



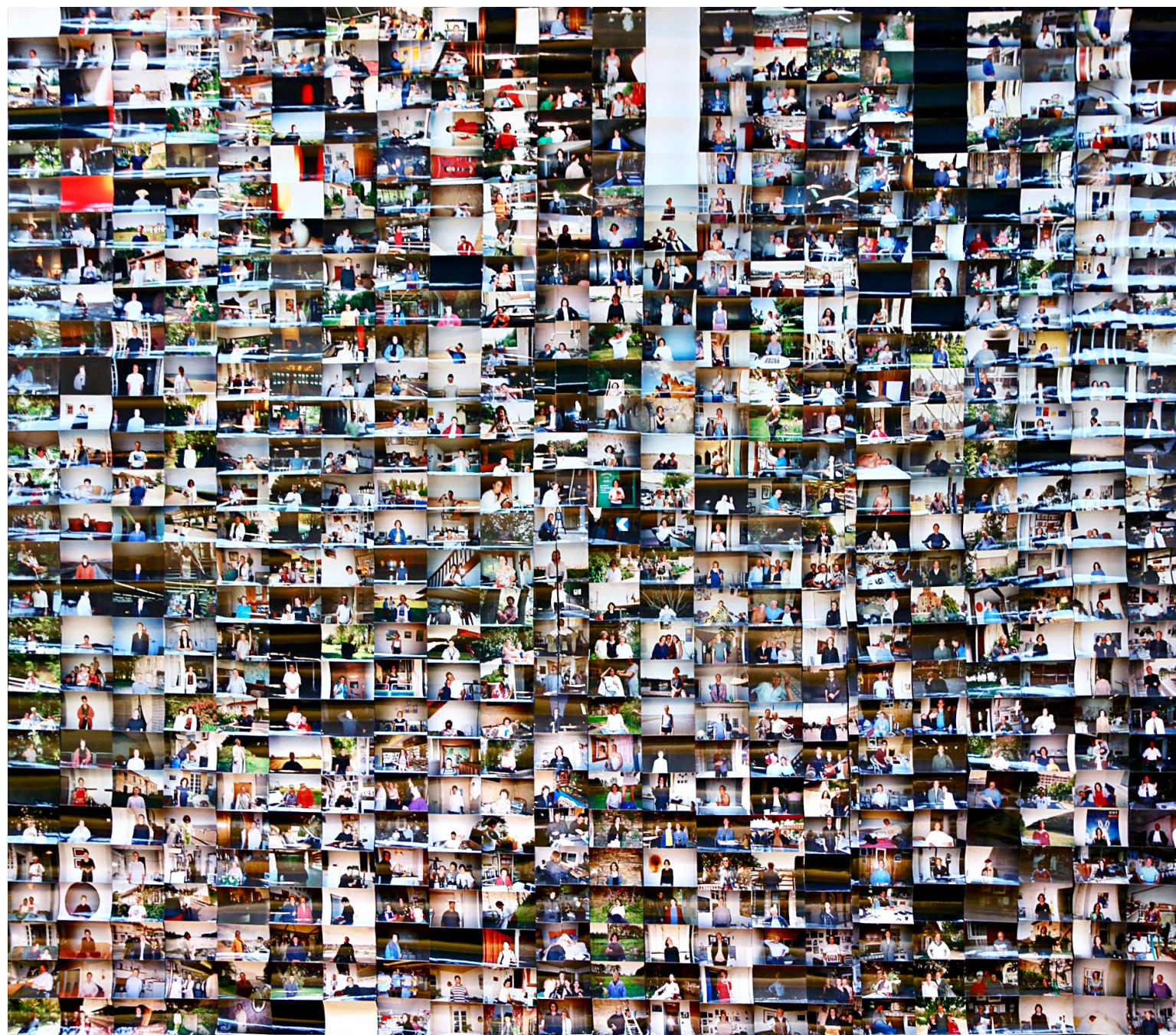
**ONE
WORLD
ONE
FAMILY
UN
MONDE
UNE
FAMILLE**

**A PHOTOGRAPHIC PROJECT BY JM BABONNEAU 1998 - 2018
UN PROJET PHOTOGRAPHIQUE DE JM BABONNEAU 1998 - 2018**



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a photographic project by jm babonneau / 1998 - 2018
un projet photographique de jm babonneau / 1998 - 2018



ONE WORLD / ONE FAMILY UN MONDE / UNE FAMILLE

1998 - 2018

20 YEARS LATER

> PRESENTATION

20 years later, in May 2018, I am launching a new edition of my participatory photographic project *One World / One Family (Un Monde / Une Famille)*.

