

“Jägertürme”, “Wild/Wald”, “Waldeinsamkeit” – Looking to some of your photo-projects, you seem to be a nature-loving photographer. What fascinates you about such (covered) cars?

If I've been shooting many series for years connected with nature and landscapes, we have to go back in september 2007 when I started to shoot the first Ghost Cars in Bamako (Mali). At this period of my life, I was still a commercial photographer working for advertising agencies and for magazines (mainly connected to sports or urban fashions). Why did I start to shoot those cars in Bamako ? Then we have to go back to august 1998 when I first went to Bamako to visit family during my summer holidays. Between 1998 and 2007, the face of this capital city, Bamako, totally changed : asphalt roads, small chinese motorbikes, people, cars everywhere ! While I was scouting the city I couldn't turn my eyes away from those covered cars. They were everywhere. And I found them beautiful, strange even a bit scary (reason why I called them the Ghost Cars). I decided then, with the help of a friend, to shoot every cars I could see. He took me on his Jakarta (chinese motorbike very famous in West Africa) and we started to go around Bamako. One day, he picked me up at 4 o'clock in the morning and each time I saw a covered car, I asked him to stop, I put my 6x7 camera on a tripod and I shot. We did so up to 13 :00 and within 8 hours, I had shot more than 40 sceneries. I took care to have no people in the frame of my pictures. I wanted to make those cars, the main character of each of my frame and to show it in an urban landscape. For me those covered cars pictures are portraits. Those pictures finally show a lot about the owners of the cars and also about the city. I took a great care to be far enough from the cars and using a wide angle to show a lot about the environment. When I came back from my trip to Paris, and get the films developed, I was very happy with the pictures I shot. And then my obsession started...

Are you interested in cars at all?

I have to admit that compared to a German citizen, I am not at all ! My wife, who's German, is much more interested in cars than I am ! I've always seen cars as an instrument to go from a point A to a point B. Despite the fact that I've had my driving licence for more than 20 years, I had my first car in 2010 when I moved to the countryside in France because I had no option. As an urban man in Paris, I didn't really need a

car. However, I make the difference between a Twingo and an Aston Martin. I am not feelingless in front of the shape of a nice car or to have a Sunday road trip in a trabi. I am a bit Saxonian now that I live here ! ;-)

Why these 4 cities (London, Athens, Bamako, Tokyo)?

As I was telling about previously, after shooting the Ghost Cars of Bamako, my obsession started. Each time I was going to a city where I could see plenty of them, I shot a serie no matter which camera I had with me. In 2010 I went to Athens to work for a video game company and I saw Ghost Cars everywhere. I couldn't leave them alone without shooting their portraits. In 2011 when I went to Japan to shoot a long-term photographic story, I spent a week in Tokyo and met plenty of ghost cars. Again, I couldn't let them go away. In 2016 a swedish publisher contact me because he wanted to make a photobook about my ghost cars. In my opinion, the pictures I had were not enough to make a book. Moreover, looking at the work, it was like something was missing. I decided then to go to London in may 2016 for few days where I knew I could find more Ghost Cars. Today my obsession is over but who knows ? I might fall back again !

How do you choose your projects?

I have no rules. I just try to be as free as I can. Most of the time, a photo project is an answer to some of the questions I ask myself. And even, a project can be a partial and incomplete answer. The only thing is that since I left Paris, all the series I shot are connected with my direct environment and nature. And if I start the exhibition at the museum with a ghost cars shot in a forest in Germany, I did it on purpose. I could say that this picture is the link between the urban ghost cars shot previously and my new series where Nature is the main subject. And if you look at my Jägerturme, you can really make a connection with my Ghost Cars serie : obsession, landscapes, portraits.

What are your actual photographic projects?

I've been working on a serie called « La promesse d'un monde meilleur ? » (The Promises of a better world ? »). It's a photo essay, a bit like my serie, The Last First Day. If I am happy in my life, most of the time and that I find it meaningful (at least for myself), I am still asking

myself plenty of questions about the state of our world (politically, historically, ecologically speaking). The statement of this serie could be : Are we learning enough from our past to stop making the same mistakes ?

Why have you moved from a capitol like Paris to a tiny village like Hohenstein-Ernstthal?

First, Hohenstein-Ernstthal is not a tiny village but a small countryside town of 15.000 inhabitants. For sure there is a huge difference between Hohenstein and Paris. But I feel much more in peace with myself here than in Paris. ;-)

In fact, to make it short, I left Paris in 2010 because I couldn't stand urban life and my job as an advertising photographer anymore. I moved in a small village in La Sarthe not far from Le Mans. Between 2011 and 2014 I travelled a lot to shoot personal photo projects (3 months in Japan, 3 months in Iceland and 5 weeks in Spain walking the Camino Francès, final spanish part of the Jakobsweg). In Spain, while walking, I met Christin (German Saxonian). We fall in love and I moved with her in april 2016 in Hohenstein-Ernstthal not far from her family and from the primary school where she teaches. And here and around, there are plenty of photo stories to shoot ! I even saw Ghost Cars in Hohenstein. The question is : Am I going to shoot them or not ?! ;-)