

SEB JANIAK

In a photographic career spanning 25 years, Seb Janiak has explored a remarkably diverse range of areas. A survey of his work would form a virtually complete picture of all the options offered by the photographic medium, such is its scope. In keeping with the lively tradition at the heart of photography, technological innovations open up the possibility of new types of image. However, only a handful of people can successfully forge an artistic idiom and blaze a trail in the uncharted territory unveiled by the new tools available to them. Fewer still can also provide innovative solutions to the issues raised by previous generations, but Seb Janiak features among their ranks. From his matte paintings with their revolutionary new techniques and unique perspectives in the mid-1980s, to his latest photographs of laser beams passing through prisms, attempting to capture light in its original purity without the use of artificial means (mirroring the endeavors of the founding fathers of photography in the first half of the 19th century), Janiak has successfully preserved a sense of cohesion while covering the full range of possibilities offered by photography. This cohesion is all the more remarkable considering the major break with the past in photography over the last thirty years represented by the advent of digital technology. Rejecting the straitjacket of specific schools or eras, but exploiting instead the complex nature of the world around him, Seb Janiak uses – and reveals in his photographs – the vibrant power of opposites.

His deeply creative energy is echoed in a life marked by success and withdrawal, the superficial and the profound, rootedness and transcendence.

Janiak started out as a young freelance graphic designer without specific aspirations to be an artist, who wanted above all to give free rein to his curiosity and to experiment with a piece of equipment which he discovered by chance and which opened up the possibility of creating stunning images.

In 1987, images could be created and digitally enhanced using Quantel Paintbox. Seb Janiak was one of the very first people to extend its use beyond the TV and film applications for which it was originally designed in order to produce photographic images for exhibition. In these photographs, scenes of unbridled fantasy were reconstructed with a hitherto unprecedented degree of realism. This marked the dawn of a new photographic esthetic. A variety of different shots taken all over the world could be assembled digitally into large-format images conjuring up a sci-fi world suffused with the staggering transparency of photography. This new style of image would become the staple fare of the next two decades, but Janiak's achievement lay in being the first to create them.

Seb Janiak is a pioneer, spurred on by a restless desire to observe the world, challenge it and apply his artistic skills to reshaping it.

He has an unquenchable thirst for everything that supplements our understanding of reality, opens up new perspectives and creates meaning. Whether he is dealing with institutionalized phenomena (religion, science, and astrophysics in particular) or niche areas (esotericism, ufology) his imagination draws on humanity in all its boundless diversity, transcending time and place.

An overview of his work is instructive in this respect. The success of his early digital photos was followed by a meteoric rise in the world of advertising. With significant resources at his disposal, Seb Janiak achieved fame and created images which described and shaped their times in equal measure. He made a seamless transition from still images to video and the most influential musicians quickly approached him to direct their music videos, including Daft Punk, Janet Jackson, NTM and Robbie Williams.

In 2001, after ten years of frenetic activity, major health problems forced Janiak to make radical lifestyle changes. At the height of his artistic powers, he resumed his

experiments with photography, free from the constraints of commissioned work. Drawing inspiration for his work from a variety of sources over the years such as traditional oriental texts (including the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* and manuals of Chinese medicine) or the history of Western art, Janiak created strikingly powerful ensembles in which human figures were replaced by nature and ideas.

The Kingdom, which he began in 2008, constituted a key stage in this protracted process. These large photographs of turbulent skies, vehicles for the primal energy revealed by the transformation of clouds, reprised the digital editing technique pioneered in his matte paintings. The breath-taking quality of these works was followed by equally striking series in which Janiak depicted the normally invisible forces which shape and alter reality. This constituted both a personal quest and a game for this artist driven by the desire to look beyond surface appearances. Ever alert and tirelessly challenging the world, Janiak outlined responses and suggestions through the medium of images.

Since 2011, he has set new parameters on this research by restricting himself to the techniques of analog photography, namely double exposure, superimposition and photomontage.

This consummate master of digital editing abandoned what people were all too ready to consider his main forte. This limited range of options has proved fruitful, leading him to perfect increasingly complex systems in the studio to produce photographs of magnetic fields using ferrofluids, laser beams, sunlight (*Visible light*), or even air bubbles (*Vacuity*). In this way, he re-establishes the link with the photographic tradition in its earliest incarnation, when the skill of the artist was crucial and the key challenge was to capture light in permanent form.

In what can be viewed as a yearning for simplicity or even a form of asceticism, Seb Janiak continues to translate his thoughts on man's fate, the world and its mysterious forces, time and light into images. He devotes equal attention to analyzing all of these evolving phenomena which are a permanent feature of his work, echoing their ceaseless patterns of renewal in his own creative approach.

EXHIBITIONS/ ART FAIRS

1987

Freeze Frame, first international exhibition of digital photography
International Network Video, and collaboration with the designer Philippe
STARCK, Paris.