In May 1998, I launched a collective and interactive photographic operation involving 23 volunteer participants from my social circle, except one (a namesake), in order to portray a social network, including members of my family, friends, my girlfriend at the time, as well as my teacher at the National School of Photography in Arles, Arnaud Claass, and the owner of my little student apartment and part-time employer, photo-master and co-founder of the international photography festival, Les Rencontres de la Photographie d'Arles, Lucien Clergue.

As the child of divorced parents having partially grown up abroad since childhood, my family and my social network are geographically dispersed. Born in the Nantes region in North-Western France, grown up 5 years in Germany, being a pupil in a German school, and then, at the time of the first version of my project in 1998, studying photography in Arles, I felt the need and the desire to gather all important people in my life from back then into a project, a study, a quasi-communion, with my youth ideals of a better world beyond borders and distance. Thus my 23 participants were scattered in 7 countries and 13 cities (list available in the next pages).

The project was carried out by asking all participants to have a portrait of themselves taken each day, for 28 days in May 1998, in parallel, almost simultaneously.

I had developed some simple instructions to offer the project a typological and sociological aspect : a five-foot long piece of string (1,5 meter) attached to each camera, proposing to keep the same distance between subject and photographer throughout the project.



Excerpts of images shot in Arles in May 1998 by Lucien Clergue and Jean M. Babonneau

The distance, longer than the length of the arm, was designed in such a way that the participant should ask the assistance of a third person to have their portrait taken; in order perhaps to reveal different faces to different people, at different degrees of intimacy (knowing that the project was intended to be seen by an audience of strangers). It was also proposed to change the setting, location, background each day to provide a more comprehensive portrait of one's environment.

In our era of globalization, in Marshall McLuhan's *global village*, my project goes beyond a purely personal story. The audience, outside of my social network, will also recognize itself, since there is a part of universality in all and everyone. This project is one I conceptualized from my inner visions, and thus not that of anyone though.

Everyone is a photographer. Everyone has become a photographer. Photography is part of our everyday life. We now all carry a camera in the pocket, in our smartphone, versatile and portable communication box. If the recent trend of digital photography seems to have supplanted film photography, or even printed photography among the general public (photographs are now shared more often on screen than on paper), we still cherish the old images of our family albums. Roland Barthes refers to the aura of old images in his essay *Camera Lucida (La Chambre Claire, 1980)*.

I propose a form of family album which aesthetics and process are reviewed, corrected, sublimed and inspired by our new technologies, and yet simple as a snapshot.

The vision I had in 1998 foreshadowed the social networks of today. Facebook, Instagram and others did not exist yet to give us a form of contemporary ubiquity.

Being an experienced photographer and visual artist, what is the point of proposing such a project which images were mostly made, except from a few fellow professional camera-based artists, by amateur photographers, people who are non-professional artists and moreover on very simple photographic devices ?





Box containing the 23 disposable cameras of 1998, equipped with their 5-foot long string (1,5 m) and a handwritten post-it note indicating the relational status between each participant and the artist

The “disposable” cameras featuring a fixed focal length - without zoom, allow an aesthetic unity, aided by the fixed shooting distance indicated by an attached string of five feet (1,5 m) and the desired centering of the subject (a notice of instructions accompanies the cameras shipped by post). Thus a typology can be put into place. In addition to their simplicity, “disposable” cameras (later recycled as part of the installation), at affordable prices and recording images on physical filmrolls, guarantee a satisfactory image resolution compared to many compact digital cameras.

The individual image, taken out of context, would lose in value, in meaning, in emotional charge, and this is precisely the paradigm of the project. All the images interact with each other: they form a conceptual system and entity, a grid of reading.

Some artists work with found or commissioned images - images which the artists haven't produced themselves (Christian Boltanski, Sophie Calle and many other artists). In this project, I partly detach myself from the integral photographic production, and I pilot the project from a distance, accepting the errors, the imponderables of daily life, the technical problems. All will be part of it : the underexposed, overexposed, black, white, veiled, blurred images : the “failed” images that the mainstream photo labs would systematically remove from the printing chain. All images tell the story and process of each photographic diary.

