mota e 'na busa

This Venetian adage offers the title for the Alessandro Sambini's project for GD4PhotoArt and encompasses its meaning: a hole always corresponds to a "mota", a heap. For every manufactured or creative product, there is a heap, a parallel pile of waste. Human energy creates space, products, services, emotions. It distils matter into perfect, ergonomic objects: beauty. Matter changes, its fate is divided; "on one part the honey and the other the wax" (De André). From the fields of the Po Valley planes with their heaps of unsold vegetables to the mountains of rusty iron near Verona, from the mountains of waste near London to the plastic island off the coast of California, 30 metres deep and floating silently, invisible to the human eye, Sambini represents a new geography, with variable, unpredictable geological times.

Niels Stomps

Niels Stomps was born in Driebergen, The Netherlands, in 1974 and now works and lives in Amsterdam. He studied photography at the Utrecht School of the Arts, where he is currently a guest lecturer. In 2007 he received his master's degree at the St. Joost Academy in Breda.

His work consists of series of photographs, focusing on the way people react to major changes, sociological or environmental, changes that are so big and overwhelming that the individual can only adapt to the inevitable. Stomps prefers to present his photographs as a sequence of images and to combine several series into one publication.

His work has been shown in solo and group exhibitions in the Netherlands and abroad, and he has won many international awards.

El Dorado

For GD4PhotoArt, Niels Stomps took his pictures on the Svalbard Islands, an extreme territory to the north of Norway, on the way to the North Pole. The landscape is composed of white expanses and snowy mountains, with remarkable glaciers. For Stomps, Svalbard is a place lying between the past and the future, a borderland in both literal and metaphorical terms. Man has made huge efforts to occupy the area, to carry out scientific experiments and research aiming to unveil as many mysteries as possible about us and the planet we live on. Since 2006 Svalbard has been home to the Global Seed Vault, which conserves plant seeds from all over the world at a constant temperature of - 25 C°. In the various series of Eldorado, Stomps combines landscape images with portraits, as well as the interior and exterior of scientific buildings.

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