

Telematic Art

Art Cafe f/2

OPEN YOUR EYES OUVRE TES YEUX APRI GLI OCCHI ABRA TUS OJOS

Art Cafe Rhizomatic Exhibitions with Emmanuel Smague and g_art

Original Art Cafe Interviews and Artists Statements with Curator Doris Stricher

Emmanuel Smague

Tell me about yourself. Where you are from, background...

I am 40 years old, I live in Lannion, in Brittany (France). I am a music teacher and every school holiday, I am free to indulge my passion for photography.

How did photography begin for you? How long have you been shooting?

My photo work falls into three periods. From 1987 to 1992 i traveled to Turkey and took colour and black and white shots (Nikon FA and F3 bodies, 35/55/105 and 180mm lenses).

From 1992 to 2005 i continued to travel, but without a camera. For me, traveling is only a pretext to discover and meet people, it is no longer my priority as it was during this earlier period. Since 2005 i purchased a Leica M7 equipped with a 35mm lens. It's during the summer of 2005, onboard the Trans Siberian, that I returned to photography and started to work exclusively in black and white. A trip that for me was very important, as it was the first time I was traveling with the idea of working on a photogra-

phic subject – the Trans Siberian. Since then, the selection of my travel destinations is directly linked to a subject. However, for me, photography remains a pretext and not a goal, a pretext as I said to discover and meet people.

What thing or things have inspired or influenced you the most in your photography?

Painting. I do think i look at things as a painter, more than a photographer.

Do you have any formal photography or art training?

Only the user's manual for my camera.

Children and schools play

a role in a number of your photos. Is due to your being a teacher?

There is no connection with the fact that I am a teacher. What I like most with children is their spontaneity. This is what I also find in older people, especially if they have become "big kids" again :)

What has caused you to mainly choose to do you work in Iraqi Kurdistan, Georgia, Central Asia and Mongolia? What's the story behind these locations?

As I said earlier, I choose destinations thinking of photographic subjects. My presence in Iraqi Kurdistan stems from a cultural exchange between Kurdish and Breton musicians. This exchange allowed me to meet an interpreter who opened doors for me and helped me visit refugee camps. Flickr has also allowed me to be warmly welco-

med in a Georgian village and to discover their daily life. Since my trip on the Trans Siberian, I have had a desire to discover former Soviet republics and the countries influenced by this gigantic empire.

Have your projects in these locations been funded by any organizations or are these done mainly on your own?

I work independently from any organization. However, in the future, I would see working for an NGO or a photo agency as an accomplishment. Current distribution of my work is limited to exhibitions and sales through my website. In September-October 2009, my work on Iraqi Kurdistan will be published by Éditions de Juillet.

What projects are you currently working on?

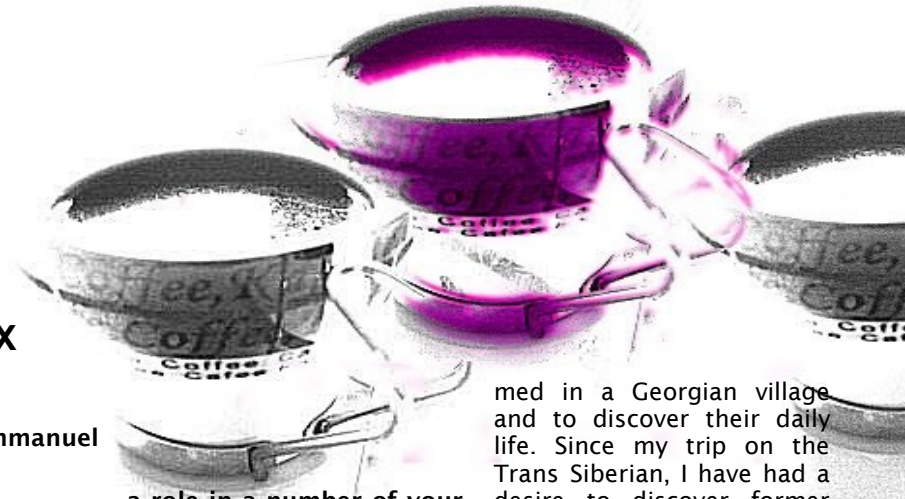
In April 2009, for two weeks, I will move into a village that was not evacuated 45 kms away from the Chernobyl nuclear plant, to produce a body of work that will parallel work done in villages that were evacuated following the tragedy.

How often do you shoot?

I am not one of these people who shoot a lot. For me, pre-visualisation before shooting is very important... Learning how to look at light, how to compose your image... after that, it is just a matter of giving commands to your camera. But you must also keep in mind that anticipation and chance can be on your side.

How would you describe the photos you tend to personally appreciate?