Somehow, it is a non-literary photo novel, a social network fixed on paper - and not on an interactive screen. It is a family album revisited in its form, expanded, transfigured. It is a subjective documentation, a testimony of our time straddling two millennia.

The origins, the joys, the sorrows, the passions of each and every person may probably not show through many modest and self-conscious portraits ... but the viewer will be there to fill the gaps, read between the lines, project and create one's own story.

The installation space is simple. It is a virtual and international house. A lot of happiness and love bring people together under one roof, beyond the basic need for shelter and despite the possible and temporary discords. My project certainly comprises an idealistic aspect that promotes a common *savoir-vivre*, a togetherness beyond territorial boundaries and limitations, cultures, nationalisms and populisms, which are now gaining popularity following a financial and economic crisis, like it occurred in the 1930s after the Wall Street Crash of 1929.



I propose my own more systematized version of *The Family of Man*, the famous photographic exhibition organized by Edward Steichen at the Museum of Modern Art of New York (MoMa) in 1955. We are a family of human beings beyond our differences. My project proposes to contemplate and meditate on our similarities, rather than on our differences. It is a humanistic artistic project, "ambitious and full of humor" according to Lucien Clergue, photographer & co-founder of Les Rencontres Internationales de la Photographie d'Arles, who participated to my project in May 1998.

The viewer is invited into a metaphorical projection thanks to masonry strings crossing the space between the two walls of portraits, each superimposed with the pentagonal and archaic form of a house, drawn with the same strings. Here is a house under construction, with fuzzy outlines, without walls : a transparent house. It becomes a public space, an exhibition space in a place of art. The project is easily comprehensible, accessible and playful. I do not deny playfulness as part of the process. Neurobiologists and psychologists state that one learns and memorizes more effectively through play.

Both facing composite walls of portraits, from 1998 and from 2018, will welcome the viewer to a discovery or rediscovery of some faces 20 years later. Some participants to the 1998 edition of the project have since died. After all, we're all only visitors in the world, traveling through for a few decades, being a little link in the ancestral human chain. The deceased rest in peace, having left their mark in our hearts. Some other earlier participants may give their spot to newcomers in 2018, as it happens in real life : after 20 years, we have lost contact with some people, we have met new people... and all those who have accompanied us for a few hours, days, weeks, months or years during these 20 years will not necessarily appear in the composite portrait, although they played a more or less influential role in our lives. Finding and recognizing the present and the absent ones can be part of the game. One month, the project's duration, is only a drop in the incommensurably long river of time. A drop and then two, it's probably not so bad.

The project could have been given a following after a decade instead of two, and been repeated every 10 years. But it happened so that I didn't feel the need for it until recently, after experiencing the loss of some beloved ones. A new milestone has been reached and it deserves a new investigation and account. Who knows how many of us will still be alive in another 20 years ? Will my daughter then take the project over ? Without thinking too much of the future and its possibilities, let us seize the present opportunity and embody this project with our images, together, in May 2018 - if you wish.

While social networks on the Internet now give us access to a certain synchronicity and a form of virtual ubiquity, how can this project still be relevant ?

The disposable cameras hanging by their string at the geographical position of the participants on a world map



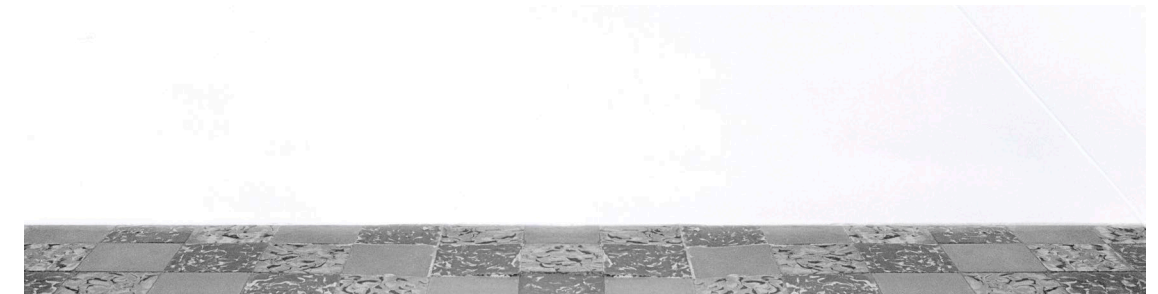
In the constant flow of images on our screens, I feel a lack of tangibility and rituals. Digital images circulating on the electronic stream appear as fast as they disappear. Today, I feel the need for a body of printed images, an overview, a multi-party meeting, a collective and unusual portrait, although fragmentary and non-exhaustive in a specific timeframe. It is a kind of ceremony intended to mark the passage of time and to remind us of our fleetingness, in order to refocus on the essential things of our lives, since it happens to all, to different degrees, to get lost in path.

