

ELSA&JOHANNA

The Timeless Story of Moormerland
The Blurring Days

EXHIBITION
from october 19 to december 2, 2023

OPENING
Thursday, October 19th from 6 to 9pm



Elsa&Johanna, *The Sound of The Belltower* «The Timeless Story of Moormerland», film photography, inkjet printing on baryta paper, 58 x 80 cm, Ed. 5 + 2ap, 2021
Acquired by the Städtische Galerie, Karlsruhe, 2021.

PhotoSaintGermain



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COMITÉ PROFESSIONNEL
DES GALERIES D'ART

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Elsa&Johanna, *Vertigo*, «The Timeless Story of Moormerland», film photography, inkjet printing on baryta paper, 58 x 80 cm, Ed. 5 + 2ap, 2021
Acquired by the Städtische Galerie, Karlsruhe, 2021.



Elsa&Johanna, *Fire* «The Timeless Story of Moormerland», film photography, inkjet printing on baryta paper, 73 x 100 cm, Ed. 5 + 2ap, 2021

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The Timeless Story Of Moormerland
The Blurring Days

from october 19 to december 2, 2023

Galerie La Forest Divonne is delighted to present a new chapter in Elsa & Johanna's photography series «The Timeless Story of Moormerland» entitled «The Blurring Days» from October 19 to December 2, 2023 in Paris.

This will be an opportunity for the public to discover this series in the gallery, following the major retrospective devoted to them by Karlsruhe's Städtische Galerie in 2021 and the success of their solo show at the MEP Studio last year.

Realized in Germany in May 2021, in a context still constrained by the health situation, Elsa&Johanna conceived the series «The Timeless Story of Moormerland» as a family album, mixing indoor portraits, spontaneous photographs, landscapes or still lifes that give birth to multiple visual narratives.

Over a four-week period, the two artists travelled to twenty different regions of Germany. *Moormerland*, a small German town close to the Dutch border, particularly captivated them.

These images of waiting places and solitude in seemingly characterless surroundings stimulate our imagination and trigger our emotions at first glance.

This time around, the photographic duo use **film and natural light**, resulting in striking, **highly**



Elsa&Johanna, *The Mirror Across The Street*, «The Timeless Story of Moormerland», film photography, inkjet printing on baryta paper, 58 x 80 cm, Ed. 5 + 2ap, 2021



Elsa&Johanna, *The Dear, the Plane and the Bouquet*, «The Timeless Story of Moormerland», film photography, inkjet printing on baryta paper, 58 x 80 cm, Ed. 5 + 2ap, 2021

saturated color renditions. The unexpected viewpoints and fine color tones are reminiscent of the work of William Eggleston, a photographer who has greatly inspired the young artists.

«In our practice, we aim to offer a human and sensitive experience. An experience that calls the viewer to confront his or her own system of projection, his or her own relationship with the Other, and the mechanisms of individual and collective memory. From this perspective, our commitment is to create sensitive, authentic stories and characters, and to play our photographic performances as honestly as possible. There isn't a character we've imagined or created for whom we don't have empathy.» (excerpt from EllesxParisPhoto interview, 2021)

Elsa&Johanna put themselves in the shoes of characters who could be real, whose habits, social background, family history and even first names they imagine in order to embody them as realistically as possible. **They affirm their talent for storytelling, autofiction and staging. Fragmented narratives, photographs that penetrate the intimacy of the protagonists, showing them in their everyday lives.**

Elsa&Johanna's third solo show at Galerie La Forest Divonne Paris comes at a busy time for them: **prizewinners for the creation of two artistic posters for the 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games**, currently on display on Quai de la Mégisserie in Paris's 1st arrondissement; **prizewinners in the *Capsule 2023 Residency at Champ des impossibles***, in the Perche region, under the direction of Christine Ollier; selected for the **Grand Paris Express «Tandem» program** to create a perennial work in one of the future metro stations in collaboration with architect Thomas Richez, under the direction of José-Manuel Gonçalves.

2. BIOGRAPHY

Johanna Benainous (1991) and Elsa Parra (1990) have formed a duo of visual artists, photographers and filmmakers since 2014. They met at the School of Visual Art in New York and received the jury's congratulations from the Beaux-Arts de Paris (ENSBA) in 2015.

«Working at the crossroads of photography, performance and video, since meeting they have been creating visual narratives in which they are the interpreters. The use of autofiction, at the heart of Elsa & Johanna's work, enables them to portray characters freed from their own identity, questioning in the process the contemporary individual, notions of self-representation and anonymity.» Simon Baker, director of the MEP.

