

Tomorrow is another day

Grande commande
pour le photojournalisme

June 29th ...
Sept. 29th 2024
Opening
Saturday
June 29th ...
11.00 am



*musée
Nicéphore
Niépce*

Curated by:
Sylvain Besson,
musée Nicéphore Niépce
Exhibition scenography:
équipe du musée Nicéphore Niépce

The museum would like to thank:
The National Library of France (BNF),
in particular Sylvie Aubenas,
Héloïse Conésá,
Emmanuelle Hascoët
and the Société des Amis
du musée Nicéphore Niépce

Visit the new temporary
exhibitions: Saturday June 29, 2:30pm
Discover the exhibition
with the curator
and the photographers

While France was more or less coming out the other end of the COVID pandemic, two hundred photographers were starting out on an unprecedented adventure as part of the France Relance “Big Photojournalism Commission” under the aegis of the National Library of France. Their only objective was to document the country getting back on its feet after having spent months at a standstill, like the rest of the planet.

Faced with the unbelievable, the unimaginable, the grief, the upheaval in our everyday lives and our sense of certainty, the project involved two hundred proposals, two hundred photo-reportages all over the country between 2021 and 2022, a bit like a “Scan of France”. The enormity of the programme means it is not easy to pinpoint a throughline or to extract any one series for its power of evocation over another. In fact, it is the diversity of the viewpoints presented that gives this commission such power, not to mention the collective nature of an endeavour that gathered together small pieces of France and the lives of the French over a two-year period, without omitting a single territory [in metropolitan France and in the overseas territories], and not forgetting anyone [in as much as it was possible, it covers all ages and all socio-professional categories] even though, with “only” 200 reports, it is impossible to be completely comprehensive.

The genre can be said to be reportage as the photographers were given such a long timeframe, allowing them to go slowly, to really appropriate the subject, to identify and meet with the right people [witnesses, researchers...] to choose their method, to think of a narrative and then to produce a piece that makes sense, informs and asks questions. This “Scan of France” proves photography’s amazing capacity to tell stories, to bear witness, to shine a light and to ask the right questions. Each of the 200 photographers chosen were able to take the time to “take their time” [a year for each one] to build their photographic essay, far from the urgency of the present, and imagine the most effective way to transmit these samples of reality.

The Musée Nicéphore Niépce has chosen to showcase the *Grande commande pour le Photojournalisme* by showing the work of 14 photographers: Ed Alcock, Jean-Michel André, Aurore Bagarry, Sylvie Bonnot, Julie Bourges, Céline Clanet, William Daniels, Hélène David, Pierre Faure, Marine Lanier, Olivier Monge, Sandra Reinflet, Sarah Ritter, Bertrand Stofleth. While the Musée Nicéphore Niépce often leans toward a more exhaustive approach, collecting, studying, and showing photography in all its forms, from the invention of the process to the present day, these fourteen offerings illustrate fourteen singular approaches, echoing the museum's examination of photography as a medium while at the same time dealing with current issues, those of a post-COVID world. In this show, the museum gave the photographers the opportunity to go beyond their first choices, and to revisit the broader body of work they produced during the year. These new submissions provide us with a reappraisal of the work they did for the commission project.

The pandemic brought to the surface and exacerbated issues that were previously latent. Pierre Faure explored worsening inequalities and the already disastrous situation of too many territories with his modest, low-key shots using traditional methods while Aurore Bagarry collected stories from elderly people, fading memories whose trace she managed to preserve through the portraits and landscapes they posed for. The ubiquity of digital in our everyday lives became evident during the pandemic.

It really broke out, bringing with it the inevitable Data Centres, huge secure "server farms" through which all of our data passes. Olivier Monge was given access and managed to reveal their lurid yet disembodied feel.

The pandemic brought home to us the ongoing de-industrialization of France in a number of sectors. Jean-Michel André examined the territories where this de-industrialization is most obvious, alternating between lunar landscapes and portraits of miners' descendants, while Sarah Ritter explored the world of work through the National Archives, evoking its history in a poetic manner.

Nature rebooted to an extent during the pandemic and a number of photographers looked at the need to reconnect with the earth, in particular Julie Bourges with her portraits of fisherwomen or Hélène David, with her collection of testimonies and complex scenography cleverly blending her own shots with archive images. Céline Clanet ventured into protected lands, jealously guarded from developers and operators. Activism and photography truly go hand in hand.