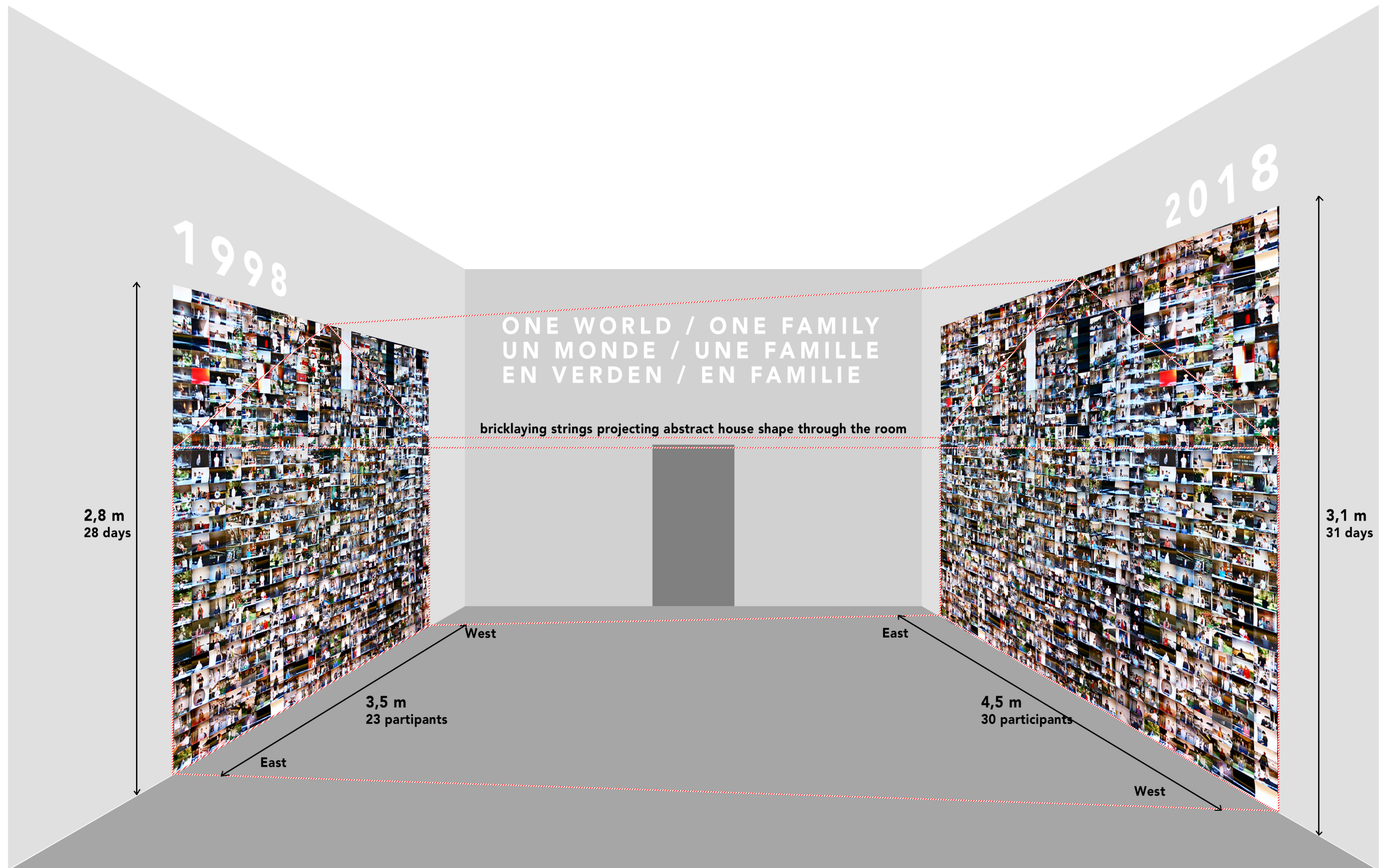
The resonance of multiple portraits synchronized throughout the world, despite its modest origin within my small world extended out to yours - microscopic to macroscopic, can echo out and inspire the audience. I invite you to realize this vision in photography, at least in the form of a photographic installation, a physical indoor space open to the public. Some ideas drum up their obviousness : of course, it had to be done. In my opinion, this project is one of them.

