

ELSA & JOHANNA

Sequences

EXHIBITION - PARIS

March 5 - April 11, 2026

OPENING RECEPTION

Thursday, March 5, 2026, 6-9 pm

EVENT

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_g ^u Jeudi des Beaux-Arts Late Opening
Thursday, March 5, 6-8 pm
Meet the artists



Elsa & Johanna, *Kilomètre zéro II*, baryta paper print, 2025, © Elsa & Johanna

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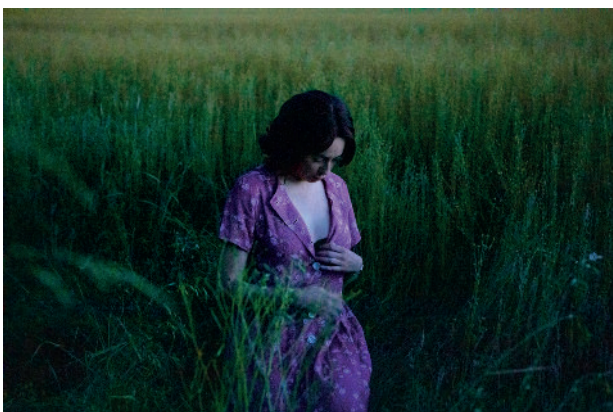
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La Forest Divonne Gallery is delighted to present the new event photographic series by Elsa & Johanna entitled “Sequences”.

This exhibition takes place within a particularly rich moment in the artists’ careers. Following their in-situ installations throughout the city for “*Un été au Havre*” at the invitation of Gaël Charbau, and their major solo exhibition at the Centre Photographique de Marseille last summer, their monumental photographic work will soon be inaugurated at Champigny station as part of the Tandem program of the Grand Paris Express, of which they are laureates.



Elsa & Johanna, *Kilomètre zéro I et Intuition II*, baryta paper print, 2025, © Elsa & Johanna



Elsa & Johanna, *Disparition I et II*, baryta paper print, 2025, © Elsa & Johanna

With *Sequences*, Elsa and Johanna open a new chapter in their photographic practice by making the landscape a full-fledged protagonist. It was during a residency at Moulin Blanchard in the Perche region—more specifically on the outskirts of the Bellême forest—that the talented duo produced this new series, inspired by the lines, contours, and chromatic variations of the landscape. They returned to the site in summer to construct their images, when the light intensifies and colors reach full saturation.

Their working method, which has become their artistic signature, is based on a rigorous and narrative staging in which each image is conceived as a tableau that tells a story: carefully selected settings, a subtle mastery of natural light effects, precise clothing and accessories, and the presence of bodies and postures meticulously composed by Elsa and Johanna, who perform all the characters in their photographic fictions.

Here, the artists fully integrate the landscape into their visual vocabulary, transforming fields, forest edges, and rolling roads into mental, almost cinematic scenes. The Perche territory—agricultural, wooded, and undulating—becomes a pictorial surface on which sequences with pop accents unfold, infused with a sometimes muted and mysterious tension.

According to Elsa & Johanna:

«This interplay between reality and imagination is a delightful balance: opening a door to an imaginary world, immersing oneself in it for hours, then returning to reality and integrating fragments of fiction.»

Color occupies a central place in this series, approached much like a painter working with a palette. It enters into dialogue with the traditions of American and European painting, evoking the silent, laboring figures of Jean-François Millet's *The Gleaners*, the introspective landscapes of Andrew Wyeth, and the suspended atmospheres of Edward Hopper. Cinematic references also feed their inspiration: the hushed strangeness of David Lynch, the formal rigor and palette of Wes Anderson, the tension of Hitchcock's *North by Northwest*, the controlled dramaturgy of Sam Mendes, the contemplative minimalism of Peter Weir, and the grand classical epics of John Huston's narratives.