Their work has been exhibited at the Salon de Montrouge (2016), the MAC/VAL, Paris Photo and the Festival d'Hyères (2019). In 2020, they were finalists for the Prix Découverte Louis Roederer des Rencontres d'Arles, and entered the Société Générale Contemporary Art Collection. The same year, they were selected by Gaël Charbau for the «Un regard sur la scène française» exhibition at Art Paris, where they created an immersive installation on the Galerie La Forest Divonne stand. They then carry out a carte blanche commission for the Palais de la Découverte, which gives rise to the «Palace Odyssee» series, and are part of the «Staging Identity» exhibition at the Mathildenhöhe Institut in Darmstadt alongside Pipilotti Rist and Cindy Shermann.

In 2021, the artists hold their first retrospective exhibition entitled «The plural life of identity» at the Städtische Galerie in Karlsruhe, Germany. In 2022, Elsa & Johanna open the Saison at the MEP Studio in Paris with an exhibition devoted to their latest project, «The Timeless Story of Moormerland», produced in Germany.

Their photographs are included in the collections of CNAP, Fonds d'art contemporain - Paris Collections, Städtische Galerie Karlsruhe and Société Générale, among others.



Elsa&Johanna, *The Umbrella* «The Timeless Story of Moormerland», film photography, inkjet printing on baryta paper, 40 x 54,5 cm, Ed. 5 + 2ap, 2021

3. RESUME

Johanna Benainous was born in Paris in 1991 and
Elsa Parra was born in Bayonne in 1990.
They live and work in Paris.



PERSONAL EXHIBITIONS

- 2023** *The Timeless Story Of Moormerland*, Galerie La Forest Divonne - Paris (October 2023)
Palace Odyssée, by invitation of RATP and Palais de la Découverte, Champs-Élysées Clémenceau metro station, Paris
A Couple Of Them, at the invitation of Fonds d'art contemporain - Paris Collections open-air exhibition on the Pont Saint Ange, Paris
- 2022** *Ce que vaut une femme : les douze heures du jour et de la nuit*, Maison Auguste Comte, Paris, France
The timeless story of Moormerland, Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Paris, France
The Plural Life of Identity, Städtische Galerie, Karlsruhe, Germany
- 2021** *Palace Odyssée*, Etincelles du Palais de la découverte, Paris, France
The Plural life of identity, Städtische Galerie, Karlsruhe, Germany
Palace Odyssée, Galerie La Forest Divonne, Paris, France
PARIS PHOTO, Grand Palais, Galerie La Forest Divonne, Paris, France
Festival air de fête, invited by FRAC Bretagne, Saint-Briac-sur-Mer, France
A Couple of Them, FMAC Paris, Caserne Baudoyer, Paris, France
- 2020** *Silver Springs*, Galerie La Forest Divonne, Brussels, Belgium
Find the truth, Les Rencontres d'Arles, exhibition with Galerie La Forest Divonne
- 2019** *PARIS PHOTO*, Galerie La Forest Divonne, Grand Palais, Paris, France
Rosarium - C'est le soleil qui finira par nous perdre, curated by Ann Stouvenel, Mains d'Oeuvres, Saint Ouen, France
- 2018** *A Cross Perspective*, Galerie La Forest Divonne, Festival Photo Saint-Germain, Paris, France
- 2017** *Le Reflet de la cuillère*, Espace des femmes, Festival Photo Saint-Germain, Paris, France
Los Ojos Vendados, Etro, Saint-Germain, Paris, France
- 2015** *A Couple of Them*, Beaux-arts de Paris, France

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2023** Art Brussels, La Forest Divonne Gallery, Brussels, Belgium
Expo Chicago, La Forest Divonne Gallery, Chicago, USA
- 2021** *Per Se*, Galerie La Forest Divonne, Paris, France
Art Paris Art Fair, Galerie La Forest Divonne, Grand Palais éphémère, Paris, France
Find the truth, Jimei X Arles, Jimei Photo Festival, Jimei, China