Lastly, long-term artistic projects show consistency and determination. They are gaining depth and value over the years. May 1998 - May 2018 : an anniversary date. The repetition of a system, a ritual, a custom, a habit is somehow reassuring and seems to give an illusory control over life and death, or at least it seems to give meaning to life. Art often deals with vanities, mortality and the human condition. This project, in a way, is also a borrowing of existentialism.

Concretely : the reissue of this ambitious project requires financial and logistical support, artist grants and sponsorships, and exhibition spaces, of course, because this project will only come to life by being exposed and shared with a public, several audiences. The first phase of the project is self-financed to allow the making of the portraits without missing the anniversary of the month of May 2018.

Views of the installation *One World / One Family*, in June 1999 (images of May 1998). A second wall featured the project's disposable cameras hanging on a world map at each participant's geographic location - each camera "relic" featuring the participant's hand-written relational status to the artist. A third wall featured the list of all participants' names, cities and countries of residence. Dimensions of the wall of images: 3.3m x 2.8m (including the installation's entrance door, so the visitor wouldn't see it immediately). A luminous sign (typographic light box) containing the title of the artwork was also placed at the entrance of the installation. From the actual exhibition room's ceiling, a light bulb hung to an electric wire and came inside the virtual space of the house represented by the projection of the pentagonal house-shaped strings through the installation space, linking the wall of images with a smaller patchwork of family photos from my grandmother's collection. The viewer thus entered the virtual house. The new anniversary installation will display two walls of images, the one from May 1998 facing the one from May 2018.





**ONE WORLD / ONE FAMILY
UN MONDE / UNE FAMILLE
EN VERDEN / EN FAMILIE**

ONE
WORLD
ONE
FAMILY

UN
MONDE
UNE
FAMILLE

2018



39 PARTICIPANTS CONFIRMED / CONFIRMÉS

35 CITIES / VILLES & 24 COUNTRIES / PAYS :

DENMARK & GREENLAND, SWEDEN,
NORWAY, FINLAND, GERMANY,
UNITED KINGDOM, FRANCE,
ITALY, GREECE, LITHUANIA,
BELARUS, RUSSIA, TURKEY,
ARMENIA, UNITED ARAB
EMIRATES, SENEGAL,
NEPAL, CHINA, JAPAN,
AUSTRALIA, BRAZIL,
CANADA, USA