On a similar topic, Sandra Reinflet counterpointed activists in Bure, demonstrating against waste disposal with the desperately empty view of the “idyllic” infrastructures, that were the built with the subsidies given to entice locals to accept the waste. The production of nuclear energy is also at the heart of Ed Alcock’s work, examining the landscape and way of life of the people who live around the eighteen nuclear power stations in France.

The pandemic revealed the effects of climate change to the extent that they can no longer be contested. Sylvie Bonnot’s documentary approach probes the complexity of the nature/industry relationship in the framework of forestry and climate change. In the Loire and Gironde regions along the Atlantic coast, Bertrand Stoffleth and William Daniels revealed the effects of climate change head on. Marine Lanier worked with academics and researchers who are striving to counter climate change in the Lautaret garden and are coming up with formal proposal after formal proposal to have their efforts reproduced.

The photographers who worked on the “grande commande” tell us stories, enlighten us, and awaken our consciences, each in their own way. In doing so, they are keeping a record of our post-pandemic society, for posterity.

Sylvain Besson

These photographs were produced as part of the national commission “Radioscopie de la France: regards sur un pays traversé par la crise sanitaire” [A Scan of France: a look inside a country during a health crisis] financed by the French Ministry of Culture and administrated by the BnF.

Read more about the projects and the photographers on the museum’s website or on: Grande commande Photojournalisme [culture.gouv.fr]

1.

Ed Alcock

Zones à risque

[Hotspots]

“Questions get hushed up quickly around here.

Wherever there is a nuclear plant, nuclear doesn't exist. It is hidden behind the cliff, and we don't talk about it anymore.”

Christiane Lamiraud,

62, special ed. teacher.

She lives in the seaside town of Saint-Martin-en-Campagne, just one kilometre from the station, and swims in the Channel every day.

© Ed Alcock – MYOP / Grande commande photojournalisme



1

2.

Jean-Michel André

À bout de souffle

[Out of Breath]

Aerobatics on slag heap 101, known as Lavoir de Drocourt, in Hénin-Beaumont.

Photo taken of Thibaut Jorion, an acrobat from Avion.

© Jean-Michel André / Grande commande photojournalisme



2

3.

Aurore Bagarry

Le voyage immobile

[The immobile journey]

Mas can Majoral, alt. 1100m,
active from 1605 to 1932,
the Parcigoule valley.Prats-de-Mollo-La Preste,
Pyrénées Orientales, France.© Aurore Bagarry / Grande
commande photojournalisme

3

4.

Sylvie Bonnot

L'Arbre-machine

[The Tree-machine]

The deadwood of the underwater
canopy of the Petit Saut
reservoir has been re-colonized
by epiphytes. Only the bromeliaceae
can retain the water needed
to survive despite much more
extreme conditions than in the forest
where they are usually protected
from UV rays.

Saut-Lucifer, Guyana,

12.02.2022

© Sylvie Bonnot, Hangar
Gallery / Grande commande
photojournalisme

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5.

Julie Bourges*Les eaux-fortes*

[High water]

Camille Brigant.

This is Camille at work on the VaFiAn. She has been working on the boat for four years. She studied business at maritime school but after a work experience stint on the fishing boat, she changed her career path. She mainly fishes for spider crabs and scallops when in season.

© Julie Bourges / Grande commande photojournalisme



6.

Céline Clanet*Les îlots farouches*

[The Fierce Isles]

Roche Grande Reserve,
Mercantour National Park.

This protected zone was set up in 2021 and stretches over 500 hectares. It features a vast collection of fields on chalk, cliffs and screes as well as forest habitats. In the interests of observing the land's natural evolution, all human presence and activity is banned.