Situated between painting and cinema, *Sequences* unfolds as a contemporary fresco in which the landscape becomes a mirror of inner states. Elsa and Johanna invent a world that is both familiar and unsettling, where each image seems to herald the next, like successive shots in a film or fragments of a narrative written from one image to another.

This marks the sixth exhibition devoted to Elsa & Johanna by La Forest Divonne Gallery, across its two spaces in Paris and Brussels. The gallery has also presented their work at numerous art fairs, including Expo Chicago, Art Paris, and Paris Photo Art Fair.

La Forest Gallery has represented the work of Elsa & Johanna since 2017.



Elsa & Johanna, *L'enlèvement II*, baryta paper print, 2025, © Elsa & Johanna



Elsa & Johanna, *La récolte*, baryta paper print, 2025, © Elsa & Johanna

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 Arts in New York and received the jury's congratulations from the École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts de Paris (ENSBA) in 2015.

“Working at the intersection of photography, performance, and video, they have, since their meeting, created visual narratives in which they are the performers. The use of autofiction, at the heart of Elsa & Johanna's work, allows them to stage characters freed from their own identities, in turn questioning the contemporary individual and notions of self-representation and anonymity.”

– Simon Baker, Director of the Maison Européenne de la Photographie (MEP)

Their work has been exhibited at the Salon de Montrouge (2016), MAC/VAL, Paris Photo, and the Hyères International Festival of Fashion, Photography and Accessories (2019). In 2020, they were finalists for the Louis Roederer Discovery Award at the Rencontres d'Arles and entered the Société Générale Contemporary Art Collection. That same year, they were selected by Gaël Charbau for the program “Un regard sur la scène française” at Art Paris, where they created an immersive installation at the La Forest Divonne Gallery booth.

They subsequently produced a carte blanche commission for the Palais de la Découverte, which gave rise to the series “Palace Odyssey,” and took part in the exhibition “Staging Identity” at the Mathildenhöhe Institute in Darmstadt, alongside Pipilotti Rist and Cindy Sherman.

In 2021, the artists presented their first retrospective exhibition, “The Plural Life of Identity,” at the Städtische Galerie in Karlsruhe, Germany. In 2022, Elsa & Johanna opened the season at the Studio of the MEP in Paris with an exhibition dedicated to their latest project, “The Timeless Story of Moormerland,” produced in Germany.

Their photographs are included in numerous public and private collections, notably those of the CNAP, Fonds d'art contemporain – Paris Collections, the Städtische Galerie Karlsruhe, and Société Générale.



Elsa & Johanna, *La fin du jour I*, baryta paper print, 2025, © Elsa & Johanna

PERSONAL EXHIBITIONS

- 2025 *Ce que vaut une femme - Les 12 heures du jour et de la nuit*, Centre National de Bretagne, Rennes, France
Un été au Havre, commissariat Gaël Charbau, Le Havre, France
Ce que vaut une femme : Les Douze heures du jour et de la nuit, Château de Haroué, Centre des Monuments Nationaux, France
Beyond the Shadows, Gallery Kana Kawanishi, Tokyo, Japan
- 2024 *Beyond the Shadows*, Institut Français du Japon, Tokyo, Japan
Climbing into Another Skin, Mai Mano House, Budapest, Hungary
Chronicles of the Ordinary, Galerie La Forest Divonne, Bruxelles, Belgium
- 2023 *The Blurring Days, The Timeless Story of Moormerland*, Galerie La Forest Divonne, Paris, France
Beyond the Shadows, T3 TOKYO Festival, Tokyo, Japan
Samples, Moulin Blanchard, Le Champ des Impossibles, Perche-en-Nocé, France
A Couple of Them, Pont Saint-Ange, Paris, France
Palace Odyssée, Métro Champ-Élysée Clémenceau, Paris, France
- 2022 *Les douze heures du jour et de la nuit*, Maison Auguste Comte, Paris, France
The Timeless Story of Moormerland, Studio de la Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Paris, France
- 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
Find the Truth, Paris Photo, Grand Palais, Galerie La Forest Divonne, Paris, France
Festival air de fête, invité par le FRAC Bretagne, Saint-Briac-sur-Mer, France
A Couple of Them, FMAC Paris, murs de la Caserne Baudoyer, Paris, France
- 2020 *Silver Springs*, Galerie La Forest Divonne, Brussels, Belgique
Les Rencontres d'Arles, exposition *Find the truth*, Galerie La Forest Divonne, France
- 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, Paris, France
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

