



Self-portrait with my own photo mask from 1986

Artist Statement

“The ideal point of view”

The earliest aspirations of my childhood were to paint. By my early twenties, however, these aspirations had led me to photography, that undeniable mirror of existence which enabled me to accurately capture my motifs both in matter and in time, thus revealing them in their total uniqueness. This then is the world we perceive with our senses but, beyond this, there is another world which pulses within us, in our dreams, our illusions, our feelings. The definition of illusion as something untrue, as the opposite to reality has always repelled me for how can one live without illusions? What if the illusionist who may not usually believe in his own magic, begin to actually believe in it? This would surely make of him a Don Quixote... or a fool. Or maybe it would turn him into a poet. “Such is my quest”, sang Jacques Brel in “L’homme de la Mancha”, and it became mine too. For the last few decades I have explored both the real and fantasy worlds; even with my commissioned work too, which has opened up a fascinating “cabinet of curiosities” where an oyster, a pot of jam or a loaf of bread can assume aspects of the marvellous. But in truth, for me, banality does not exist.

My work is mainly contemplative in nature and so I chose the 8x10 large-format camera for its ability to render detail, making the image almost tactile. It is also, in its clumsiness, a fixed window on the world, a camera-obscura, a tool of perfection for “composing” the image as opposed to “taking” it. The set is built in three dimensions, including the backgrounds, while paying the greatest attention to every detail, organising the empty spaces, in an attempt to be in control of every square inch in the frame, rehearsing the final shot exactly as one would on a stage, until I reach the “moment of grace”. All this from the ideal point of view of the lens. The final photograph will never be retouched or further manipulated, so I must come as close to perfection as I possibly can. There is a beauty in making the picture exist in reality before recording it. Somehow it becomes the proof of one’s own existence.

My work of the last three years has followed the same pattern although this time, instead of starting from a definite idea and gathering the details to serve this idea, I find the details first and form them later into a whole. Where this will lead me is still unknown to me. At the same time I opened a door onto, for me, a new world... the open-air! I swapped my studio for the Australian wilderness. There, I have been "scanning" in ecstasy what could not be collected in my "cabinet of curiosities", the revelation of another dimension, nature which in its power resembles at times a huge geoglyph ordered by the gods, every detail vibrating with life and yet also something more... the awareness of creation which breathes from every stone, every water-pool, every sea-slug. I then reassemble all these fragments into a new order, a monumental puzzle in an attempt to reconstruct the amazing world I have glimpsed, which leads one inevitably to think of the aboriginal "Dream-Time", for dreams make up half of our life here on earth.

If I could only bring forth the divine, the sacred, the beauty of our world !

Resume

Major exhibitions

Stockholm J&L Galleri 2009 "Métamorphoses"
Photo-Fair Stockholm 2008 "Le Pays du Rêve"
Photo-Fair Stockholm 2007 "Cubisteries"
Photo-Fair Stockholm 2006 "Suite Automnale"
Bièvres Musée Français de la Photographie 1996 "Femmes Fleurs Fruits et Légumes"
Malmö Exponera Warehouse Photo gallery, 1996
Stockholm World Trade Centre 1993 "Femmes fleurs fruits et légumes"
Sweden Frövifors pappersbruk, 1993 "Femmes fleurs fruits et légumes"
Paris Salon de la Photo, 1993 "Nudes"
Milano Gallery Il Milione, 1986
Tokyo Photopia, 1983, with Robert Demachy

Group Exhibitions

Bournemouth - 2009 "From here to there" Fifty years of photography at the Arts University College at Bournemouth
Arles - 2006 Musée de l'Arles "La photographie publicitaire en France"
Paris - 2006 Les Arts Décoratifs "La photographie publicitaire en France" - De Man Ray à Jean Paul Goude
Stockholm - 1984 Camera Obscura "Lust"

Books

Pour Gourmet- IM.Germany, 1991
Cubisteries, Electa Portfolios, 1986
Le Petit Théâtre- Publicness, 1982
Le Petit Théâtre- Japanese edition, 1982
L'Album de François Gillet - Publicness , 1981

