

**PARIS PHOTO 2019 – November 7-11 2019**

**BOOTH D38**

## **YAN MORVAN SOLO SHOW**

As early as the 1970s, Yan Morvan's total commitment to social documentary reveals his exceptional virtuosity to the world. In the heat of the moment, he works by instinct, face to face, bedazzled but unphased even if he will recognize, much later, that "hell has passed through me".

Yan Morvan's work, permeated with references to Shakespeare, Kafka and Herodotus, documents the golden age of Pop culture, but also the phenomenon of urban tribes, the beginning of social unrest born of rootlessness. "I felt that these were warning signs of urban chaos and the social disintegration we are witnessing today."

This contemporary way of contextualizing the action, of documenting the off-camera, from black and white to colour, incorporating emotion and poetry, is rare. It's no surprise that the work of this major French photographer has been widely published by the French and international press.

Right from the start he covers the whole field of photography, from wars (Northern Ireland, Iran / Iraq, Lebanon, Rwanda, Kosovo...) to portraiture, landscape, document. Transcending the boundaries between genres, exploding taboos and forbidden genres, he's at home with people of conviction, regardless of whether they are working class or millionaires, whether they are victims of war or road accidents, British Punks or Thatcherites. He uses all the techniques at his disposal, from silver print, black and white, to sumptuous colour cibachrome, from Leica 24 x 36 to Deardorff large format.

We see it in the prints presented here, most of them vintage, all exceptional, like this big and beautiful platinum image of Bobby Sand's funeral. Sometimes they are even impossible to reprint, the negative having been lost, like this cibachrome of 1997, taken on the devastated green line of Beirut. From the beginning, Yan Morvan shows an attention to detail and the influence of past masters. Today, these rarities, some gathered from lost and found papers and collections, are heritage treasures, just as his recent photographs of battlefield landscapes are of great historical significance, spread across continents and eras and awakening our consciousness.

### • **Champs de bataille (Battlefields series)**

*"In 2004, with by my 20 x 25 Deardoff chamber camera, I began a series on battlefields. Did these places still tell History ? Without yielding to the raw emotion, I wanted to address myself to consciousness, to show through landscapes sometimes harmless a 'geography' of human insanity. I was looking for another way to testify to a consideration on the image and from the reality of war. I started to photograph French battlefields, D-Day beaches, then those of Europe, our family who torn itself so often. I went through European battlefields, those from the Pacific Ocean, from Africa, America and Asia."*

Yan MORVAN



### • **Blousons noirs (Black jackets series)**



*Black Jackets Series is the first series by the French photographer Yan Morvan, created in the seventies. During the fifties, Paris and its suburbs see the birth of the "Black Jackets", those bad guys who are meeting up, with their soundtrack of Rock'n'roll arriving in France with the single. This youth inspired by the USA had the slogan "live fast,*

*die young, leave behind a beautiful corpse", as James Dean proclaimed it, in a rockabilly-bikers style who will scare French people until the seventies.*

*Yan Morvan offers with its initial series a real artistic and documentary work, a testimony of French society and its margins. Recognized by the journalistic community for its audacity and independence, he chose to photograph this youth as close to reality as possible, without any statement or judgment. It is during the photographer's meetings that this immersion occurs. Yan Morvan was not afraid to put himself in danger, capturing tensions and rivalries operating within gangs. With these rare documents, Black Jackets series established itself as a sociological reference and confirmed the reputation of the photographer but also the aesthetic quality and historical importance of his shots.*

### • **Les Années de fer, 1979-1981 (Years of Iron series)**

*"When Yan Morvan first travelled to England in the late seventies, he discovered Mohican Punks, nazified Skinheads, Rude Boys, Hooligans on the war path and Mods astride scooters. An open-air theatre lay before the photographer with actors straight out of Orange Mechanic and a grotesque, millenarian-style atmosphere suggestive of Hieronymus Bosch. The streets were loud with flocks of noisy, unemployed youths who fought back against despair with vitality, preferring pain over boredom. That is the essence of these photographs. As one jealous England protects its traditions and plans to recycle its glorious past forever, another, in the clutches of a momentous recession, attempts to find its 'raison d'être'." Francis DORDOR*





## • **Bobby Sands, 1981**

In 1981, Yan Morvan was a freelance photographer in Sipa press office, one of the three major Parisian photographic press agencies of the eighties. He had the perfect profile of the determined young reporter who is risking everything, fitting right in with the riot culture in Northern Ireland. He was consequently sent on the clashes in Londonderry in April 1981. He stayed for three weeks and returned several times during the year.