If I had to keep only one



Emmanuel Smague exhibition "Cairo's ragpickers".

photo in this album, it would probably have to be this picture taken in a refugee camp in Northern Iraq. With photography, you can convey an emotion; a photo can tell a whole story just by itself. Whoever looks at it can then tell his or her own story. Photography is also a delightful cocktail of patience and speed. And if the person I am photographing can become my accomplice, then it is for me a moment of pure bliss:

I noticed you use a Leica M7 with Summicron 1:2/35mm ASPH. Is this your main camera? If so how did you settle on this setup?

Yes, this is all I use. I am always trying to be close to my subject and this is the reason why I work with a 35 mm lens. I chose the Leica m7 because it is robust, simple and unobtrusive.

Do you mainly shoot areas close to where you live or do you frequently explore other areas?

Since 2005, I take pictures only when traveling. But starting in May 2009, I will work for most of a year near home, in an extended stay hospital and I will work in parallel on older people still living independently in rural areas.

You've used both color and black and white... What caused the choice of one over the other?

My photographic work is currently focused on black and white. I find it conveys emotions better, as colour, in my humble opinion, is more oriented towards aestheticism.

And for the last question, what photographers have influenced you most and why?

To mention only the main ones : Bresson, Koudelka, Salgado Agoudjian and Sluban. Their outstanding humanist work have always inspired me.

g_art

Where are you from?
Canada.

What kind of studies you did?

My background is in architectural technology and I currently write construction manuals for architects, but I daydream sometimes that I will quit my job and focus on my art full time. I have always enjoyed drawing and I wanted to be a commercial artist in my youth. I was always interested in the arts, and studied music, commercial art, graphic art and photography through my high school years.

Why have you chosen the photographic Art?

I tend to work long hours at the office, so I only get small windows of opportunity to work on my art. Digital art allows me to create my artwork in a shorter period of time, and it has the added benefit of no clean up after.

Do you use Photoshop or other?

I mainly use Photoshop to create my digital artwork, but I also like to use Inkscape. Inkscape is a vector type graphics editor, versus the raster (bitmap) type graphics editor such as Photoshop. Inkscape offers a dif-

ferent range of digital possibilities than Photoshop for graphics type artwork. I like to integrate my Inkscape artwork with my Photoshop art. I am self-taught, and still learning the use of Photoshop and Inkscape, and am still exploring the seemingly endless possibilities of both programs.

Do you have plans, exhibitions plans?

I have no plans to exhibit my work at this time. I am passionate about my artwork, but currently it seems more like my hobby, so I don't really think of it in those terms. But who knows, it might be something I pursue down the road as I refine my art and digital drawing skills.

Why are you on flickr?

I sometimes have problems with insomnia, so started web surfing in the middle of the night, and came across Flickr by accident while on the internet. I saw some of the photography and artwork and I was immediately hooked. Since discovering Flickr, it has become my alter ego and an outlet to express my artistic side.

What are your favs photographers/Artists?

There are many wonderful and talented artists on Flickr that I admire, appre-

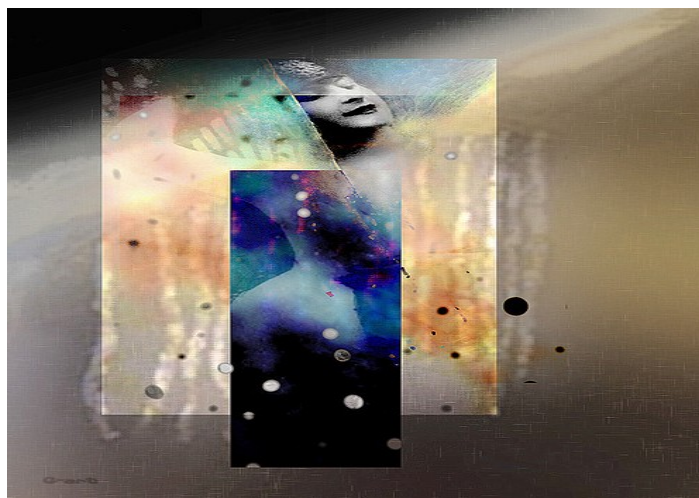
ciate and follow their work.

How would you qualify your work?

My work varies in nature. I like to experiment with colour, pattern, texture and form, so I guess I would call my artwork digital abstract. My art is primarily a multi-layered fusion of figurative and abstract elements.

References

- [1] Art Cafe f/2 - Telematic Art Forum, <http://www.flickr.com/groups/globalworldwards/>
- [2] Art Cafe f/2 Youtube, <http://www.youtube.com/artcafe2>
- [3] Homepage Ernst Koller, <http://www.neuro-wave.at/>
- [4] Homepage Doris Stricher, <http://www.flickr.com/photos/domido/>
- [5] Homepage g_art, <http://www.flickr.com/photos/22309812@N06/>
- [6] Homepage Emmanuel Smague, <http://www.smague.fr/>



g_art exhibition "Byte-Sized Art and the Digital Canvas".