Main Publications

From here to there- The Arts University at Bournemouth
La Photographie Publicitaire en France- Les Arts Décoratifs, 2006
Née en 1842.-Une histoire de la publicité Mundacom-Publicis Group 2006
200 Best AD Photographers- Lurzer's Archive 2004/05
Photography in Advertising 2004 Peer Eriksson
Graphis- Nudes 1992
Step-by-Step 1991
Graphis-1990
Profession Photographe-1988
FMR-1987
Photo Japon-1983
Creative Review -1982
Zoom- French edition 1975-1979-1981-1983

Awards

Top Job Award 1998 Photokina, Köln
Folio Award Australia 1993 Excellence in Magazine Advertising
London International Advertising Award 1994
Lions, Cannes 1993 Gold Lion (Silk-Cut)
Campain Poster/Press Advertising Award England-1993
Platina Ägget 1990 ABCD Award, Sweden
D&ad England 1990
Australian Writers & Directors 1990-1989-1988
Eurobest Awards 1989
D&ad 1984
Campain Poster Advertising Award England 1983
Clio Award 1983
Kodak Fotokalendar Preis, Germany 1988
The Art Directors Club Merit Award 1988
The Art Directors Club 59th Annual Exhibition Merit Award 1980
Clio Award 1979
Guld Ägget 1979 ABCD Award, Sweden

Lectures

Sydney 1995, 1998 -Broncolor/Baltronics
Melbourne 1995, 1998 -Broncolor/Baltronics
Brisbane 1995, 1998 -Broncolor/Baltronics
Auckland, New-Zeeland 1995 -Sinar/Broncolor
Köln, Germany International BFF Congress -1993
Oxelösund Sweden – Molanders -1995
Palma de Mallorca Spain 1988 -3rd Convención Gama Professional
Stockholm Sweden 1986- Svenska Fotografiska Förbund
Geilo, Norway 1984
Reykjavik, Island 1984
Gant, Belgium 1983
Helsinki, Finland 1981- Idea 81 Congress

Biography

François Gillet was born in Normandy, France in 1949. In his teens, he moved to England and studied language and commerce in Bournemouth. Although his prime interest had always been painting, in the late sixties, he took up a three-year course in photography at the Bournemouth & Poole College of Art and Design. He soon was fascinated by the media, highly productive and was granted a “best-student-award” when he graduated in 1971. In his early twenties he moved to Sweden, was first employed as a photographer at the “Institutet för Färgfoto” where he stayed three years, learning to work on commission and experimenting a great deal. It was then he adopted the large-format camera as his main tool. His private work gave him instantly work in Stockholm and he was provided with his own studio by Arbman’s advertising agency, at the time leading/creative agency in Scandinavia. Many award-winning campaigns in Sweden and Norway followed. After several impressive publications in Zoom magazine, he started working internationally.

His ability to feel at ease with more demanding subjects, the non-spectacular, made him particularly attractive in the advertising world. He has a preference for the subjects which he can develop over a longer period of time. The first Bonne Maman pictures were commissioned as early as 1985 and Francois was to work with this account over 20 years. The Brown Brothers campaign is another adventure which started already in 1987 and which, through years of close work with David Frost, brought these family-owned wineries to an envied position, both inside and outside Australia. He has worked with many legendary names of advertising, such as Paul Arden, Nigel Rose, Graham Fink, Parry Merkley, Bruno Lemoult, Patrick Mikanovsky to name a few. He has always counterbalanced his assignments with his private work to such an extent that it is often difficult to clearly distinguish one from the other. In the year 2000, he moved his studio to a small island in the Stockholm’s archipelago where he can more easily find, not only the harmony he needs, but also the pieces of the puzzle he slowly assembles. The last six years he has mostly worked on various private projects such as the “Suite Automnale” and more recently “Beyond Mystery-Bay” and “Le Pays du Rêve”, where he explores this time yet another field of photography. For the first time, he left his studio and went out travelling throughout the Australian continent in 2007 and 2008, portraying nature.