

FATA magazine



Hilsen fra Rebekka Ehlers i anledning af Fatamorganas 25 års fødselsdag © Rebekka Ehlers



Since 1989 interested in photography at Fatamorgana have put the world in images, visualized their dreams and created themselves as photographers.

Fatamorgana has been school, home and playground, challenge and love, doors have been opened, boundaries broken down, and the goal has always been to get to the core of what it means to be human. Be yourself and be together.

Your eye is a camera, a dark room with a peephole and a back wall that records the reverse image, a world upside down.

Everyone can see and everyone can take pictures. But using photography as a language requires more than that.

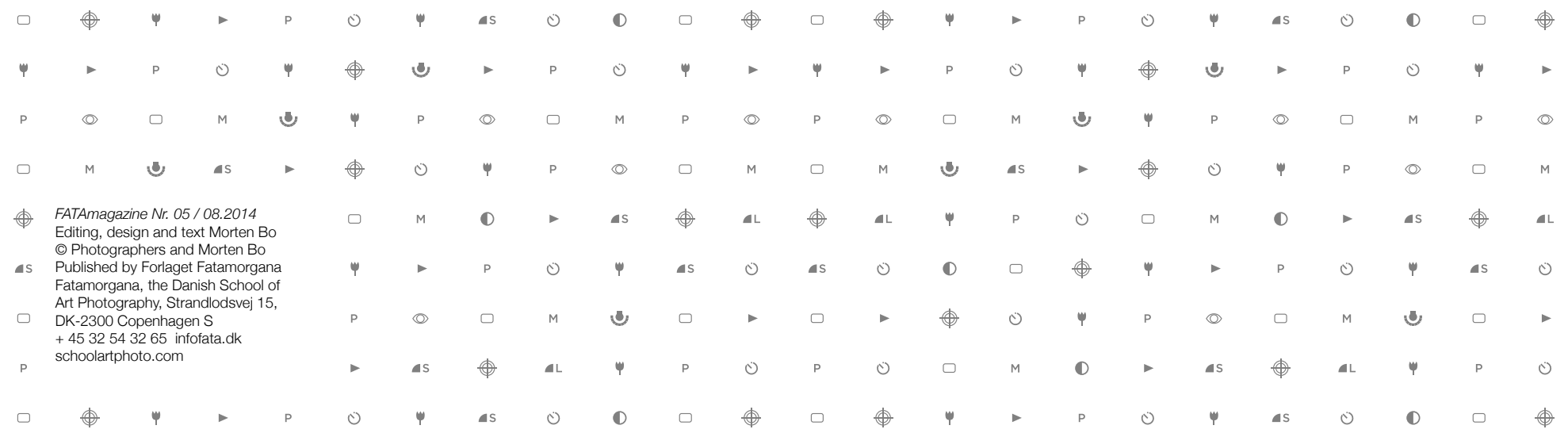
Have you been student at Fatamorgana, you can do something that others cannot, you have something others don't. And we need you.

You've got a language, you can communicate in pictures, tell stories, and you know the image magic, strength and limitation.

Manipulation and eye-catching.

World Upside Down, last part of Morten Bo's trilogy about The Fatamorgana-art history will hopefully open for an understanding of what the image is what photography is and how to get there.

For that there is a need, respect and understanding that in photography lies a world of possibilities just waiting to be used.



Fatamorgana-art history in 25 years by Morten Bo



Creating School
Fatamorgana-art history 1989-99
Reproduced in Jubilee Book



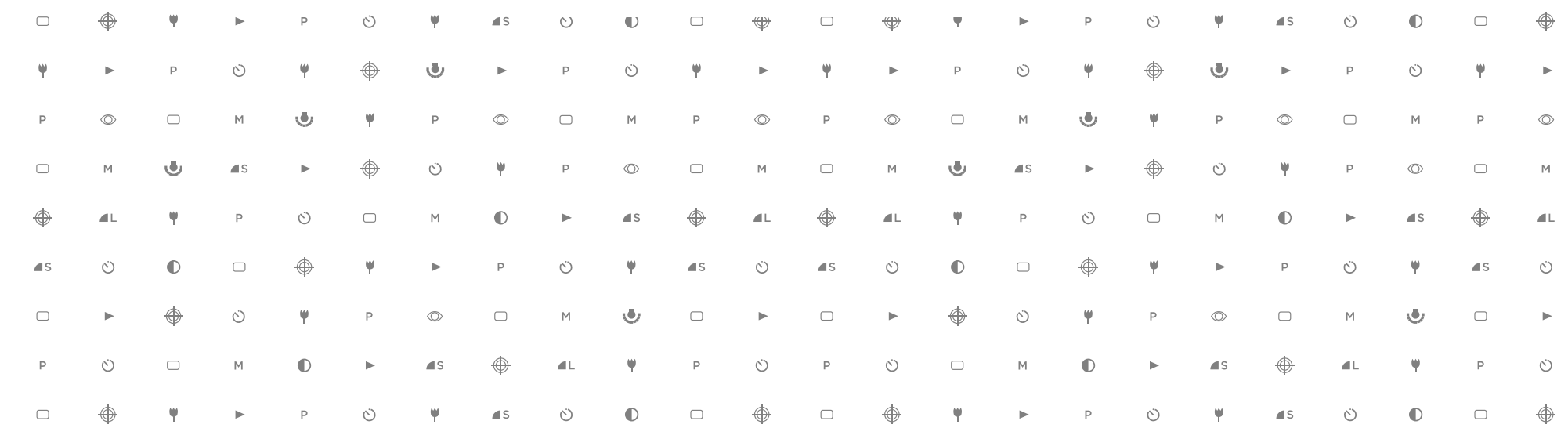
Fata Time and Spirit
Fatamorgana-art history 1999-2007
Published in 2007



The World Upside Down
Fatamorgana-art history 2007-14
Printed in FATAMAGAZINE no. 5 2014



© Carl-Mikael Ström / FATAMORGANA



The unbridled statement was the ideal, but it often seemed a long time coming for it was not uncommon that you as Niels Bach Jensen laid on his back looking up at the ceiling, hoping that the inspiration would come to him. Nothing could excite Niels, everything was rejected as being too boring or seen before or stupid or corny, so the last night before he had to turn in his project he was still in the inactive corner and nothing had been done, I said after unsuccessfully trying to overpower him up in a scornful tone:
 - Isn't there anything that interests you?
 He then glared at me and was obviously sick of my last-minute harassment.
 - Yes, to kill.
 - Then damned do it.
 And so he did.

Went to the pet store and bought a budgie, tore its head off and the next day he could deliver the image of a budgerigar body with stretched wings and fractured head.

Niels was not the only one who was gripped by desperation, Astrid Dalum was too. She had been admitted to the Journalism School for photojournalists, but would rather have stayed at Fatamorgana first as a basis and had now for three months been in a standstill feel-feel country with lace curtains, watery eyes, soft rabbit and fuzzy feeling, and wanted desperately to do something right, something really good as a final project. But the inspiration did not show. She was not lying wondering, but walked restlessly around the school in hope of that she came across good ideas in the last minute. But all that came to her was boring, seen before, stupid or corny and then I confronted her with the question:
 - Isn't there anything that interests you?
 - Yes, to travel.
 - Then damned do it.

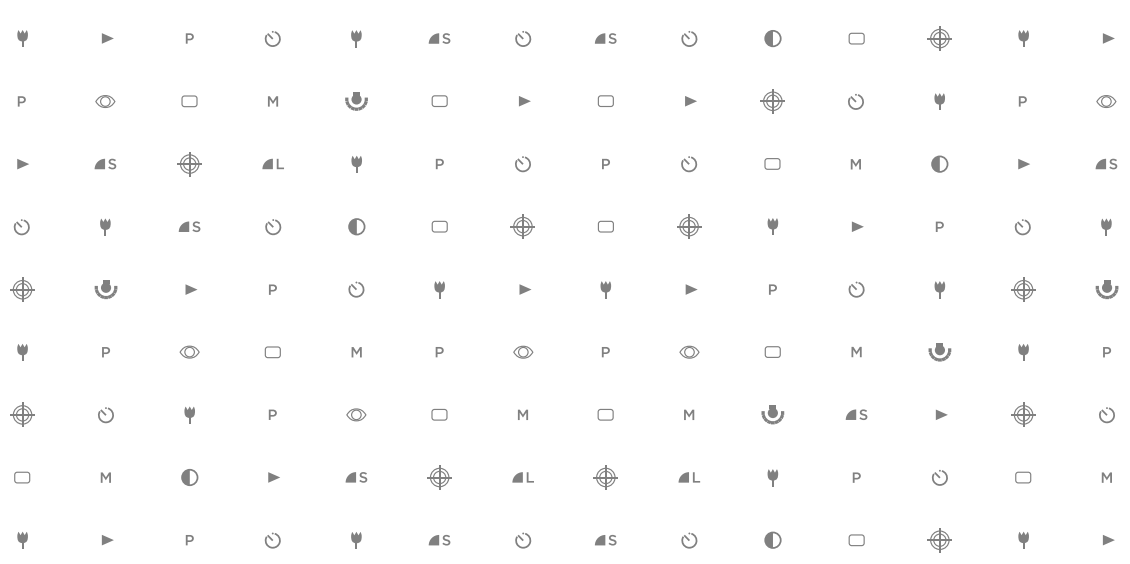
Fifteen minutes later she had ordered a cancellation trip to Namibia, took off the next morning and the week after she turned in the most beautiful picture of him, she had met the first on the beach where he sold juice to tourists, and it was not the juice that interested her or the tourists.