© Céline Clanet / Grande commande photojournalisme

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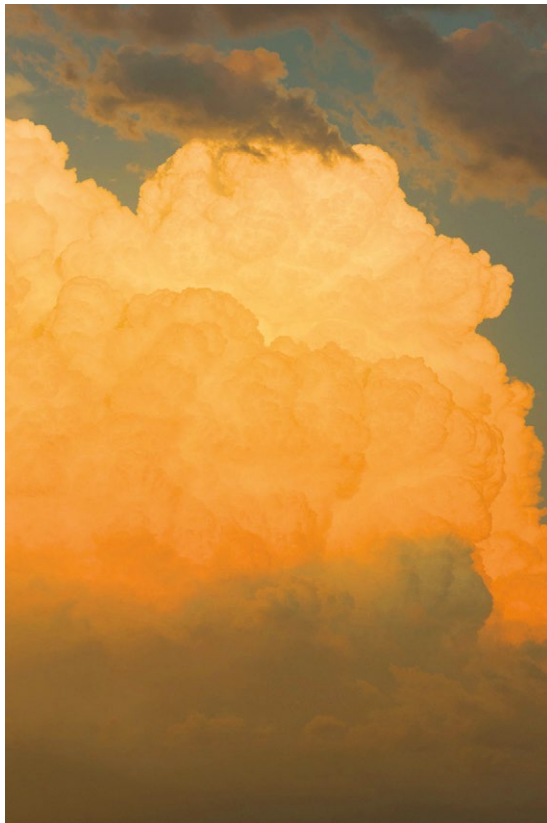
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7.
William Daniels
Un climat français
[A French climate]
Soulac-sur-Mer,
one of the towns most affected
by the rise in sea level.
© William Daniels / Grande
commande photojournalisme

8.
Hélène David
*"Météore" [secrètes
connivences avec le sol]*
[Natives, secret connections
with the ground]
© Hélène David / Grande
commande photojournalisme



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8

9.
 Pierre Faure
France périphérique
 [The edges of France]
 Businesses and services
 in the French countryside
 started to close in the eighties
 and the trend is ongoing.
 The closed shopfronts attest
 to previous business activity
 that is, at times, completely
 absent from communities today.
 More recently, the trend
 has moved to medium-sized
 and even larger towns.
 Creuse,
 2022

© Pierre Faure / Grande
 commande photojournalisme

10.
 Marine Lanier
Col du Lautaret – été,
 [Lautaret Pass – Summer]
 from the series
 “Hannibal’s Garden”,
 2023

© Marine Lanier / Grande
 commande photojournalisme



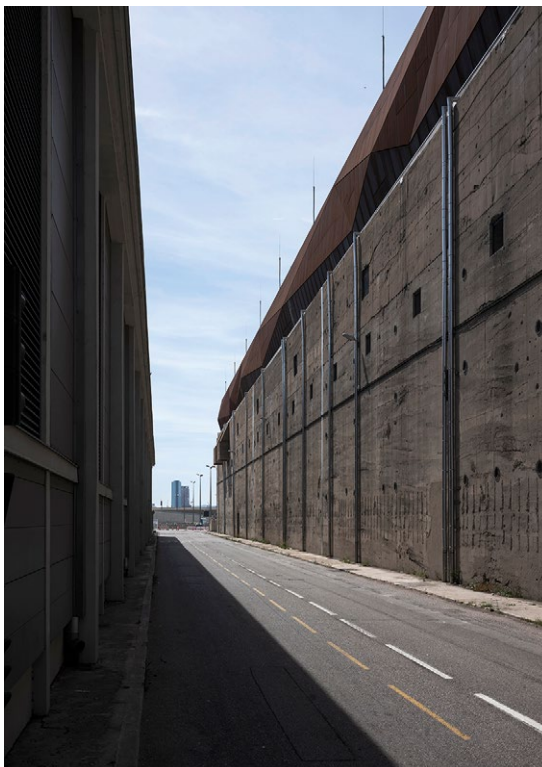
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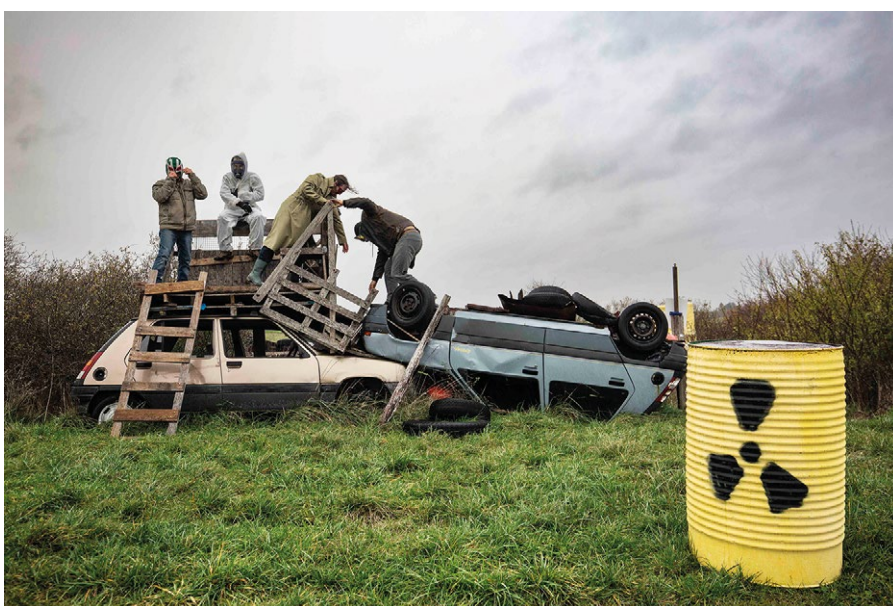
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11.
Olivier Monge
Data Center Interxion à Marseille
[Interxion Data Centre] in Marseille
The building is an old German
bunker for submarines.
© Olivier Monge – MYOP / Grande
commande photojournalisme

