

# back to The ROOTS

## photo exhibition

■ 11-25 October 2012 ■ Abbaye de Neumünster ■



The Central and Eastern European Film Festival "CinEast" has been organising art exhibitions since its first edition in 2008.

This year, as an extension of the festival's main thematic cycle "Back to the roots", we are proud to present this photography exhibition, which brings together the works of six artists from Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary dealing with the theme of roots and uprooting.

Almost one hundred photographs, on display all around the Abbaye, capture from different perspectives answers to some of most fundamental questions of man: where do I belong, where are my roots? Can we lose them, can we go back to them?

A sentimental journey to the land of childhood (Joanna Chudy), a study of the fusion between the elderly and the immediate universe they inhabit (Michał Zieliński) or a look at the authentic aspects of remote and abandoned places (Wojciech Gepner), much of the work invites the viewers to reflect on the links between the identity of people and the places they come from, or inhabit.

Some of the artists question the oft-cited willingness to return to origins, or to grass roots, in a world increasingly dominated by technology and nomadic lifestyles. For instance, Kasia Stanny's project casts an ironic eye on folklore as custodian of national identity, the photographs of Tomáš Pospěch examine the challenge of "a return to earth and nature", whereas Sarolta Ban's work explores the role of imagination in the origins of our relationship with the world.

Exhibition organised by the CinEast festival and the Association of Polish Art Photographers (OW ZPAF) in cooperation and with support of CCRN "Abbaye de Neumunster" and the Fonds Culturel National.

We would like to thank all the partners and the artists who made this exhibition possible!

Jagna Olejnikowska (curator)  
Radek Lipka (coordinator)

Le Festival du Film d'Europe Centrale et Orientale « CinEast » organise des expositions d'art depuis sa première édition en 2008.

Cette année dans le prolongement du principal cycle thématique du festival « Retour aux racines » nous sommes fiers de présenter cette exposition de photographies réunissant les œuvres de six artistes polonais, tchèques et hongrois et abordant le thème des racines et du déracinement.

Près d'une centaine d'œuvres exposées un peu partout dans l'Abbaye, capturent à partir de perspectives différentes des réponses à quelques unes des plus fondamentales questions que l'on peut se poser : où est ma place? où sont mes racines ? pouvons-nous les perdre ? pouvons-nous les retrouver?

Que ce soit un voyage sentimental vers la terre de l'enfance (Joanna Chudy), une étude sur la fusion entre des personnes âgées et l'univers proche qu'elles habitent (Michał Zieliński) ou encore un regard sur des endroits périphériques et abandonnées, dans ce qu'ils ont d'authentique (Wojciech Gepner), beaucoup des œuvres réunies invitent le spectateur à réfléchir sur les liens inextricables entre identité des personnes et lieux qu'elles habitent ou dont elles proviennent.

Certains des artistes interrogent la volonté souvent affichée de retour aux sources, aux racines dans un monde dominé de plus en plus par la technologie et des modes de vie nomades. Ainsi le cycle de Kasia Stanny constitue une interrogation ironique du folklore comme dépositaire de l'identité nationale, les photographies de Tomáš Pospěch abordent la problématique d'un « retour à la terre et à la nature », enfin les travaux de Sarolta Ban explorent l'importance de l'imaginaire dans les sources de notre rapport au monde.

Exposition organisée par le festival CinEast et l'Association Polonaise des Artistes Photographes (OW ZPAF) en collaboration et avec le soutien du CCRN et du Fonds Culturel National.

Nous remercions tous les partenaires et les artistes qui ont rendu possible la réalisation de cette exposition!

Jagna Olejnikowska (commissaire) Radek Lipka (coordinateur)

Sarolta Bán was born in 1982 in Budapest, Hungary. She started out as a jewellery designer before becoming a photographer. In her works she likes using ordinary elements and by combining them, and often by contrast she tells captivating stories and a surreal atmosphere.

Her pictures are both interpretations of the surrounding reality –inner world – and allegories of thoughts. They are visual poems which are open to the personal interpretation of each viewer.

The photographs selected for the exhibition show mostly trees and roots of trees in a variety of aspects. Sometimes roots become a kind of anchor, sometimes they are the medium between the energy of underworld and the external reality, in other photos trees appear as the symbol of the link between man and nature and conversely cut or uprooted trees become a metaphor for his detachment from nature and from his nature.

Not all of her pictures include real human presence, but all include human feelings and stories and in a sense they are more mirrors than figurative pictures.





Original prints can be purchased on [www.saroltaban.com](http://www.saroltaban.com)

Joanna Chudy is a graduate of the Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków and the Photography Department at the National Film School in Łódź where she received a degree in creative photography. In 2009 she began a postgraduate course in photography at the Department of Graphic Art of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw. She has held many individual photo exhibitions and participated in a number of group exhibitions in Poland and abroad.