What a sight, here he is, our Lord's wonderful creature, alone on the beach. He is black, pitch black, and he is a man. Astrid was shocked that it was so obvious what she had photographed, but took the positive criticisms on board and often since used the desperation as an option when she was stuck. At the school's 20th birthday I could with the words: *Photography shall be dangerous*, hand her a commemorative gift because she with her pictures in the magazine *The Bunker* had created an unprecedented media storm: *Astrid eats Cat*, it was more than the average Dane could handle.

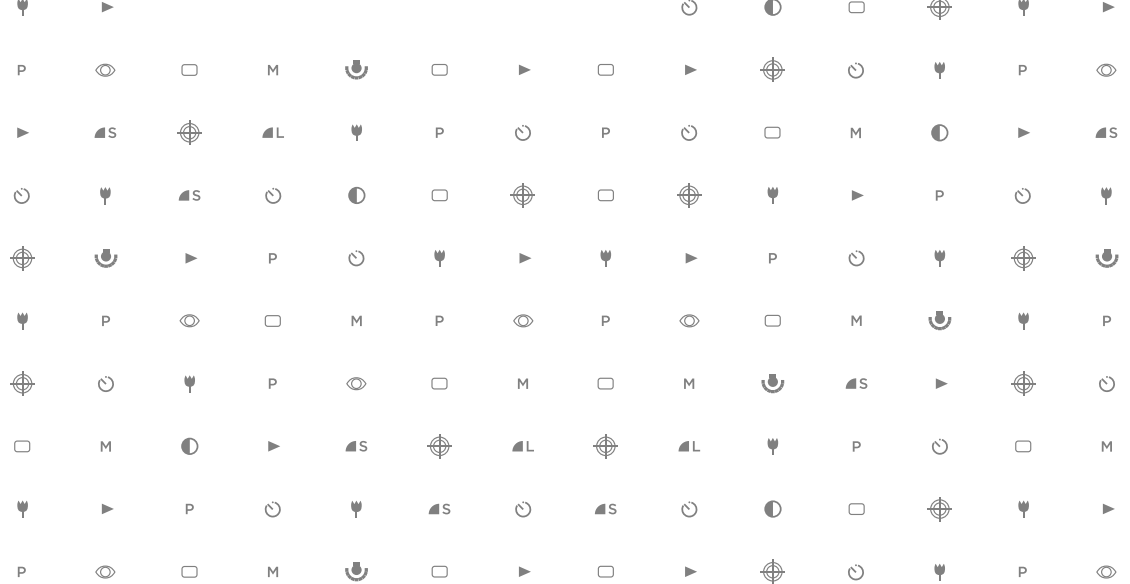
Desperation was a possibility, and the possibility became more and more a method, is there anything you want to, do it, everything is possible, boldness became a virtue.

And it was passed, Nanna Hillig, who had never made a video before, recorded an animated film about a toy soldier who jumps out of a hat box and down between her legs to shoot her both in the chest and forehead and then walks up under her nightgown. A 60 seconds horror movie.

The untested was a possibility, and no thought too difficult to realize, so when I call the traditional start task to photograph a stranger: *Under The Skin* tissue is obvious for Tilde Juul



© Niels Bach Jensen / FATAMORGANA



© Nanna Hillig / FATAMORGANA



to enter an operating room and take pictures under the skin. The untested was a possibility and no thought was too difficult to realize, so when I call the traditional first project 'Under The Skin' where one has to photograph a stranger it is obvious for Tilde Juul to enter an operating room and take pictures under the skin. And it becomes amazing pictures where you see the tip of a scalpel sticking down from the ceiling, cutting a hole in the skin, more literally under the skin had no one ever portrayed a stranger.

Since she was 16, Tilde knew she would be a photographer, and she was excited when she finally moved to Copenhagen to go to Fatamorgana. The desire was great and the ideas many, so for Tilde the bold diligence period was a paradise, and her first video a visualization of a dream.

She is staying in her old classroom between stuffed animals while her whole family is waiting in the next room full of contempt and condemnation. So to get into the next room, which is a hospital room where a friend is hospitalized, she slide through her father and mother, uncle and aunt, grandmother and cousins to finally realize that her friend has fallen out of the bed. There was not relaxed on the requirement for either action or recording, and the whole thing was done on a weekend in Silkeborg. For Tilde nothing was impossible and video was her favorite tool. Her midway movie years later as a student at the film school had the same devil-may-care daring, a large scenographer love epic set in biting storm on a sailboat but recorded in the studio.

Arne Bro, head of the film school documentary line came twice a year and mocked the talents at the portfolio guidance. He led two lines at the film school with the same goals and ideals as the Fatamorgana, and several who made their first videos at Fatamorgana, continued with Arne training to be a documentary filmmaker, or they went as Tilde did on the multi-camera line. Four out of six at the multi-camera line in 2009 came from Fatamorgana and they had a great time.

In the documentary line was Eva Marie Rødbro and Olivia Maria Rus were admitted at the documentary line. Eva had taken a bachelor's in Amsterdam but Olivia had gone to the Fatamorgana when the daring culminated. She was a visual genius but did not know it. She felt rebellious but did not express it, she had big ambitions but you did not see it and the frustrations caused her to hide and run for cover.

So I asked her task to do a retelling of one of Salvador Dalí's works.

- Be as imaginative, intense, seductive and spectacular as Dalí, as simple, specific and precise.

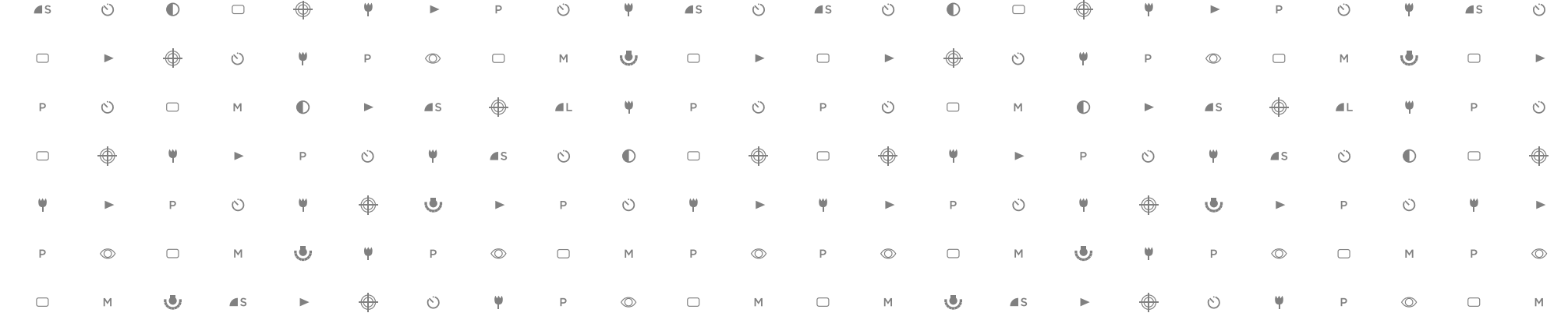
It got Olivia to go blank. She just could not think of anything that lived up to her ambition of originality, all ideas were discarded before they reached beyond the idea, the days passed and her apathy became larger and larger until a few days before deadline where the desperation had kicked in the adrenaline. Then it came, a full-fledged vision that just had to be implemented and there were no limits to what she could do.

Climbing over the fence to Bymuseum at night, get the butcher to supply eyes from a cow and get a friend to sit in the middle of miniature city with a satanic stare and with an eye in one hand. It was so beautiful, so right, so terrible Dalí'sk that I forgave her for all the fucking around.

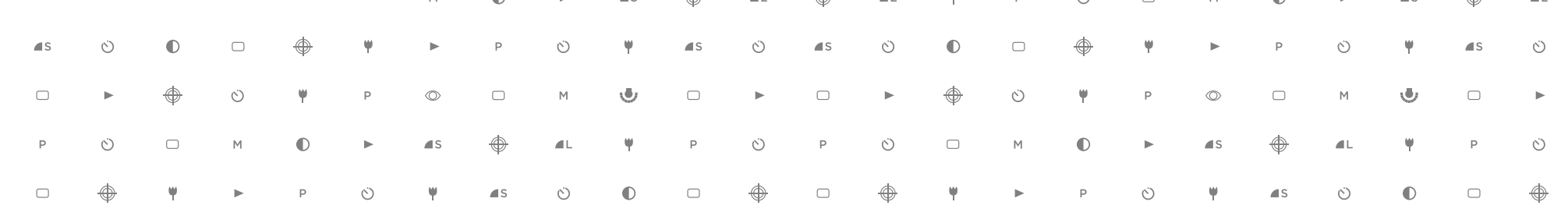
There is an almost hypnotic tone in picture that demands that I surrender, if it is the veiled threat, the eyes from



video Dremmer jeg? 2008 © Tilde Juul / FATAMORGANA



© Olivia Maria Rus / FATAMORGANA







© Kristine Gausereide Jacobsen / FATAMORGANA



© Sara Skorgan Teigen / FATAMORGANA



the cow in the hand, or the message from a secret sect, is a mystery, but it was Dali both work and personal. Olvia had really hit the bull's-eye and she knew it. She knew it was something special and that she henceforth would be dependent on the virus it gives to realize an idea. Next scoop, an aluminum foil-wrapped male person alone in an abandoned office space and other tableaux followed, but the paraphrase of Dali's The Great Masturbator was her best. The first film she made only a few years later during a family visit in Poland was amazing. Strong, tight, touching and personal and it secured her the admission as a documentary director with Arne Bro.