1998 - 2018

A PHOTOGRAPHIC PROJECT BY
UN PROJET PHOTOGRAPHIQUE DE

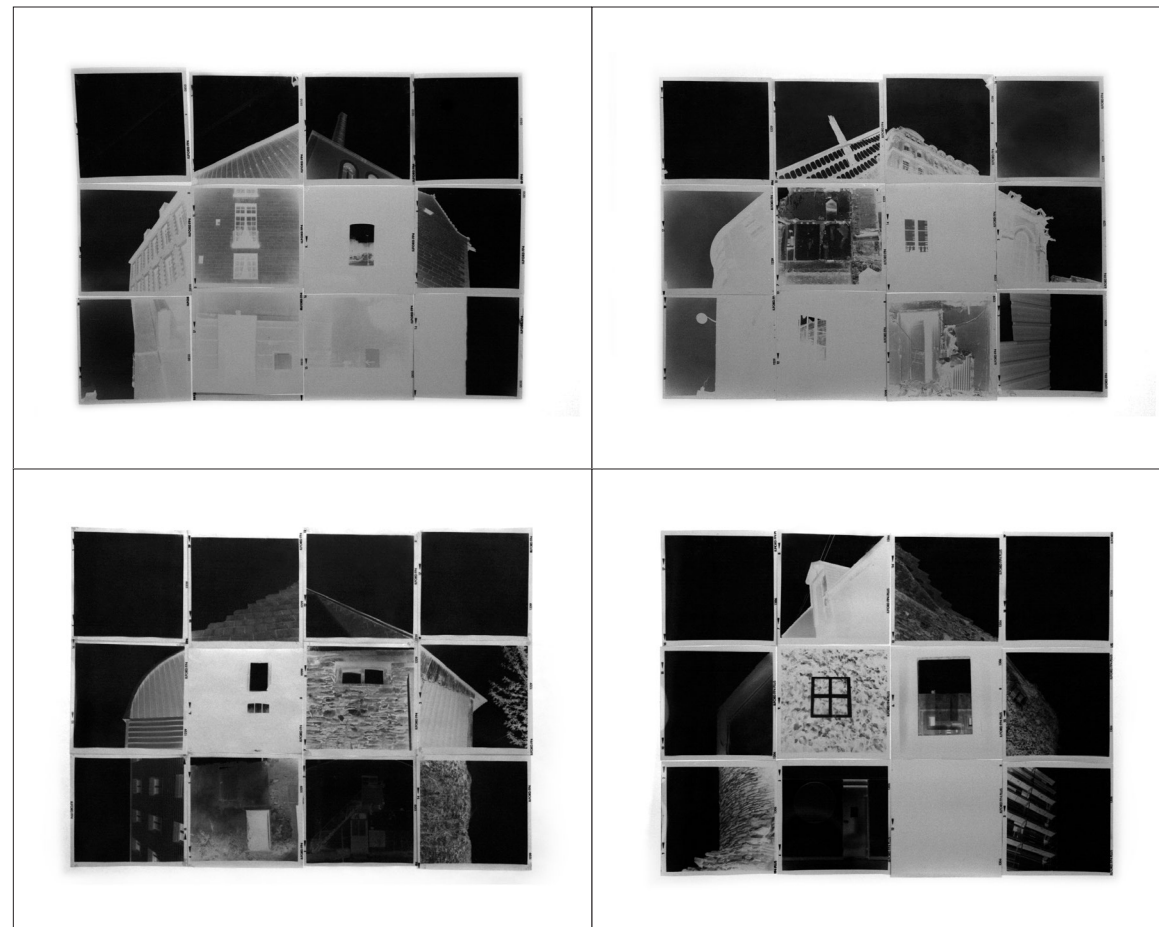
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May 1998

7 COUNTRIES : France, Germany, Austria, Iceland, Italy, Greece, USA.

13 CITIES : Arles, Pornic, Nantes, Gorges, Saint-Michel-Chef-Chef, Paris, Caen, Ulm, Vienna, Reykjavík, Florence, Katerini, Oxford (MS).

23 PARTICIPANTS (displayed from East to West, so left to right).



One of my early photographic works : Maisons / Houses 1-4 (composites of medium format negative film pieces displayed under glass plates, unique originals), Nantes, 1992-1993

May 2018

24 COUNTRIES : Denmark & Greenland, Iceland, Sweden, Norway, Finland, France, Italy, Greece, Germany, United Kingdom (England & Scotland), Lithuania, Belarus, Russia, Turkey, Armenia, United Arab Emirates, Senegal, Nepal, China (Hong Kong), Japan, USA, Brazil, Australia.

35 CITIES : Copenhagen, Dyssegård, Göteborg, Oslo, Helsinki, Reykjavík, Sisimiut, Palaiseau, Nantes, Pornic, Ligné, Concarneau, Poitiers, Arles, London, Glasgow, Hamburg, München, Kaunas, Minsk, Moscow, Ufa, Rome, Thessaloniki, Kaş (Antalya), Yerevan, Abu Dhabi, Sally, Kathmandu, Hong Kong, Tokyo, Melbourne, Sauk Rapids (MN), Montréal, São Paulo.

39 PARTICIPANTS (displayed from East to West, so left to right).



Another of my early photographic works : Portraits / Windows, region of Nantes, 1993-1994. Various social environments and neighborhoods, door to door process



ARIKUR
Jean-Marie Babonneau
hefur safnað saman 23 konum og körlum úr 13 borgum víðs vegar um heiminn til þess að halda nokkurs konar dagbók í ljósmyndum í einn mánuð. Þessar sjálfsmyndir eru teknar við margs konar tækifæri og við ólíklegustu athafnir, t.d. í nautaatshring, við uppvaskið eða bara í baði. Jean-Marie sendi hverjum þátttakanda einnota myndavél og setti einfaldar reglur við myndatökuna. Útkoman verður síðan sett upp á stóran sýningarfleka þar sem allar þessar rúm-

Jean-Marie Babonneau heitir franskur ljósmyndari sem staldraði við á ritstjórn Mannlífs í upphafi árs. Hann hefur undanfarið ár unnið að allsérstakri sýningu sem hann hyggst setja upp á næstunni.