- 2022 *Entres les mondes*, Palecete Santo Estevao Alfama, Lisbon, Portugal
- 2021 *A Couple of Them*, Hyperfestival, Place Baudoyer/Hôtel de Ville, Paris, France
Je te laisse les clefs, H Gallery, Paris, France
Beyond the shadows, Art Paris Art Fair, France
Prix Balzac 2021, Maison de Balzac, Paris, France
Art Paris Art Fair, Galerie La Forest Divonne, Grand Palais éphémère, Paris, France
- 2020 *Per Se*, Festival Photo Saint-Germain + Photo Days, Galerie La Forest Divonne, Paris, France

Find the truth, Jimei X Arles, Jimei Photo Festival, Jimei, China
 Art Paris Art Fair, dans le parcours *Un regard sur la scène française*, under the artistic direction of Gaël Charbau, Galerie La Forest Divonne, Grand Palais, Paris, France
Staging Identity, Institut Mathildenhöhe, Darmstad, Germany
Not So Crazy Girls, curator Naomie Rubins, Espace Futur, Paris, France
Heartland, Art Paris Art Fair, invited by Gaël Charbau, Grand Palais, Paris, France
Ensemble, Galerie La Forest Divonne, Brussels, Belgium

- 2019 *Some of us*, commissariat Jérôme Cotinet-Alphaize, Carlshütte, Büdelsdorf, Germany
 34ème Festival International de Photographie de Hyères, Villa Noailles, France
 Art Paris Art Fair, Galerie La Forest Divonne, Grand Palais, Paris, France
Lignes de vies, une exposition de légendes, commissariat Franck Lamy, Musée d'Art Contemporain du Val-de-Marne (MAC / VAL), Vitry-sur-Seine, France
100% L'Expo - Sorties d'écoles, Grande Halle de la Villette, Paris, France
 Festival International de Journalisme, Couthures-sur-Garonne, France
Qu'est-ce que tu regardes ? Espace Beaurepaire, Paris, France
POSTURE(S), Galerie La Forest Divonne, Brussels, Belgium
- 2018 FIAC 2018 - stand du FMAC, 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, Bruxelles, Belgique
Profils, Pavillon Blanc, Centre d'art Henri Molina, Colomiers, France
- 2017 *Kaléidoscope*, commissariat Jean de Malherbe, Galerie La Forest Divonne, Brussels, Belgium
Morceaux choisis, commissariat 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, commissariat Sandra Maunac, Madrid, Spain
Le quatrième sexe, commissariat Marie Maertens, Espace Coeur, Paris, France
 Festival Circulation(s) #7, le Centquatre, Paris, France
- 2016 *Une inconnue d'avance*, commissariat Gaël Charbau, Villa Emerige, Paris, France
Felicità, commissariat Alexia Fabre, Palais des beaux-arts, Paris, France
Dress codes, commissariat Alexandra Dhainaut, Mains d'Oeuvre, Saint-Ouen, France
 Parcours Saint-Germain, Le Mont St Michel, Paris, France
Vertige en terrain plat, commissariat « Mathilde s'expose », Fondation Brownstone, Paris, France
 Salon de Montrouge #61, commissariat Ami Barrack, Beffroi de Montrouge, France