The cross-bordered image affected and originality was a quality and scenes were created, which was too much, too mysterious and too naughty. Kristine Gausereide Jacobsen was sent on a crematorium to make a serious reportage on the last trip, but she came home with a hilarious satire of the foolish workers, beautiful scenes from a workplace where she caught the bizarre scenes and gave it all she got. It made it just extra funny that it was the dead who ended up in the cans.

I got a letter from the crematorium municipal manage saying that Kristine had not followed the agreements on what and where she could photograph and that the Fatamorgana students were no longer welcome.

Being brazen, wanton and cynical was a quality so the super active, loud and oddball had their golden days; Sara Skorgan Teigen was like that. Her pictures were always to the limit of the allowable, grapping breasts, lighting fire on the top and cutting to the bone, Sara was like that, uncompromising and vivid, and Fatamorgana was haven for her because she was allowed to do everything.

She made masks, exhibited her girlfriend made fun of citizenship and spent itself, nothing was sacred to Sara, ingenuity was great, and the ideas were queuing up to be realized. Sara burned through and was that year chosen to participate in the Atelier Devisu's workshop in Marseille with Antoine d'Agata.

It was Antoine, recurring successful guest teacher who recommended Lucille to invite a student from Fatamorgana in the workshop, he held every spring at Atelier Devisu with students from international photographic education. Universities paid for a selected residency at Lucille, Fatamorgana were offered free of charge. And of course it was force the bead Sara, who was chosen for this year's workshop in Marseille, while Elin Hansson took to burlesque in Tampere, Finland.

It was a wild time when there was made a mockery of citizenship and equality, the brainless work and overzealous housewife with friends, lovers but also own sexuality.

But then stopped the party too, as it could not get worse, it began to fade. From being a virtue, it was now a little embarrassing to shout and be attention-getting, revealing and satirical, now you had to study, and the pictures are a studio, and no one was better at it than Benedikte Bjerre. When it became giddy flirting, so it was time to change direction, and Benedikte led the way. She had made a reportage about herself and her dildo, and that was the end, Benedikte was still highly motivated, full of energy, burning interested but now she was a researcher who registered, watched, presented in a report and gave it all a tinge of sober, scientific thesis, and she was praised. She was taken around to different places, it was shown only in Denmark, but should have been



© Elin Hansson / FATAMORGANA



© Elin Hansson / FATAMORGANA

in the world, put the camera on a tripod and took a picture of what was between the tripod legs, and it was just above the stand, and she noted the coordinates and took samples of the soil and vegetation, which were then observed under a microscope, and it all put forth as evidence of the place.

It was real, it was the truth. Do you want to know the truth about you or yours, so you must collect as many facts as possible, study the collected and put it together in a meaningful structure. Benedikte's stars, coordinates, soils, vegetation in the microscope was the truth about the place, just the place and the difference between the four different places we would even find.

The project announced the new time when the truth about you is the information that is available. And you will get to know you; you must link the data and form a picture.

The photograph was ideal to detect because it echoed every photon that was thrown back from the observed object. She was good, Benedikte, and she was on. Studied on the Städtisches Hochschule, Frankfurt, where Jacob Emdal was nearing completion. He had to turn a proper somersault when he three years ago, arrived at Wolfgang Tillmans department, Benedikte did not have to, her project data collection was much-hyped world of art also in Frankfurt.

Her final project was a recording of the effects that her late grandmother had left. Every object photographed with the same soft light in the same black background one on each side images to edge, all packed in a neutral binding. The 3000 books formed a blue block and sitting on a pallet on the floor of the gallery. 89 kg truth about her grandmother.

The new time had come to Fatamorgana, and although none were as categorical as Benedikte, there was still a drift; the entertaining desperate had to tighten the screw to get attention and calmly subtle gained momentum. It was a time of change, Alexander Kristoff photographed sex nuns and hard dicks, went to the Royal Theatre with lots of theatrical blood and cut the tongue by a singer, he loved to cause a stir, and succeeded, his portrait of an innocent girl age five who suck Magnum Eskimo icecream was charged with forbidden sensations, but most held back or surrendered to sober objective view, they would not be street performers, but artists.



Sara was meditating, subdued and Mette Hartung Kirkegaard, who had started an ongoing aggressive style put garlands in the shallows and glass balls on the rock when she was home for the Christmas holidays in Allinge, Mette wanted to be an artist.

She explored the landscape, decking up in the greenhouse, gave the trees suit and mixed in some strange way that observed with the developed, and all the time she asked questions, it was a pleasure to see how she evolved through his personal



© Mette Hartung Kirkegaard / FATAMORGANA

experiments, there was a whole special openness in her pictures as if anything was possible, a naive, playful quest which was breathtaking, and everything she did looked exactly like her.

This was Mette, never afraid of anything, always modest but curious and with a great visual talent, she could see things as no other. Both of Amsterdam, Gothenburg and Glasgow she was accepted as a student, but chose Gothenburg, Akademin Valand, where she continued her land art installation art with painted sticks and whimsical setups.

Kim Catton went also came to Akademin Valand, though, when he was admitted at the Fatamorgana was aggressive reportage photographer. At a picket in front Brorson Church, as police cleared for rejected asylum seekers, it was Kim who helped a girl on her feet after the police had beaten her in the asphalt with cudgel blows. The video for the heroic performance circulated on the net, and made Kim famous. But war photographer withered when he started at the Fatamorgana. I did everything that I could to keep him alive, invited Fady Adwan, one of the few photographers who were in Gaza City during Israel's bombardment to show her pictures and tell how it had been to experience that as a photographer. Banaan Hesam Al-Nasser interpreted in Arabic.

Kim wanted, even though he was politically engaged, to be an artist. He faked together with his girlfriend an expedition to the North Cape, an exploration of the elements that were not afraid to invest a lot of energy and time into a single work, if he believed in it. His energy was great, his intellect on top and independence overwhelming, Kim did not want any help or support, he knew what he wanted, and he did what he could, and if he could not, he set out to learn it. Mette felt at home in Gothenburg, Kim did not. It was too academic, intellectually shallow, there was too

much talk and too little production, there was no room for originality, unification was complete, he was bored, and after a year he left the city and the studio and came to Denmark to make project 'Drone' where he puts the killing machine and its application up to debate. The artist, he has become, but the war photographer has again been allowed to look forward.

The political photograph was not completely forgotten, Banaan Hesam Al-Nasser, which later was admitted to the Academy with a series of debate-generating works of sewn virginity made with Soren Ebdrup illegal bill posting on the buses: Danes against expulsion. Morten Messerschmidt was replaced with named asylum seekers from Brorson Church, so it was them who had been parked in an asylum center for 7 or 10 years, with their hand under their head, as the now hidden Mezzerschmidt, said: - Give us Denmark back. No political photograph was not dead, nor reportage.

As the country's best photojournalist students were honored with the Information Photo prize that year, it was Sara Brincher Galbiati, Sanne Vils Axelsen and Tobias Selnaes Markussen all from Fatamorgana, who got 1.- 2nd and 3rd place. Sanne had been an intern at Jyllands Posten but the other two at Per Folkver Politiken.