12.
Sandra Reinflet
Le prix du silence
Barricades à la gare
[The Price of Silence.
Barricades at the Station]
The old train station in Luméville
is part of what's left of the railway
line that Andra wants to reopen
to transport nuclear waste
to Bure. However, the activists
who are occupying and defending
the land own it, and they form
a legal and physical barricade
against the landfill project.
Ever since Andra obtained
its Public Service Status,
it should be able to requisition
the land it wants, and as such,
expropriate the land... The heart
of the conflict may play out here.
© Sandra Reinflet / Grande
commande photojournalisme



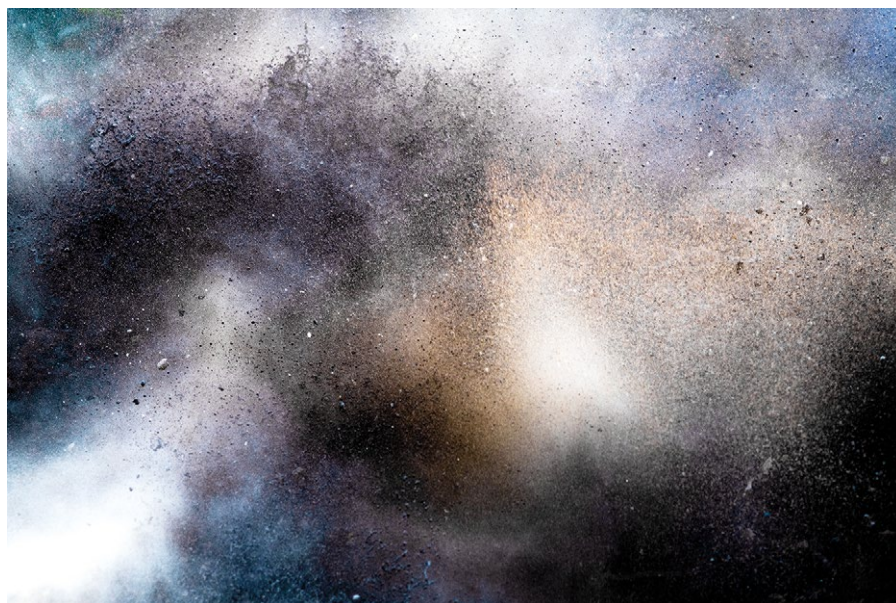
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13.
Sarah Ritter
*De l'extraction :
un portrait français
Ors*
[Extraction: a French Portrait]
French Guyana,
2022-2023

© Sarah Ritter / Grande
commande photojournalisme
In addition to the "Radioscopie
de la France" commission,
this piece received support
from the Hauts-de-France
Photography Institute,
in the form of a research
grant for the production
of a show, as well as
a production grant
from the Artists' Foundation.



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14.
Bertrand Stofleth
Atlantides
[Atlantides] Horizon beach,
Lège-Cap-Ferret,
2022

Atlantic wall bunkers,
built in 1943, falling over
and partially submerged
on Horizon beach,
in the Gironde region,
showing how far the coast
has receded.

© Bertrand Stofleth / Grande
commande photojournalisme



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Open

every day
except Tuesdays and holidays
9.30 ... 11.45 am
and 2.00 ... 5.45 pm
10.00 am ... 1 pm
and 2.00 ... 6 pm [july/august]

Free entrance

We would like to thank:
Friends of the Nicéphore Niépce museum,
– Our patrons
Maison Veuve Ambal
L'office Notarial Camuset
et Gacon-Cartier
Canson

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