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE COLLECTIONS

Cnap (Centre national des arts plastiques), Paris, France
 Fonds d'art contemporain – Paris Collections, France
 Modern Art Museum Städtische Gallery, Karlsruhe, Germany
 Collection d'Art Contemporain Crédit Agricole, Paris, France
 Collection d'Art Contemporain Société Générale, Paris, France
 Collection Photographique du Palais Galliera (Musée de la mode de la Ville de Paris), France
 Collection Départementale d'Art Contemporain de la Seine Saint-Denis, France
 Collection Photographique de la Villa Noailles, Hyères, France
 Collection Picto Foundation, Paris, France

Collection Dior Lady Art, Paris, France
Palais de la Découverte, Paris France
FMAC (Fond Municipal d'Art Contemporain de la Ville de Paris), France

AWARDS

- 2023 Laureates of the Artistic Posters for the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games
- 2021 Nominées pour Le Prix Balzac 2021 (Prize of the Friends of Balzac)
Carte Blanche "Lady Dior as seen by"
- 2020 Laureates of the Société Générale x Beaux-Arts de Paris Collection Award
Nominated for the 2020 Louis Roederer Discovery Award, Les Rencontres d'Arles
Carte Blanche granted by the Palais de la Découverte and Gaël Charbau
- 2019 Winners of the Public Prize at the 34th International Festival of Hyères
Winners of the 2019 Voice of a Woman Awards with the short film 'Coup de Bol', NYC
Bronze Cube ADC Award 2020 from The One Club for 'Coup de Bol', NYC
- 2017 Winners of the 2nd Prize of the 2017 Picto Fashion Award
Selected for the 'Etro' Carte Blanche
Selected for the official visuals of the 'Festival Photo Saint-Germain'
Selected by the 'Galerie du Club des AD 2017'
Invited to the 'Circulation(s) Festival 2017
- 2016 Nominated for the Emerige Revelations Grant
Nominated for the 61st Salon de Montrouge
Finalists for the HSBC Photography Award

RESIDENCIES

- 2023 Capsule Residency, Le Champ des Impossibles, Perch-en-Nocé, France
2018-2019 Centre d'art Mains d'Œuvres, Saint-Ouen, Paris, France

INTERVIEWS (selection)

Elle Magazine, par Soline Delos
Saywho par Marie Maertens
Made in Mind Magazine par Flavia Rovetta
Les Inrockuptibles par Ingrid Luquet-Gad
France Culture par Aude Lavigne
L'Officiel par Felix Besson
Fisheye Magazine par Marie Moglia

PRESS (selection)

Elle Magazine, by Soline Delos
Mu in The City, by Gilles Bechet
9 Lives, by Pascal Therme
The Art Newspaper, by Alain Berlan
Libération, by Jérémy Piette
IDEAT, by Béatrice Andrieux
Stylist, by Stéphane Durand
Slash Paris, by Guillaume Benoît

Libération, by Jérémy Piette
LensCulture, by Alexander Strecker
Télérama Sortir, by Frédérique Chapuis
Libération, by Clémentine Mercier
L'Œil de la Photographie, by Jonas Cuénin

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 2022 What a Woman Is Worth - The Twelve Hours of Day and Night, The Eyes Publishing
- 2021 Elsa & Johanna, Fanny Taillandier, La Martinière Publishing, "Percevoir" collection, edited by Simon Baker, foreword by Simon Baker, 2021, 128 pp
Beyond The Shadows, H2L2 Publishing, texts by Gael Charbau, Salomé Brustein, Eugénie Adda, Baptiste Gourden, Arthur Larrue, 2021, 174 pp
- 2017 Kaleidoscope, text by Arthur Larrue, Galerie La Forest Divonne Publishing, 30 pp

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

ELSA & JOHANNA

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EXHIBITION - PARIS

March 5 - April 11, 2026

OPENING RECEPTION

Thursday, March 5, 2026, 6-9 pm

GALERIE LA FOREST DIVONNE - PARIS

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Elsa & Johanna, *L'enlèvement III*, baryta paper print, 2025,
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Elsa & Johanna, *Mirage IV*, baryta paper print, 2025,
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