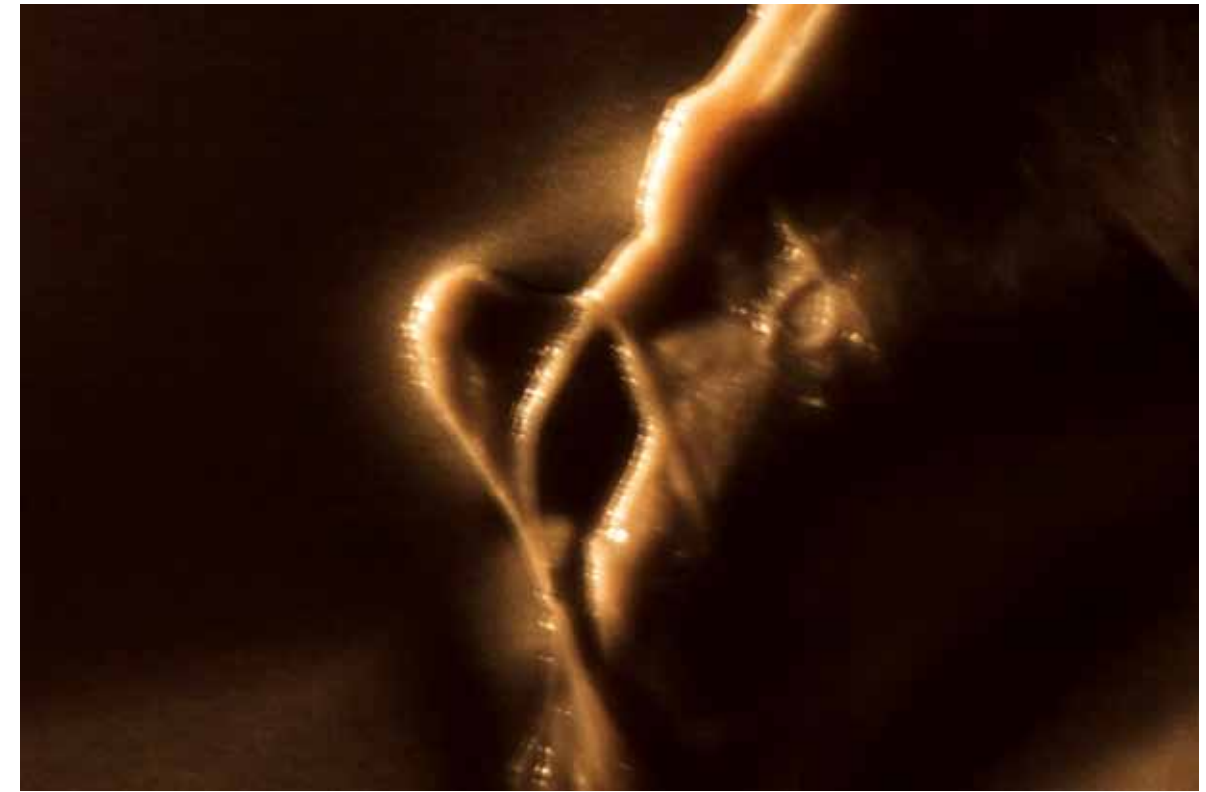
Since his appointment as picture boss the newspaper had distinguished itself as something special when it came to face, my former partner led our shared ambition of Ragnarok with him, ideals, method, openness, language and attitude, and it was no wonder that Peter in the selection of trainees primarily selected students who had gone on Fatamorgana. They had the same attitude to what reportage image should be, they had the same professional pride, and same visual look, and then dared to open their mouth when something was against them. Among photojournalist students doing an internship at Per Folkver had

first priority, then at Jyllands Posten and Berlingske Tidende. Did you get Funen County Venstreblad, one wrinkled your nose, and it was very wrong if there were only the West Coast back. It was therefore Casper Christoffersen by Astrid Dalum was advised to take leave half a year to go on Fatamorgana and hope for a better placement than the one he had received. And he got that, Scandinavia's largest photo agency Scanpix.

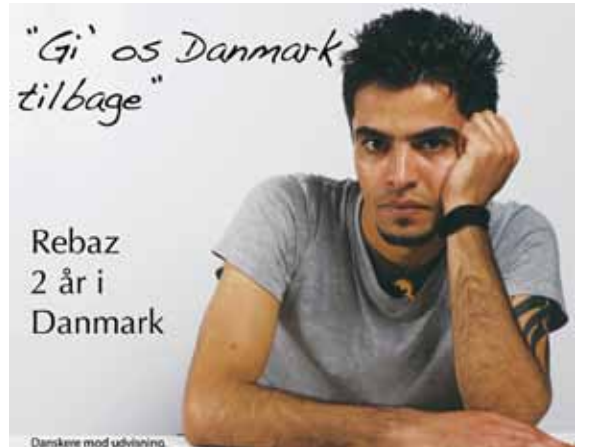
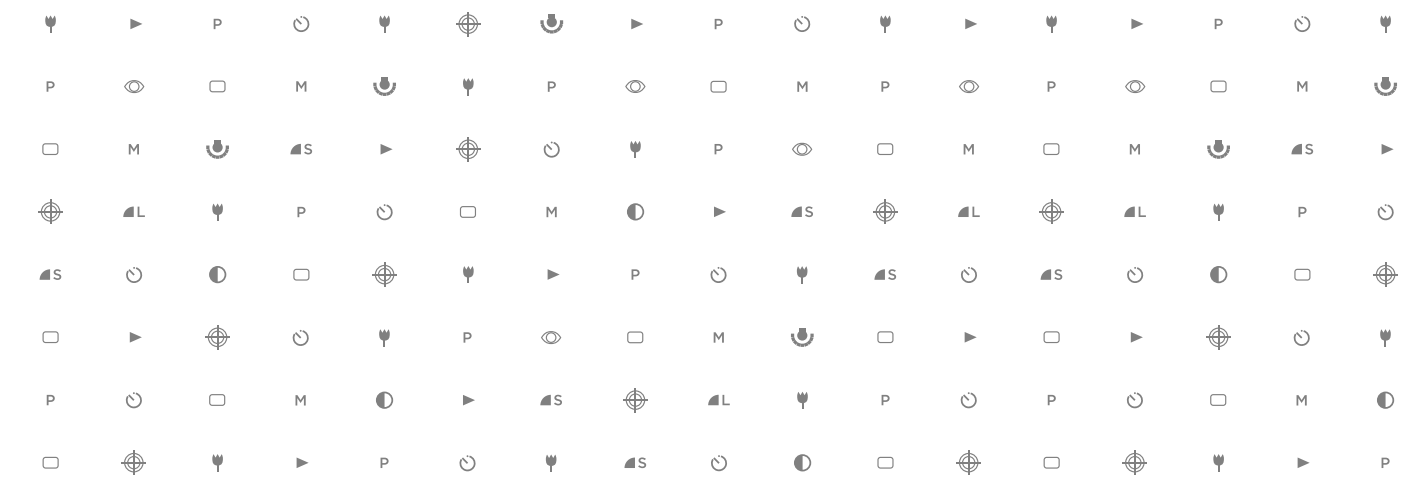
But where previously it was crucial to be able to photograph if you'd trained as a photographer, so it became more and more of a sideshow, with power and influence how press photographers were selected and trained, were scribes and had no visual viewpoint nor no knowledge of what it takes to be a good photographer. Ever so slowly the rope tightened around the requirements, first with the knowledge test as the ability to write to be able to refer to a meeting, but the former had to be able to deposit and rate his photograph. Now, it was determined that one should be good at not only articulate, but also good at spelling and grammar before they would even look at the pictures the applicant had made for the job.

Several of my best students spent a week on a report, made four images that documented their talent, determination, and visual viewpoint, and when they came to hand in the application, they should first prove that they could put commas. I think it was to avoid photographers of foreign origin, dyslexics and people with pride at the risk of the rubbish that could arise in a later appointment.

I complained on one occasion to the photography lines leader Soren Covenants, but he declared himself loyal to the writer upper class and accepted not only the discriminatory selection of candidates, but also the situation of apartheid, that the photographer pupils could not photograph for the first year, but only write and read. For some it is good and important to both write and



© Banaan Hesam Al-Nasser / FATAMORGANA



© Banaan Hesam Al-Nasser og Soren Ebdrup / FATAMORGANA



photograph, but it creates a mortally ill hierarchy of Journalism, the story is letters and photograph illustration. Per Folkver had huge success, and the Fatamorgana students got the best internships and most prizes, made no impression in the Bunker.

So now all the Fatamorgana students who want to become journalist, is taught by a writing journalist before they audition. It helps some but not others. Cecilie østergren Olsen was the typical news photographer, outreach, quick, turned and with a visual view that struck sparks three consecutive years, she was thrown on the grammar, but would not give up. Train HF at night school, took extra lessons in spelling and spelling, everything she did, as she became more and more stressed and less and less to photograph. I was her mentor for the first two times, but after the third defeat I lost contact.

The balance between reportage photo and freedom of art is critical to the Fatamorgana. It's part of the magic that you as documentary photographer can relate to the artistic image that you've tried it, and can use artistic tools in your photograph.

But just as important is for them to be artists that they know that there are some rules and regulations for how a reportage picture might look like. That they know what a good picture requires time, courage and insight. Often exceed the balance of the school for the most part in the artistic direction, and my job is to meet reporting.

Among the guest teachers there are always many documentary photographers and artists, to review and critique it all no matter what type of photography language they speak. But this respect for photography as a medium does not exist everywhere, in the School of Journalism, photography is illustrations with captions, and at the Art Academy it is a tool. It is a problem that no one at the Art Academy teaches photography, there is no history of photography as an artistic medium. In the field of sport's and music there is a clear understanding of the importance of routine, if you want to deliver the very best that you have to be in shape, you must train daily to stay on top, but when it comes to photography, there is simply zero respect, and my students are, therefore, when they become students at the Art Academy worse and worse to actual photograph usually they end up dropping it altogether.

So when Absalon Kirkeby had been admitted to the Art Academy this was my advice:
- Be sure to find a medium that you really want to work with, now that you're going to stop photographing.

I gave him three months, because I knew from the many others of my students who had attended the Academy, it was so long it took to lose interest when you were not active. But Absalom would not hear anything I had to say, he would go on to photograph, whatever.

- Ok, so I support you.
He was allowed to continue at Fatmorgana, while he was a student at the Art Academy and got all the support and backing he needed. I gave him advice whenever he should exhibit, make books or were unsure about where his pictorial was going. In the first year at the academy, he was dependent on me, because none of his teachers could say anything about his photography, but as it evolved, it became easier for professors and fellow students to relate to his art. Absalom had successfully exhibited frequently and sold well. Got great reviews and was constantly on the

road. Never saw him break from his photography, he loved to photograph, and belatedly began to lay beams and nes into his deserted snapshots, and I put words to what bar does, why it is there and why it is important. Absalon has just graduated after six years of education, and as usual, he asked for advice on what should be framed and hung.