Silesian Ulysses is a photographic record of roaming the streets of contemporary Upper Silesia, mainly the slowly disappearing miners' housing estates. According to the author, Silesia – with its wealth, variety and contrasts – holds images similar to those seen by James Joyce's hero wandering around Dublin. The way in which Ulysses was written has provided her with structure and inspiration to photograph Silesia. Her aim was to reduce the photographic images to ordinary everyday life, which goes on from morning until night and constitutes human existence in miniature. She moves away from the conventional depictions of Silesia and goes beyond the boundaries of documentary photography. She tells her Silesian story using simple, everyday images contrasting with the impressionist form of photography.

In the selected photographs the author invites us on a journey back to childhood and to deeply rooted reminiscences. It can also be read as a sentimental journey by the author to the land of her childhood, but this journey also represents a universal pondering of the issues of memory and belonging.





Wojciech Gerner was born in 1966. He is an artist-photographer, a reportage-maker and also a creative photographer. He experiments with various techniques: from camera obscura to digital camera, from traditional photography to advanced computer graphic design.

Since 2005 he has been a member of the Association of Polish Art Photographers. The winner of numerous photographic contests, his output contains publications in Polish and foreign press, as well as in photographic handbooks and albums.

Ambiance in photographs is his biggest interest. He believes that in order to capture the right moment, it is worth sacrificing everything else: the frame, the colour, the focus... He particularly likes to photograph those discarded places, dead ends of big cities and the peripheries, where – he believes – one can distance oneself from that smooth, fabricated and increasingly plastic reality.

However, he also focuses on dog-eared Communist-era spaces which form part of the history of those brought up in such surroundings (the majority of Poles)

With a tender eye he documents the specific atmosphere of old relicts of the former age.

The photo project "GRACELAND" is an open project that keeps on growing as the author travels across Poland; GRACELAND is simply a "land full of grace". And it is not about that shallow beauty, nor is it about cheap glamour. Instead, it is about pure and true (while sometimes naive and sometimes rough) grace. The charm of the places captured in the photographs lies in their authentic uniqueness that comes from an act of man, regardless of whether or not it is deliberate. Many of the photographs document the process of decorating reality "on its own". What counts is that those who are behind it have tried to improve the world or even fix it. This project is dedicated to those "fixers" of the world.







Tomas Pospěch was born in 1974. He is an art historian, photographer, artist, free-lance curator, and teacher at the Institute of Creative Photography, Silesian University, Opava. He lives in Prague and Hranice. His main professional interests are photography and the fine arts of central Europe. He is the author of more than twenty books, including monographs on Vladimír Birgus and Jindřich Štreit as well as on contemporary Slovak documentary photography, and the volume Czech and Slovak Photography of the 1980s and 1990s, which accompanied an exhibition of the same name. Among the exhibitions he has organised is a retrospective of the work of Jindřich Štreit. His articles appear regularly in many Czech art photography magazines. In his recent projects, Castle Owners, Landscapes and Aimless Walk, he has taken a more conceptual approach. He is the winner of the 2006 “sittcomm” award.

Photographs selected for the exhibition originate from two projects Border and Islands. Both of them depict a return to the soil. Back to direct contact with the culture, care and respect for the earth through agriculture. Joys and sorrows of a questionable “coming back to the earth”.





Kasia Stanny, assistant professor in the Department of Photography at the Faculty of Art, Media and Stage Design Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw. Lecturer at Warsaw Film School. Graduated from the Faculty of Fine Arts in Warsaw and the Institute of History of the University of Warsaw.

Implemented projects for the Department of Education, Museum of the History of Polish Jews in the Warsaw Academy of Music, and many others. She presented her works at twenty solo exhibitions and more than sixty group exhibitions in Poland, France and Germany. Winner of many awards and honours.

"Monidła and other stuff" is a series of photographs referring to folk art as a treasury of national identity. It shows the fading beauty of folk festivals and colourful church fairs where the opportunity to see regional dress and pure Polish tradition become more and more rare.

These series were realised over a number of years in small villages and towns, which are often famous with only one day in the year when they turn into colourful landscapes and unique celebration.

Among these photographs there are ones taken during Palm Sunday in the village Łyse in Kurpie, the feast of Corpus Christi in Łowicz and the traditional wedding ceremony in Kadzidło.

The extraordinary artistic form of saturated range of colours was inspired by the vividness of the costumes of the region and was stylised to remind of popular in the 50s of the twentieth century – coloured sacred images painted on glass and pre-war postcards – photographs from the series "Polish type" depicting rituals and customs.





Michał Zieliński was born in 1988. Artistically and spiritually connected to north-eastern Poland. His first projects were carried out in the Suwałki Region. He drew inspiration from his contact with Pacamera Club members. In 2010 he graduated from University of Arts in Poznań with a BA degree. His work won the National Contest of Arts Schools Diplomas.

„my place is already there”

This project depicting residents of Suwałki area in their homes, consists of double portraits: images of a man next to his portrait. These portraits are developed on the walls of their own houses. Putting photos on the wall not only perpetuates the image of a man at the time, but also literally attempts to merge the subjects with their environment.

Leaving a material trace in the place in which the depicted people live creates a tangible evidence of their presence and emphasises how rooted they are in their homes. These roots put down by people who have spent all or most of their lives in one single place seem to have a more profound, metaphorical dimension.