1991

Paris de 2044 à nos jours, exhibitions of the first « matte-painting » (Worldwide
Premiere),

Former Musée des automates, Paris, France

Sollicitation to expose shots to Berlin, Munich, Hong-Kong, Los Angeles

2001

Archeology of Elegance, Munich, Allemagne

(roving Exhibition : Tokyo / Metropolitan Museum

Photography / Londres / Los Angeles, / Milan)

2002

Archeology of Elegance, Deichtorhallen museum, Hambourg

2006/07

In Fashion Photo, Art Photo Expo during Art Basel Miami Beach, Etats-Unis

Commissaire : Marion de Beaupré

BAC Festival, Contemporary Art photography of the city of Barcelone, Spain

NOOVO International Fashion and Photography Festival, Santiago de
Compostela, Spain

2008

Contemporary Shanghai Art Fair '08

FIAC - Show Off, espace Pierre Cardin, galerie Paul Frèches, Paris

Photographies contemporaines / Art Valorem, Drouot, november 23

Art Photo Expo gallery, Art Basel Miami Beach

2009

Naomi Campbell Retrospective, Art Photo Expo, Art Basel Miami Beach, Miami

Art Photo Expo gallery, New York

2010

FIAC off Chic Art Fair, Visionairs Gallery, Paris

FIAC Acces & Paradox, Visionairs Gallery, Paris

2011

Cutlog contemporary art fair, October 20-23, 2011

Seb Janiak – art book release, mid october 2011

Fotofever, Photography Art fair, Nov 10 -12, 2011

PRIX

2001

Second price of the best cover US in N.Y (Naomi Campbell portrait)

1999-2000

Life Magazine Price for the best photography of the world , illustration category,
magazine Details

EXECUTIONS, DIRECTIONS

2010-2011

Soon International magazine Cover september 2011

Nike – Campagne Japon et US

Worldwide campaign 1664

La « Conspiration d’Orion » overtake the million downloads

60 millions of visitors are counted on the website

2007-2008

Writing, production, setting of the short movie « la Conspiration d’Orion »

Official selection of Sitges short film festival, Espagne 2008

2006-2009

Worldwide campaign Kronenbourg 1664 (prix de la meilleure publicité d’alcool
en France)

Worldwide campaign Mitsubishi (car),

2005

Worldwide campaign Yamamoto –Man perfume

2004

Worldwide campaign Yamamoto – Men parfume

Mano Solo’s album Cover

Photo campaign for Samsung (États-Unis)

Writing of a new movie

2003

Musical album covers for several artists : Ophélie Winter, Lady Laistee...

Video Clip Dizze Rascal (Grande-Bretagne)

l’Oréal Studio Line advertising movie

L’Oréal campaign with Beyoncé Knowles

Worldwide campaign Mitsubishi – Colt

2001-2002

Conception and realisation of DVD Vanity 9,

First worldwide exclusive musical production on DVD support

(Compilation house illustrated by exclusive video clips)

Ultra Violet, worldwide advertising movie and photoshoot for Paco Rabane

Worldwide campaign for Givenchy, make up 2000, 2001 and 2002

Worldwide campaign for Collistar (italian cosmetic)

Writing of a long movie for Avalanches Production and Europa Corp

1999-2000

Album cover for the group TLC (USA)

Fashion photoshoots for Harper's Bazaar New-York, Vogue Paris, Details (USA),

Détour (USA)

Concept movie for Philippe Starck (Boutiques J-P Gaultier)

1998

Five advertising movies for Canal Satellite with the Euro RSCG-BETC agency

1997

Creation of 99 production (Ninety Nine)

Clips realisation for Janet Jackson, Method Man, Daft Punk Paul Frèches, Paris

Realisation of conceptual images Philippe Starck and the Schragger hotels

(États-Unis)

1992 - 1995

Video clips direction for NTM, IAM, Sinclair, MC Solaar, Jean-Louis Aubert

Worldwide campaign for Guerlain, Jourdan, Nike

Rewriting of the Damntown script with Canal +, Los Angeles, USA

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Covers and interviews

Relax, Japon, 2002

Daftpunk, Les Inrockuptibles, February 20-26, 2001

Daftpunk, Technikart, March 2001

TLC, Vibe, May, 1999

Gillian Anderson, Details, June 1998

Naomi Campbell, Max / Photo (USA and France), November/June, 1997

Plus Eighty One, n° 21, summer

Nadja Auermann, Photo Magazine, n° 306

NTM, Get busy, n° 8

Revue : articles Reviews

International Herald Tribune In Fashion 07 Art photo expo, Miami Beach Art
Basel 2007
The New York Times work with me baby, Art Basel Miami Beach 2007
Relax, Japon, 2002
+81 magazine – Japan - 2002
Olivier Séguret, L'ovni onaniste (Vanity 9), Libération, January 16, 2001
Stéphane Davet, L'industrie Musicale creuse la piste du DVD (Vanity 9), Le
Monde, December
24th, 2001
Thomas Erber, La Juke-Box suave, selon Seb Janiak (Vanity 9), Jalouse
Emmanuel Lateste, Le rêve africain de Janet Jackson, Voici
Scully and mulder X-cellent Adventure (June1998), Life, spring, 1999
Interview Seb Janiak, Shot / 46, may , 1998
Method Man, Radical, november, 1998
Naomi Campbell, Max / Photo (Etats-Unis et France), 1997
Paul Frèches, Paris
Cinéaste numérique, Interactif, n° 3, June-July, 1995
Tewfic Hakem, Interview de Spike Jonze et Seb Janiak, L'Affiche n° 43
Matthias Schmidt, Expo futuropolis, Photo Magazine, April, 1991
Interview Seb Janiak, Plus Eighty One, and n ° 21, summer
Esquire, n° 12, Japon
Philippe Roizes, Vanity 9, L'Affiche, n° 99
Vanity 9, Max
Nadja Auermann, Photo Magazine, n° 306
Révolution des décors, VSD
Hip Hop, n° 99
NTM, Get busy, n° 8
Phil Bang, Transfiguration, Photo Magazine