- It would be so cool if it's possible to find time. Time is running from me, and I will soon have to decide on what should be framed if it is to attain to be ready for the opening of the 23rd

It became clear, and it was clear to me that not everyone ends up giving up on the photograph when they start attending the Academy, and that Denmark had gained a photographer and experienced artist of format, Absalon Kirkeby. His next publication is on the way, and I will be available if he needs me.

Two very different girls were in front of Fatamorgana the year Mette Hartung with her gentle nature and explorative experimental concept art and Trine Christensen, in her photograph she was rebellious and on, but as a person diplomatic organizer. Both were deeply loyal to the school, and it was them who set the standard for where we were headed.

The first Picture that Trine handed in, it was for the assignment: she, he and it, consult a foreign environment and be inspired to a visual poem about being together. she had photographed a pair of male feet next to a pair of female feet, and between the girl's spread legs is a plate of minced meat. She, he and it was so pungent grotesque borders on the bizarre and the lump of meat, which could be the dog they had chopped up or a miscarriage or the child who would be squashed in the system anyway, was so disgusting gray and full of fat and bones, on a plate that was used on the farm where Trine had grown up. It was a rebellious image with eye-catching, satire, light narrative and simple in its message, she had skills, something different. This quiet girl, who rarely dared to say anything when too many where listening.

But that all changed, the success continued with a retelling of Vita Andersen's poem, Another Saturday, from the poetry collection, Security Addicts. Here her frustrations were flaring, Trine could not only talk about herself but also about the poems content, the festive failure. She portraided coldness and loneliness, the setting being Dannebrog and streamers, to finally lying alone in a double bed with a vacuum between her legs, it is incredible how she could express herself in photography, both visually and conceptually, and then she was productive. She photographed a lot and did a lot of her selections herself but she needed support to understand that what she was doing was good. Stories, reports, poems, essays, she was virtuous, and there was a rare credibility in everything she did, it felt as if all this needed to be told. Old family photos combined with new footage from the family's abandoned farm, it looked so impulsive and playful, but I could see it was something special. The cut hair in the toilet, the blurred open door to the woodshed, no wonder it was her, Lucille selected among the 10 that this year was chosen to come to Marseille in residence and participate in the workshop with Antoine d'Agata.

I was anxious about whether she would lose her edge and temper, that she would mature and become to experienced, but to end, everything she did cut through the soul, as if it was the first time it was told. Trine suds of accumulated frustration, while Mette revisited the acceptable and designed her own fantasy world. Both were powered by a desire to communicate.

Trine was the initiator of the Fatamorgana Festival, held at Copenhagen Photo Festival. She and a group of students had



© Trine Christensen / FATAMORGANA

rentet "Huset" in Magstræde, and arranged portfolio review's, a photo competition and exhibition, which was a success, full house and dancing all night long. The following year it was Trine, who again was launching, but the support was not quite the same, and although she tried for three years to put something on rails, no one has since accepted the challenge. Trine was something special for the school, in spirit and in her art.

And the others were soon to learn, they realised that what they did had to come from the heart, they staged themselves in pictures, it would become personal and sincere, so in the wake of Mette and Trine's successes came a wave of "poor -little -me" pictures because it was how, especially many of the girls felt, they felt so sorry for themselves, it was the one that took them, and then they would just be honest. And because the alternative was to play happy and entertaining, they preferred to be boring and honest. The few boys who were in the group, so no recourse but to also be introspective, sensitive, naked and vulnerable. Daniel Bech was at the time, about to explode from all the girl talk, his pictures were frivolous, fuzzy bras, and I had a conversation with him that decisive change in his approach to photography.

- You are a hunter who goes hunting. You need to track down prey, dismantle it and bring the trophy home, so please do. Fuck all the sensitivity, all the fine feelings, your personality will only be expressed when you go hunting.

It helped. Daniel was fired up, got selected people squeezed against the wall, startled them and captured their bewildered suddenness. He loved it, finally, it was him who made the decisions, it was him that took the shot, and it was his images. What models felt meant nothing once he had got his picture. His trophy. It was a relief for him to hear me say that, that was the way that I had always worked, provoked in others, the expression I wanted and then just fired it off. When the picture was in the house, my responsibility stopped and my interest was lost. Daniel went from one boyish project to another, was sloppy with the light, the color, it was raw, and then swarmed with animal masks, superimposed birds and other imaginative, whatever he wanted. Finally, Daniel came found his expression, he was in his element, freed from "cozy cuddle moan talks", Daniel had found himself.

In the following class, was a slim tall girl, Tami Harmony Panic Vibberstoff that when she got the assignment to photograph a complete stranger, didn't really knew what to do, Daniel gave her his cocky advice and told her to do what she wanted.

- Well I want to make a meat hat and go down through the subway in rush hour and photograph people's reactions.
- Well then do it!

It was Tami's introduction to Fatamorgana, do what you wanted, if that is what you want, can turn into great photograph. Pictures we need and bother to looking at.

So the day after Tami took off with a stinky meat hat and a camera on the belly, chasing indignant face and were to give us something to laugh about. Or be ashamed.

- Here you are, here's your typical Dane, that it was the meat hat that had provoked the offended expression, we might not know. And it was also the matter of the



© Daniel Bech / FATAMORGANA

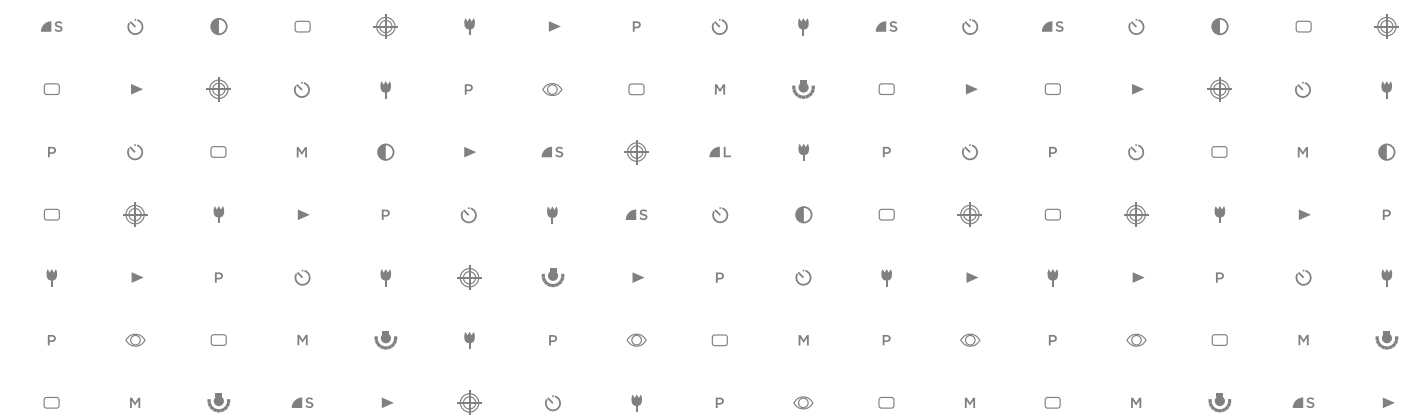


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© Tami Harmony Panik Vibberstoft / FATAMORGANA

fact that at Fatamorgana is not the process that is important, but the final product.

And so it continued Tami, not with the meat hat but with creative ingenuity, boundless contrivance that provoked unfamiliar situations and revealed the world and the people and herself, and it was collage or staging or snapshot meant nothing, Tami could it all. She made nightly slide show's on blank caps, wedding on the battlefield, one day I drove her with all sorts of props and three willing friends out to the marsh behind the TV studio where the illusory aliens, which was fueled by a machine, she had knitted together from discarded printed circuit boards, computer waste and exhaust hose from the student kitchen, Daniel was there aswell, he ran around with a vacuum cleaner hose around his neck.

A breathtaking theater of the absurd played out among the reeds, ceremony, escape, death and dependency, everything was at stake in Tami's adventure.

The following week, it was a trashy picture poem with flames of stray light, adjacent analog grain, dust, stains, miniature golf and kitty cat, it all looked put together that you got this special feeling that the world is not perfect, but still wonderful. That the truth is not what you think, but what you perceive an ineffable poem about being Tami.

She was prolific, imaginative and gifted with a rare visual talent, everything Tami touched was music, not harmonious and pleasant, but personally scratchy. After Fatamorgana, she went to Utrecht School of the Art's and while she took her bachelor's, gained momentum as a performance artist with artist duo Apperaat, although she calls it a *creative wonderland team*. Tami could, and Tami can. *Visual artist, photographer, musician and more.*

Her obvious enthusiasm was contagious, it became stuffed wolves, chaplin as a puppet and slimy slugs imagination got wings, and people were willing Rikke Myung Sun Nielsen was suffocating in red sausages. Hedvig Larsson went on a picnic with a beaver and Tom McKenzie went up to the attic, got naked and took a ride on the rocking horse. Absurd theater where it is up to the audience to make sense or be entertained by meaninglessness.