- 2020** *Art Paris Art Fair*, in the section «Un regard sur la scène française», curated by Gaël Charbau, Galerie La Forest Divonne, Grand Palais, Paris, France
Staging Identity, Institut Mathildenhöhe, Darmstad, Germany
- 2019** *Some of us*, curated by Jérôme Cotinet-Alphaize, Carlshütte, Büdelsdorf, Germany
Festival International de Journalisme, Couthures-sur-Garonne, France
34ème Festival International de Photographie de Hyères, Villa Noailles, France
Qu'est-ce que tu regardes ?, Espace Beaurepaire, Paris, France
Art Paris Art Fair, Galerie La Forest Divonne, Grand Palais, Paris, France
Lignes de vies, une exposition de légendes, curated by Franck Lamy, Museum of Contemporary Art of Val-de-Marne (MAC / VAL), Vitry-sur-Seine, France
100% L'Expo - Sorties d'écoles, Grande Halle de la Villette, Paris, France
POSTURES - La figure seule, Galerie La Forest Divonne, Brussels, Belgium
- 2018** *FIAC 2018 - FMAC's booth*, Grand Palais, Paris, France
30 ans - Anniversaire de la Galerie La Forest Divonne, Galerie La Forest Divonne, Paris, France
Prix Picto de la mode, Palais Galliera, Paris, France
Les Apparences, La Graineterie, Houilles, France
L'homme qui marchait dans la couleur, Galerie du Crous, Paris, France
La figure seule, Château de Poncé, Poncé, France
Millennials au féminin, Galerie Havas, Puteaux, France
Le redoublement, Artinkk, Brussels, Belgium
Profils, Pavillon Blanc, Henri Molina Art Center, Colomiers, France
- 2017** *Kaléidoscope*, curated by Jean de Malherbe, Galerie La Forest Divonne, Brussels, Belgium
Morceaux choisis, curated by Jean de Malherbe, Galerie La Forest Divonne, Brussels, Belgium
La Galerie du Club des AD, Arles, France
Jeune création 67, Paris, France
Ubique, les vacances immobiles, Glassbox, Paris, France
Proyecta, Imaginando otros posibles, curated by Sandra Maunac, Madrid, Espagne
Le quatrième sexe, curated by Marie Maertens, Espace Coeur, Paris, France
Festival Circulation(s) #7, le Centquatre, Paris, France
- 2016** *Une inconnue d'avance*, curated by Gaël Charbau, Villa Emerige, Paris, France
Felicità, curated by Alexia Fabre, Palais des beaux-arts, Paris, France
Dress codes, curated by Alexandra Dhainaut, Mains d'Œuvre, Saint-Ouen, France
Parcours Saint-Germain, Le Mont St Michel, Paris, France
Vertige en terrain plat, curated by « Mathilde s'expose », Fondation Brownstone, Paris, France
Salon de Montrouge #61, curated by Ami Barrack, Beffroi de Montrouge, France

RESIDENCES

- 2023** Les Champs des Impossibles, 'Résidence Capsule 2023', Perche, France
- 2018-2019** Mains d'Œuvres Art Center, Saint-Ouen, Paris, France

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE COLLECTIONS

CNAP - Centre National d'Art Plastiques
 Palais de la Découverte
 Crédit Agricole Art Collection
 Société Générale Contemporary Art Collection
 FMAC (Municipal fund of contemporary art of the City of Paris), France
 Palais Galliera (Fashion Museum of the City of Paris), France
 Departmental collection of contemporary art of Seine Saint-Denis, France

AWARDS

2023 Winners of the Grand Paris Express «Tandem» program for the creation of a permanent work in one of the future metro stations, in collaboration with architect Thomas Richez, under the direction of José-Manuel Gonçalves.

Winners for the creation of two artistic posters for the Olympic and Paralympic Games 2024

2021 Nominated for Prix Balzac 2021 (Prize of the Friends of Balzac)

2020 Nominated for the Roederer Prize, Rencontres d'Arles

2019 Winners of the Public Prize of the 34th International Festival of Hyères

2017 Winners of Prix Picto de la mode 2017

White card «Etro

Selected for the official visuals of the «Festival Photo Saint-Germain

Selected by « La Galerie du club des AD 2017

Invited to the « Festival Circulation(s) 2017

2016 Nominated for the «Emerige Revelations Grant

Nominated for the «61st Salon de Montrouge

Finalists for the «HSBC Prize for Photography

BIBLIOGRAPHY(selection)

2022 Elsa&Johanna, *Ce que vaut une femme : les douze heures du jour et de la nuit*, The Eyes, 2022, 176p
Text by Marie Robert, chief curator at the Musée d'Orsay, in charge of photography

2021 Elsa & Johanna, Fanny Taillandier, La Martinière, collection «Percevoir» under the direction of Simon Baker, preface by Simon Baker, 2021, 128p

Beyond The Shadows, editions H2L2, texts by Gael Charbau, Texts by Salomé Brustein, Eugénie Adda, Baptiste Gourden, Arthur Larrue, 2021, 174p

2017 *Kaléidoscope*, texte d'Arthur Larrue, éditions Galerie La Forest Divonne, 30p

4. PRACTICAL INFORMATIONS

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The Timeless Story Of Moormerland

The Blurring Days

EXHIBITION

from october 19 to december 2, 2023

OPENING

Thursday, October 19, 6 to 9 p.m.

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EVENTS

November 2 until 9pm

Nocturnes du Jeudi des Beaux-Arts

Photo.SaintGermain

PhotoSaintGermain

The Left Bank Photo Trail

November 2 to 25, 2023



Photo Days

A photo & video tour of Parisian galleries and institutions
from November 3 to December 3, 2023



Elsa&Johanna, *The Golden Hour* «The Timeless Story of Moormerland»,
film photography, inkjet printing on baryta paper, Ed. 5 + 2ap, 2021

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