Einnota sjálfsmyndir

Eftir Gísli Egil Hrafnsson
Myndir: Gísli Egil Hrafnsson

legu 600 sjálfsmyndir birta daglegan veruleika þátttakenda. Sýningin ber heitið „Un monde, une famille“ eða „Einn heimur, ein fjölskylda“ og markmiðið er að setja hana upp á næstu mánuðum í öllum 13 borgunum sem þátttakendurnir koma frá. Einn ljósmyndaranna er Kristín Birna Óðinsdóttir sem tók myndirnar sínar í Reykjavík. Þess má geta að Jean-Marie leitast að sýningarstað í Reykjavík og ábendingar væru vel þegnar. ■

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Photographe

Lucien Clergue

B.P. 84
19, Rue Aristide Briand
13632 Arles Cedex
Tél : 04 90 49 94 96
Fax : 04 90 96 60 81

Arles 15-11-98 -

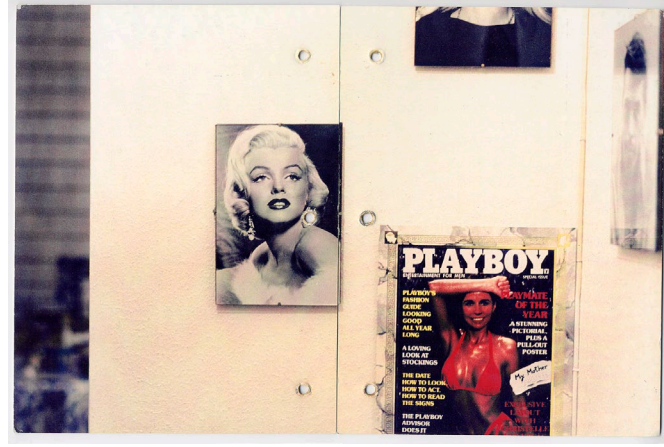
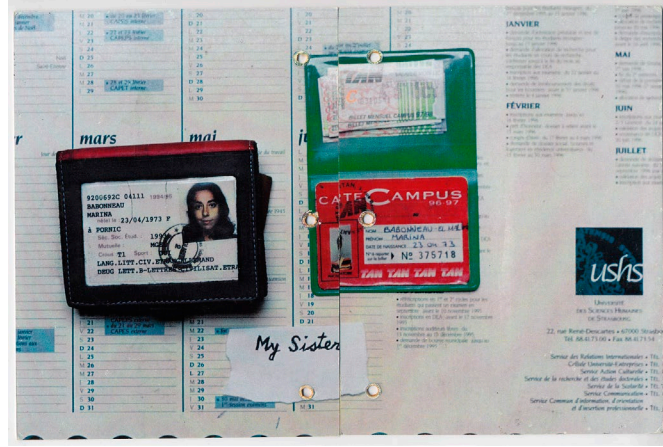
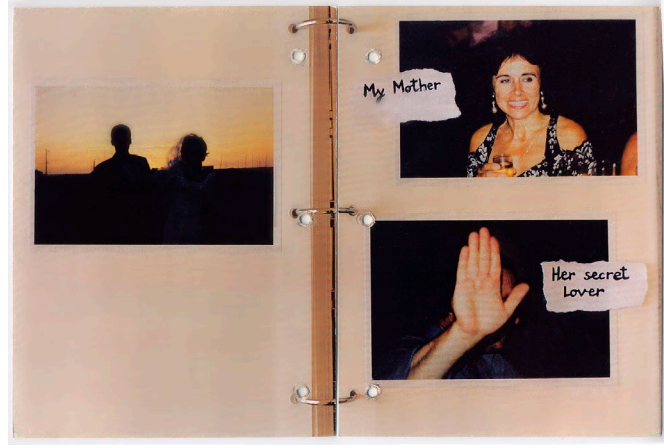
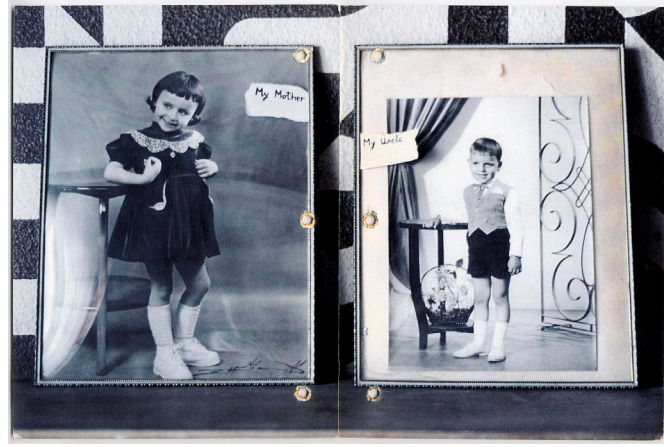
Madame,