When we moved from Teglgårdsstræde to Strandlodsvej, was the school's network of former students who painted and decorated, 75 people were involved in one way or another, in making the moving. It was 10 years ago, and the paint on the ceiling in the basement of the computers began to linger. Every six months there had been spot painting done to the worst places, but now it needed a over hall and I convened therefore a large painting weekend. 27 people renovated the school that summer. Color darkroom folded, which was decorated with a student lounge and a corner for relaxation. The last wash in the computer room was done and everything got a fresh coat of white paint. To stand delicate and coordinate the many helpers Daniel, were hired. He had been at the school for a year, but enjoyed it and was happy for another six months from working as an intern renovation in the summer. A plan was made, materials purchased and network enabled.

The garden had been renovated, Troels had with spirit leveled and graveled and put a dance floor in natural stone, where before there were brambles, and on the day where I was at the Court Theatre to be awarded Fogtdal Photography Prize kr. 250,000 I had invited everyone to the dance competition on the newly laid out floor in the garden. As a thank you to those who had spent a weekend or more in the basement of June, they were on school's birthday presented with a commemorative gift, a camera of the older version and a motivation for why, it was just the camera that should have. Tami got a. Agia Click with the words:



- Always keeps your calm and composure. Except once. It was when you found your stay at Fatamorgana was over. Then it clicked for you, you shook at the knees and your voice was husky. But luckily you found a sponsor, and I'm happy for you to click upon fata.

© Hedvig Larsson / FATAMORGANA

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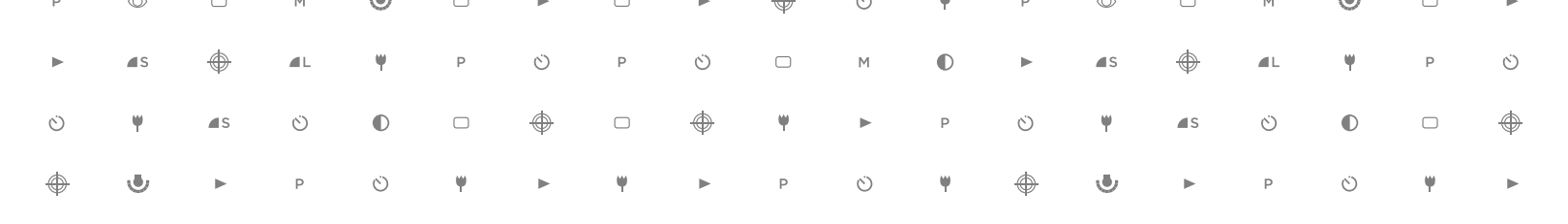


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Every summer since the school's inception, we held summer workshops for all regardless of qualifications other than that the participants should be aged 18 but now I wanted to try something I had wanted to, extracurricular workshop for 12-16 year old children and adolescents. Every day from 12-16 pm, and it turned out to be a great success. I enjoyed having to divert myself, learned a lot about both them and myself.

When we sat on the table up in the garden and ate the fruit, and the girls blabbered on about loose about photography, so I got the same warm feeling I remember from the pilot project on the island in 1988 Here I belong.

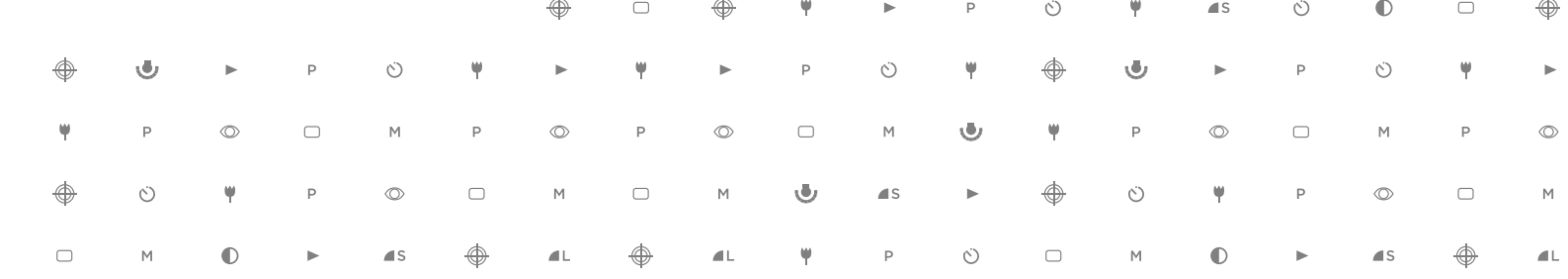
This is my home. I never want anything else. There was a feeling of the birds flying out of the cages. Never before the girls and one boy could talk passionately about photography with their peers, my merit was to have brought them together and allowed them. And the kids have an easier time adjusting, in four days they had learned the language, or more likely, they had been allowed to say what else they had to settle for to think or feel. I smiled when I heard them use my platitudes, as if it were wise words, but they understood each other. It was these feelings that 25 years ago sparked plans to create the school. The sun was shining, there was fresh cherry's and melon, freshly baked bread and fresh blackcurrant juice and this sudden attraction to do photography. Closer to happiness you cannot get.

But it was not just me who felt that Sommerskolen was a success, on the last day parents were invited to the diploma ceremony, bubbly water and the week's pictures on the wall, and I was urged to continue once a week up to July. It dawned on them how much it meant to their children that there was opened a door. So when autumn team kicked off the year so did The Aspirants with assignments, image critique, photo safari, portfolio review's with fellow pupils, it was so uplifting to hear how good they were, talking about the pictures, which qualifies willing to judge whether something is good or bad.

In The Apprentice class Aspirantenes Foraarskold there was only one girl that continued on, it was difficult for the parents to pick up and return from afar, and 8th-9th classes took a lot of time and effort, and when the photo tasks as the other homework was a burden, I chose to drop the aspirants and settle for summer school.



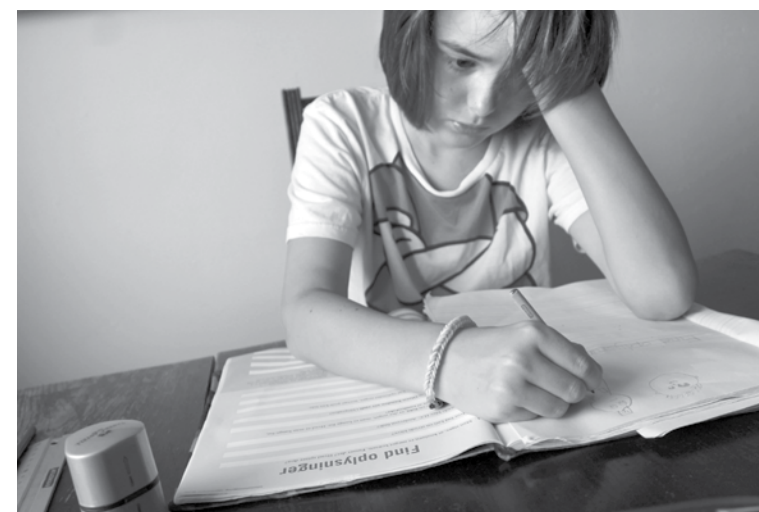
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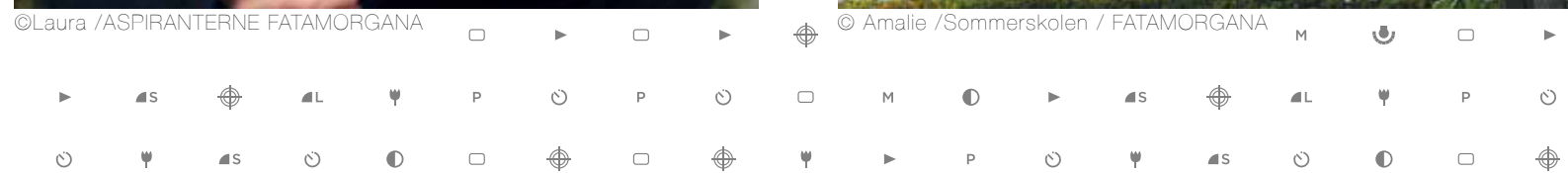
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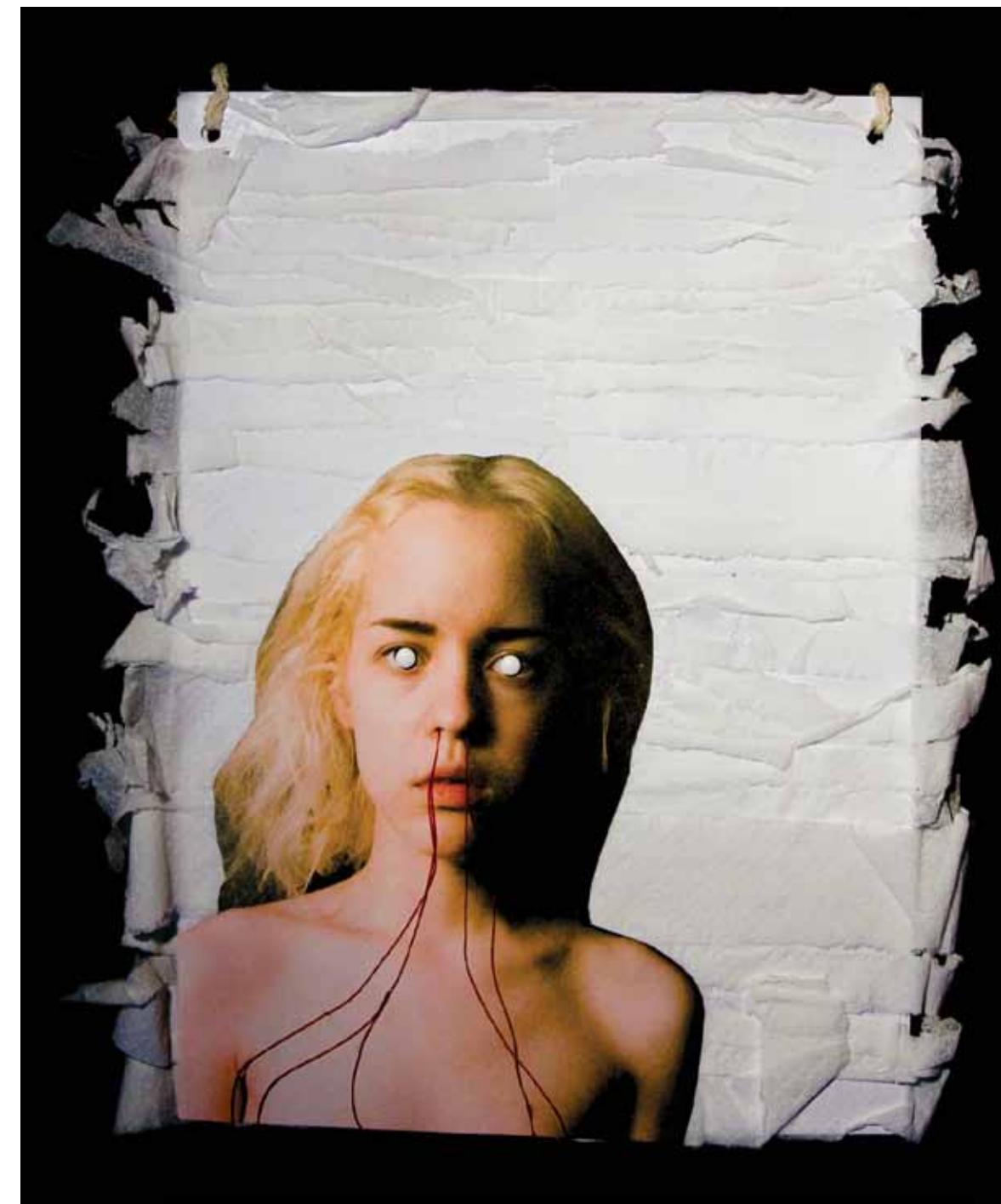
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© Amalie /Sommerskolen / FATAMORGANA



