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There is Gas under the Tundra
Charles XELOT



BIOGRAPHY

Born in 1985. Charles Xelot works and lives between Paris and Saint Petersburg.

Charles Xelot is a photographer specialized in Russia. Exploring the limit between art and documentary, he devoted himself for many years to the deepening of a subject. His favorite themes are related to social and environmental changes. His work is not time sensitive. Specialized in the creation of exclusive art book he collaborated with different foundations like the Neva Foundation in Geneva or the Timchenko Foundation in Moscow. He has published in few magazines like the British Journal of Photography, Figaro Magazine or Greenpeace magazine.

His photographs have been exhibited in museums like the Borusan Contemporary museum in Istanbul or the MMOMA in Moscow and is part of different important collections. He has published five books.

Education

2008 - Engineer diploma - ENSIL (Limoges)

2009 - School of photography "Images ouvertes"

2009 - Assistant of Anne Garde

2010 to 2015 - Assistance and collaboration with Ahmet Ertug.

Indépendant photograph since 2010.

Awards

- 2014 Prix de la nuit du livre catégorie beaux-art
- 2017 shortlisted, Meitar Award, Tel Aviv
- 2017 Winner category environment editorial, IPA
- 2017 Winner editorial photography, MIFA
- 2018 Winner editorial photography, TIFA
- 2018 Discovery award shortlist, Encontros da Imagen
- 2018 Best Emerging Photographer by Lensculture

Publications

- "Living dress", Dress Code magazine, Russia
- Catalogue of the Borusan collection, 2013. Text by Lindsay Ganter.
- Russian monasteries, Le figaro magazine, 28/11/2014, texte by JC Buisson
- Catalogue Arte Laguna Venezia 2018.
- Xleb, August 2018, Russia
- FotoMAGazin XXL, September 2018
- British Journal of photography, January 2019
- Greenpeace magazine, February 2019

Exhibitions (selection)

- 2010 "Gallargues-le-Montueux", Gallery Cimaïse, Geneva Swiss
- 2011 "Forest", Gallery Le Village, Geneva Swiss
- 2012 4 photographs exposed at the Museum of the Borusan art collection, Istanbul
- 2013 "Forets russes" Gallery Cimaïse, Geneva
- 2013 installation photographique à l'Orangerie de Vandoeuvres
- 2013 "Oil Terminal" Gallery Cimaïse, Geneva
- 2014 "Etats de mer", 6 j'avais su, Marseille
- 2014 Selection de photographies, L'Atelier 55, Megeve
- 2015 "Tykkylumi", la cite Radieuse le Corbusier, Marseille
- 2015 "The Holy Abodes of the Russian Soul", Winzavod art center, Moscow
- 2015-16 "Tykkylumi", l'Atelier 55, Megève
- 2016 "Arctic" Kremlin concert hall
- 2017 "Arctic" Gallery of the Atelier 55, Megeva
- 2017 "Monastery" Tverska Boulevard, Moscow
- 2017 ISRAEL Photo festival, Tel Aviv
- 2018 Arte Laguna, Venezia
- 2018 Projection at MOPLA, LA
- 2018 Space for photography gallery, Arles
- 2018 Projection at Voix Off Festival, Arles
- 2018 Encontros da Imagem, Braga Portugal
- 2019 MMOMA, Moscow Museum of Modern Art

Books

- Book of photographs on the construction of the biggest oil terminal of Europe, in Russia. This fine art book including a great design work (cover in aluminium, 7 colors printing on a creation paper...) was given during the opening ceremony of the terminal.
- "The Holy Abode of the Russian soul", 120 photographs of 21 Russian monasteries in a luxurious and limited edition. Project done with the support of the Neva fund and published by the Cherche Midi in November 2014. The book won the price in the category "Beaux-livres" at "la nuit du livre 2015" in Paris.
- "Valaam", photographs, conception and edition of a luxurious large format book (35x40cm), limited edition of 200. Book done to celebrate the 25 years of the re-opening of the Valaam monastery in Russia
- "Forest" September 2017 at the Editions Phinera. Art book showcasing the « forest » work.
- "Resurrection", October 2017 at the "éditions du Cerf, Paris". Photo book about the resurrection of the Russian Orthodox Church.

There Is Gas Under the Tundra (2016 - 2018)

There is gas under the tundra is long term project of massive scale. During three polar winters Charles Xelot explored the Arctic industry of gas production in the Yamal Peninsula, Russia. This photographic series illustrate the humanity's appetite for energy and the realities of its gargantuan production. The naked tundra, which was once traversed by herds of reindeer and their herders, the Nenets, is now filled with pipes and flares. Tankers and ice-breakers navigate along the coast illuminating the night.

We see a bizarre world of ice and metal, a world that sometimes resembles something alien. Endless tundra acts as a theatrical stage for a fantastic play that tells about the modern civilization. Views inside enormous, futuristic factories are juxtaposed with stark images of unforgiving polar landscapes and portraits of the reindeer herders, known as the Nenets. In this environment even light itself seems to take a new quality.

From the language of the Nenets, the word Yamal is translated as « the end of the earth ». Indeed, this works shows what may be the last frontier to explore, the last land to exploit.

In Yamal, all excesses appear more clearly than anywhere else. Here, side by side, all the boundaries coexist together - between space and time, between land and ice, between the Neolithic man and his present tribesman. These photos, in the end, put before everyone the main question: Where is the limit to the human civilization?

