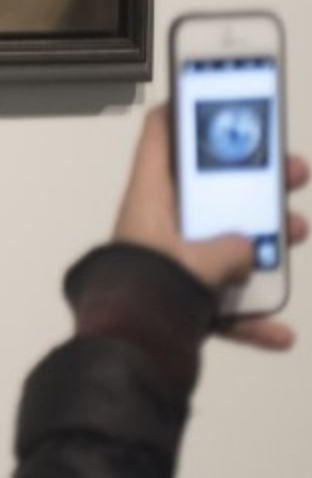
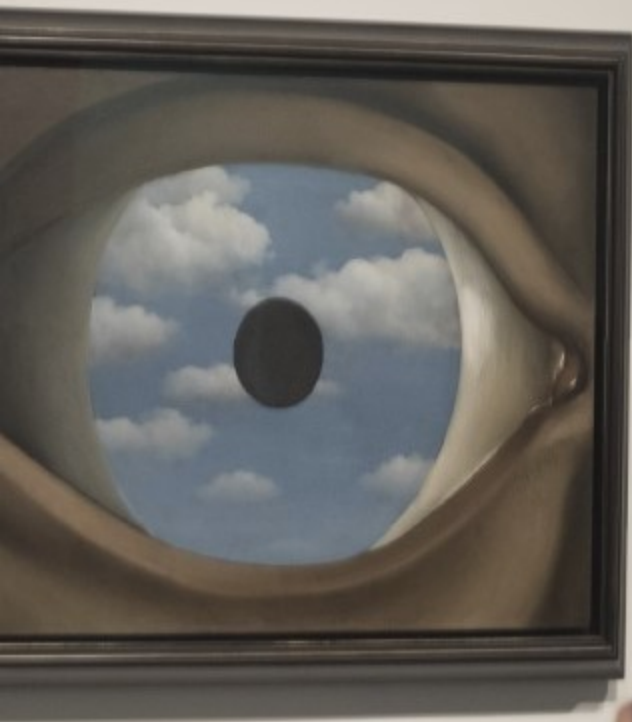


WHEREABOUTS

MARC STECULORUM



Another photographer that I discovered in my student days was Luigi Ghirri. I stumbled upon his book *Kodachrome* in a store that hardly ever presented art or photo books. How it had arrived on these shelves was nothing short of a miracle. Thirty years later, at Paris Photo, I saw a copy of *Kodachrome* being presented as a collector's item and priced accordingly.

What I found striking in Ghirri's work was that his photos (mostly situated in the Italian Emilia-Romagna province) looked so natural, without drama or bombast. His color photographs of people and landscapes had a deadpan wit and a certain lightness - they felt unmanipulated and real. Through these seemingly simple images, Ghirri explored complex themes of time, vision, memory, and sense of place. Later I read Ghirri's essays wherein he expressed his ideas about photography as a visual language and showed his admiration for certain photographers.

By then I had figured out that the photographers I valued most all had something in common. They worked in a 'documentary style', but used it in a free and rather subjective way. They showed reality with precision and clarity, yet also transcended it.

Take this photograph of the three young farmers on the cover of August Sander's book. Try to imagine how it was made. A chance encounter, an ordinary moment in time, but by the genius of the man with the camera (and through the genius of photography), the resulting image became a miracle of elegance and restraint.



French film director Robert Bresson was another influence. First of course through his films, but also through his book *Notes sur le Cinématographe*, published in 1975.

His approach to cinema was characterised by economy and precision, devoid of rhetoric and sentimentality. While most films try to arouse emotions at all cost, Bresson's art provokes reflection. As Susan Sontag wrote in her essay on Bresson, 'his work appeals to the feelings through the route of the intelligence'.

Bresson was a representative of the 'cinéma d'auteur', a type of filmmaking where the director has complete control over the final product, from scriptwriting, to shooting, and editing.

I want to express some of my ideas about a similar kind of photography. One that shows the vision of one person, uncensored, and unhindered by any commercial or editorial restraints. The aim is to find beauty and meaning in the everyday world, while breaking through the presumptions of habitual seeing.

Recognizing the merit of modest places and moments instead of glamourizing the unattainable and the plastic. Showing what is important, what really matters - things of value.



I know one thing: To make something hot, it must be done coolly.

Robert Adams was right when he wrote that your own work is never enough. You have to be interested in the history of your medium and in the work of your contemporaries. What better way to put this into practice than to open your own gallery, and that is exactly what Inge and I did in 1985.

In those years, the Belgian photography scene was a sort of wasteland. The Antwerp Fotomuseum had no proper location, but was temporarily housed in an anonymous office building on the outskirts of the city. There the collection was stored, inaccessible to the public.

Hardly any places showed photos, except for the cafes and hallways of cultural centres, where photographs filled the otherwise empty walls. At the same time in other countries - mainly in the USA, France, and Germany - the appreciation of photography as an art form was rapidly growing.

In this barren climate we started Portfolio Galerie (later DB-S Galerie). Our main ambition was to show photography in a way that had not been done in Belgium before. Our budget was limited, but we were able to rent the ideal space in the centre of Antwerp.

We planned to do our presentations without the clutter of a coffee corner, a bookshop, or postcard stand. Anything that could distract the viewer's attention away from the photos was omitted. Maybe it was a bit elitist, but we really wanted to make a firm statement.



Walker Evans exhibition, Portfolio Galerie, Antwerp, 1988



There is a Eugène Atget photo of a crowd in a Paris park staring at a solar eclipse. Maybe I had that image in mind when I made this photograph of people watching the first ship enter the new Berendrecht-lock in the port of Antwerp.

It is good to know the history of your medium. It provides references and gives you an awareness of the fact that your work did not originate out of nothing, but is part of a continuum - call it a tradition.





CONSULTATIONS

LUNDI	11 - 13	,	17 - 19
MARDI	11 - 13	,	17 - 19
MERCUR			17 - 19
JEUDI			17 - 19
VEN			17 - 19
SAM	11 - 13		