© Siri Victoria Lidbeck / FATAMORGANA



Fra projekt Ballerina © Siri Victoria Lidbeck / FATAMORGANA

When Siri Victoria Lidbeck first visited the school for Open House with her mother, she did not understand a word of what was said. She was Swedish, shy, young and extremely timid. Then when she started, Fatamorgana she was bursting with the abscess. Even Staging where she played the role of neglected, abandoned and deserted. The subject was each time that it should be so festive, but now it's all ruined. But sceneries evolved from being simple and specific enough to be nuanced and ambiguous. From the simple to the elegant seminal. She always was in the picture dressed or undressed, for it was not a rebellion aimed at anyone or anything, it was the body of her own, she rebelled against. Everything she did was fierce despair over the body, a struggle for right, a pleading of acceptance of others and his own. And it was great art. Because she fought so hard and it was so important to stress that, everything she did praised, there was tenderness and love in the air every time Siri's images was shown, no one doubted that they had a prayer of being understood.

Ever so slowly she warmed up and was happier, explored different genres of photography, her Ballerina collage is a masterpiece of photographic art, Siri could be better than any expression of self-destruction and create the theme, I am unhappy with my body. There was no taboo at all, but grotesque destruction and wonderful elegance, it was so effortless, so as obviously out, the beam of light, her operation imagination, where she acts as Siri to the plastic surgeon and ends up as a ballerina in the circus, it's so funny and painful, rebellious and touching, but it was her series also double portraits of Siri and father, brother and Siri, Siri and mother and Siri and aunt. Family members were dressed Siri naked, it looked like nothing we had seen before, she was an excellent performer and had billesdyn like no other.

At Antoine's workshop in Marseille, as she was selected to participate in, she continued the project with random strangers in Marseille. Siri nude keeps the dressed strangers, or they hold on her. It was a rough project for her and took a toll, so the next project she put herself into an empty corner where she had placed effects that could be used in a story about being Siri. But it was the same feeling of inner revolt that swept the pictures, stained tablecloth, half-eaten apple, abandonment, someone has done a decent job, but it is not successful, limp flowers, a residual milk, old wedding dress and bowl with bloody fluid, spiky screws. Suspended, depressed, stabbing, bloody panties, it was so superior artistic, I could not wish for a better development if health is good and Siri continues her tale of Akademin Vailand in Gothenburg, where she was admitted as a student, it could get big, really big. Tarnis art was about to fly out of the cage, Siris about being trapped in her body. But both of them created the mirage story of who they were, right now and right here. A significant contribution to the school's culture and spirit.

We got an inquiry at Fatamorgana if we could help get a development project going. A photo school in Mali had to be evaluated and it was obvious that Morten Nilsson, who was general manager, had to do the job. So the next year he took several trips to Mali, and ended up making a report, not just about how the project was running, but also what it would take to make the school work. It was a great and exciting work that Morten Nilsson took over and expanded to his own project Commerce & Culture, they were soon involved in other developing countries, and even though Camilla Stephan relieved him in periods of time as general manager, he chose to resign his position, and I held a farewell reception for both him and Camilla. But I promise you that the new recruited, was given a serious fright

when the school's basement after a downpour had turned into a swimming pool, sewers overflowed. Everywhere in the basement had half a meter of water, and as there is no drain in the floor, and it took about a week to get pumped the water out, everything, walls and doors was attacked by mold. It was almost too much for the new operational leader who rigged emergency kitchen to the stairs, got computers and scans up in the library and thrown pretty much everything else out. So when she drove with students for their first fieldtrip the following weekend, it was a big construction mess in the basement that they left, and when I was the keynote speaker for Jacob Aue Sobol at Carlsberg, where he exhibited, The first stop on the tour was the Photographic Centre.

Jacob was on his way to becoming permanent member of Magnum Photos, he had been at the school as a counselor; his pictures were tight, personal and showed the way for young people who would work documentary. Jacob knew not how it was to get out of the cage or be locked up, but everything about what it was like to be human. And my word to him about his pictures were also for my students: - There is a tree, a gnarled old willow tree, it must Stynes every spring, every year branches cut down to small stumps, the crown must not be too large. There is a place, a tomb with walls of hedges so thick. Strangers shall be insulated and ground frost with a carpet of branches, snowy decorate fir.

And there is a country where cynicism gets naked and innocent expose themselves. Here are freaks and injustice, here you will meet the love's brutality and homelessness pain, it is naked, the man and it is vulnerable.



It opens his shirt and baring his chest, as it will allow itself - here I am. A few excessive tickling the hair on the chest warts, but otherwise only a thin and pale, flat-chested torso. And then a vivid imagination, a naive, sincere being. - I am.

When Jacob is launching a new project, I get to be the keynote speaker, Copenhagen, Odense, Riga, Paris and here in Carlsberg City, he brings the speech on its website, and is quoted from when writing about Jacob so on that way when my words reaches out into the world, the story of what it really means to photograph. And it's important for me to have said that documentary photography is art.

And documentary filmmaking when Lars Skree, who along with his photographer colleagues in the group Lens photographed political reportage on the school's first team, received the Karl Roos Prize for his Cannes-winning documentary Armadillo on Denmark's participation in Afghanistan was with the words: - Lars Skree is yin and yang; a tough guy, yet a poet, combat soldier, yet a graceful line dancer. How to be as documentarian, a rough guy, yet a poet, a war reporter, but also a dancer. And the reasons for giving him the prize for best feature at the Cannes Film Festival was that he had filmed it - raw and unpolished and in quiet moments almost thoughtfully picturesque. We celebrated Jacob with his Leica

European Publishers Award for his dummy for the book I, Tokyo, and we celebrated Skree when he won the *Armadillo* in Cannes. And should a student have a Sobol or Skree on the inside, I was ready to back up. And push on.

The majority of the students were girls, and the best danced with free art, but then finally a guy who had only one goal and that was to be as Skree and Sobol, he wanted to go to Aarhus as a photojournalist student, and to portray the world as he saw it. He had what was needed, width, maturity, ambition, he was fast, had an eye for the right location, the right time and had already made himself a name as one of the young lions in the documentary industry.

It was Lasse Kotod. He was outgoing, aggressive, and I was anxious. Gave him the task Six Hour Run a report on a marathon in Vallensbæk. Copenhagen Six Hour Run up to 150 participants run 19 laps around the Tueholm Lake, and he should follow Charley a long-distance runner who was fastest Dane of 100 km at the World Championships in Winscoten, Netherlands.

- You must make a reportage about running long distance. Photographing what goes on before, during and after the Copenhagen Six Hour Run. A dedicated personal reportage about chasing threshold for physical activity. About training and endurance of fatigue and pain.