Je suis l'un des participants au projet de Mr Babonneau qui est me semble-t-il à la fois ambitieux et plein d'humour. Comme c'est une démarche qui devient rare, j'en accepte avec joie, et ne saurais trop vous recommander de l'encourager - avec les moyens de votre marque - car c'est un projet original, et qui j'en suis sûr, saura toucher le public - comme il m'a séduit.

Vous en remerciant par avance je vous prie de croire Madame à l'expression de mes sentiments les plus dévoués,
Lucien Clergue



Excerpts of the images shot in May 1998 for the project One World / One Family



JEAN M. BABONNEAU | BIOGRAPHY

photographer | video artist | www.babonneau.com

French-Nordic artist born in 1971, Jean M. Babonneau grew up with two cultures due to the expatriation of his French parents in Germany in the 70's. Back to France to continue his studies, he bifurcated from his scientific studies to enter the Academy of Fine Arts in Nantes (BFA) where he fell in love with the creative potential of photography.

After studying 5 years in Nantes, he was admitted into the French National School of Photography (École Nationale Supérieure de la Photographie) in Arles where he graduated in 1999 (MFA). During his student years in Arles, the young photographer worked in Lucien Clergue's darkroom and made exhibition prints from the original negatives featuring portraits of Pablo Picasso, Jean Cocteau and many nudes by the master, co-founder of the International Photography Festival in Arles (Rencontres de la Photographie).

Upon completing his studies in 1999, his taste for the exploration of foreign cultures led Jean M. Babonneau to Reykjavik in Iceland, where he began his professional career by shooting many portraits of Icelandic and international artists and musicians for over 3 years. He created a photographic book prototype and conceived photographic and video installations. The artist is fascinated by the possibilities of immersive story-telling in a space filled with images and more.

In late 2002, the photographer moved to Copenhagen, Denmark, continuing his nordic journey for 15 more years. Still living in the danish capital city, he both works on art projects (photography & video installations), photography workshops as a guest teacher and on photographic commissions for the cultural press and corporate clients. His works also include occasional art direction (graphics & web) as the dance between texts and images is always a renewed attractive exercise and challenge to his sharp eye, especially when it comes to his passion for designing photo books or music album covers. Since his professional beginnings, Jean M. Babonneau has never ceased cooperating with musicians to take their portraits or to develop stunning visuals supporting their musical creations.

Since 2013, his exploration of Belarus through regular visits to the post-soviet country is amounting nowadays to a serious body of work which is one of his coming projects. Several collaborative and solo projects, visual art books & exhibitions are under construction at this date. Please have a look at the artist's cv.

The artistic works of Jean M. Babonneau willingly mix genres drawing in both the real world and in the imaginary world, with a special taste for scenes staged in mundane places at night, time of sleep and dreams, and transforms them into spaces imbued with an eloquent mystery. His photographs and video installations often try to infuse us some poetry to help us rediscover our common places, through his foreign xenophilic eye filled with an insatiable curiosity. Besides his staged works, documentary photography also composes a part of his portfolio, in telling stories about the nordic cultures. In 2018, the artist has reached a milestone : he has spent half of his life in Northern Europe !

Excerpts from my photographic series *Walls of Emotion* (1997-1998), my previous photographic study on the family album. © photographs of jm babonneau



One World / One Family 1998 - 2018 © photographic projet & installation by jean m. babonneau | www.babonneau.com