*" Those weeks that I have lived in Derry and Belfast, living with the rioters in Catholic neighborhoods, photographing the tension, despair, faith and courage of the Irish, using the camera as a weapon for their cause, convinced me forever of the validity of photographic testimony as an instrument of memory, emotion, reflection, the guarantee of a free and democratic world". Yan Morvan*



## • **La ligne verte (The Green Line series)**



From 1982 to 1985, Yan Morvan immortalized the Lebanon war as he lived it. He tells the story of a torn country, without ever taking sides or favoring one of the characters in his story, in order to restore as faithfully as possible the episodes of this major conflict.

A true moment of history, fulfilled with a Linhof photo chamber 4 x 5 inches and with a Nikon or Leica camera, the images of Yan Morvan by the diversity of the approaches capture the violence of the fighting, the intensity of the fratricidal confrontations, the fear of the women and children, men, of course, joyful innocence among the ruins.

## • **BKK**

On the occasion of the publication of the book *BKK* by Noeue Editions, Sit Down gallery is pleased to present for the first time at PARIS PHOTO this premiering series of black and white vintage prints.

In 1979, Yan Morvan went to Bangkok for an eventful adventure lasting five months. Far from the opulence of the downtown areas, he intrudes in the suburbs of the city and frequents the fringes of society. He goes out to meet prostitutes from the red light districts, discovering the universe of bars, of the street full of people. His photographs are the nocturnal testimony of this life made of alcohol, sex and drugs. Through this representation of the damaged and tired bodies of the girls with whom Yan Morvan established a complicity and

through the illustration of this microcosm, Yan Morvan tells in a lively way, in a diary form, a part of the Thai society of that time.



## **BIOGRAPHY**

Yan Morvan is a French photographer, born in Paris in 1954. He lives and works in Paris. He has worked for a long time as a war photographer, travelling around the world to cover many conflicts of the second half of the 20th century, an area in which he is recognized as one of the greatest specialists of his generation.

His war reports earned him a mention for the Robert Capa Award, for his work in Lebanon in 1983, two World Press Photo awards in 1984, and numerous awards from American journalism schools.

Yan Morvan has collaborated with leading international newspapers and there are numerous publications about his work. His photographs have been acquired by many photographic collections in France (FNAC collections, CNAP, Army Museum ...) and abroad (Minneapolis Art Center, Walker Art Center, Moscow Multimedia Art Museum ...).

Between 2004 and 2014, Yan Morvan has been travelling around the world with his 20 x 25 chamber camera, in search of these places that made History. A photography book was published in 2015 and the series was exhibited at the Rencontres d'Arles festival in 2016. He currently works on a project called "The French" with the support of the Ministry of Culture.

## **PUBLICATIONS**

1970s

- With Maurice Lemoine, **Le Cuir et le Baston**, Editions Ailleurs, 1976

1990s

- **Le Photojournalisme**, Contrejour, 1994
- With Patrick Frilet, **Photojournalisme**, Le Guide, CFD, 1995
- With Jean-Marc Barbieux, **Mondosex**, Contrejour, 1995

2000s

- With Jean-Marc Barbieux, **Gang**, Editions Marval, 2000
- **Photojournalisme**, CFPJ, Victoires Editions, 2000
- With Jean-Marc Barbieux et Sylvie Huet, **BodMod**, Marval, 2003
- **Photojournalisme**, Victoires Editions, 2008

2010s

- With Kizo, **Gangs Story**, La Manufacture de livres, 2012
- **Champs de bataille**, Éditions Photosynthèses, 2015
- **Blousons noirs**, La Manufacture de livres, 2016
- **Battlefields**, Abbeville Press, 2017
- Avec Pierre Mikailoff, **Race With The Devil**, Editions Serious Publishing, 2018
- **Bobby Sands**, Belfast Mai 1981, André Frère Editions, 2018
- **Liban**, Éditions Photosynthèses, 2019
- **Years of Iron**, Editions Serious Publishing, 2019
- **BKK**, Editions Noeve, 2019