But it did not go as I wanted, whether it was the protest against getting a commission, or it was free art, which led him astray, I do not know, but I remember that I wasn't happy and during the following critique I let him have it: - Oh shit!

Lasse got into Aarhus, and when Martin Lehmann at Politiken had to choose a new intern among the many who sought precisely Politiken, Lasse clearly was the best. He was both raw and unpolished, but that is also reflective picturesque.

Tedious, indifferent, hazy yellowish landscapes where in the distance shown enough, some people traveling on a path - *What the hell are you doing?*

It was not until much later that I had to admit that Lasse went to Fatamorgana to learn how to dance, war photographer, that he was already. When he emailed me from Marseilles, where he was selected to attend this year, he went into a coma, he just could not photograph. Everything he pointed the camera at was boring, he would so like to show Antoine d'Agata, he was good and get something out of the ten-day workshop, but he was empty and now asked for help. And he got it. - Now you get up and onwards and out of the hammock. Bored Equality Photos are totally forbidden, now you go into the nightclubs and flash the prostitutes and the biker castle and make snaps of criminals and the football club, so we smell underarm sweat and macho, for, your stay here a failure, then you will regret for the rest of your life that you did not bring your best.

He did so, and three days later emailed me that Lucille saw that he had come to the hospital because he had been assaulted, and when he returned it was with a rambo ned face, but he smiled and had forgiven me.

Lasse went to Aarhus in the same class as Ida Munch, she got to do her apprenticeship at Jyllands

Posten. At Fatamorgana, she was a dynamic live wire, always on the move, always happy, always aware and present. Nothing went Ida's nose over. She loved going to school and need to be praised. And she got it. As invidious task she had to shoot at a demonstration organized by the Association of Rare Diseases, and she would then make contact with a person with a rare disease and preparing a report. It was a year-long acquaintance with Silas and his mother, a beautiful on-going project of the boy who is not like others, and which may go so incredibly much through several operations, isolation, pain, Ida was deeply moved and managed to get close to both the family and Silas. Long after she left Fatamorgana, she kept in touch and continued to photograph Silas' incredible life.

Sybilla Marie Wester Tuxen was completely different, also a documentary photographer, but not at all aggressive and insistent, you didn't really notice Sybilla, she was just there, quietly, "one with the walls" and revealed no secrets. But in a one on one the drawings were revealed,



Lasse Kotod after the assault

the drawings that she did at night. Large wonderful squiggle pencil drawings with shapes and patterns, ornamentation and fabled animals, such as Sybilla, she had a big secret room that no one knew about. - her love for Russia, I didn't even hear about until she returned after studying art in Saint Petersburg for one year. She had made her first film in Russia, and it was so vivid, genuinely original filled with her drawings and photography, that it gave her access to Arne Bro's documentary line.

Sybilla started at film school when Jonas Greve Handskemager started at the Academy. He was like Sybilla, quietly and correct. Polite and good-natured, I tried to provoke him with sour remarks about his laziness, but it did not seem to have any effect on him. He photographed analog, such a slow process, and the images were blurry, flash ugly and without character position or opinion, of course there was an opinion, you just could not see it. Jonas, I had doomed to be a loser when he came for a consultation to show me what he had done during the summer before the school started. It was snapshot diary photo from a trip by train to Rome and back again in an empty wagon.

It was a recurring event that Jonas and a buddy went down to the ranger trail behind Central Station, found a wagon with tarpaulin that could be cut up, climbed in and waited anxiously for it. In the pictures you could see how they made a hammock in the van and had a good time, for then in Rome to find another wagon bound for Copenhagen.

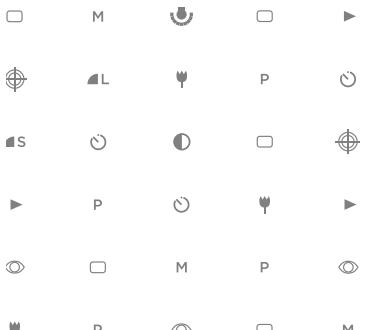
It was Jonas' secret. I asked him to make a retelling, a paraphrase of a highly controversial painting, Lunch in the Gardens of Manet, for it's time such an unheard motive: Two men dressed in the company of a naked woman.

Now was the time for Jonas' to go for it, protest, anarchism, experience and challenge, and the result was a wonderful portrait of a generation. It was Jonah in a nutshell.

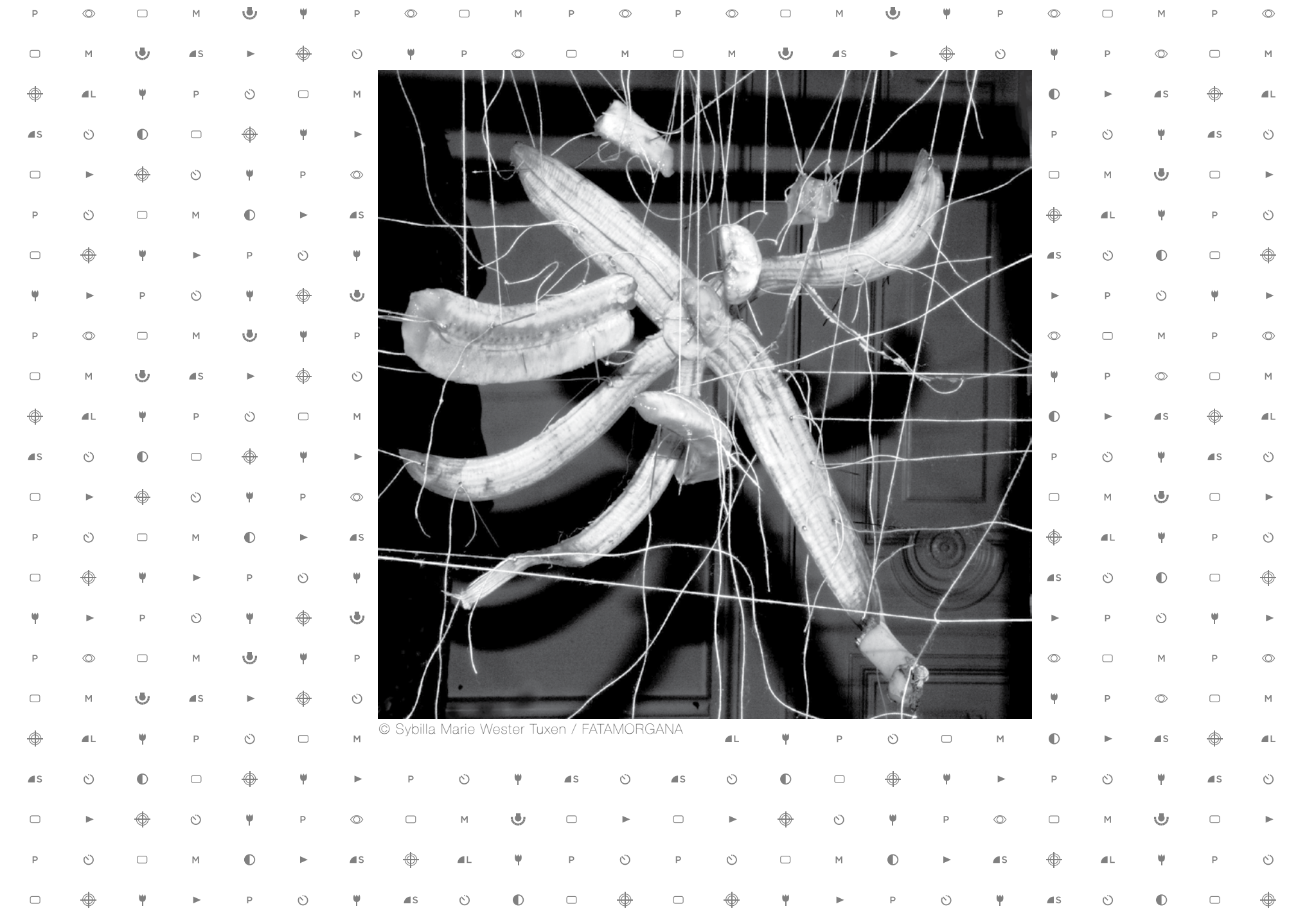


He and a companion had located themselves in a room in the basement room with a broken refrigerator, leftovers and tin foil trash, empty bottles, holding a beer, ketchup on the wall and a depressed Lolita, wrinkled and sloppy. It was something about a Luncheon on the Green when there was no more food, the beauty and the green was long gone, such as Jonas' generation, quiet and defeated, but what a fantastic scenery with everything I could wish for, filled with attitude and courage all to complete perfection. I sent Jonas to our photo technician, Eli to get help for the postproduction of the image, it needed to resemble an analog recording, even if it was recorded digitally. A repulsive Smokey yellow youthful environment. Yes, he got accepted to the Academy, not with his breakthrough tableau but with an art newspaper he had made in the third term, no one was in doubt that this was an upcoming artist of a great format.

Yes, I was anxious, and I was busy. It often seemed like the students gave themselves too much time and was too timid, modest and correct, I did what I could to give them vitamins in the diet, a boost.



© Sybilla Marie Wester Tuxen



© Sybilla Marie Wester Tuxen / FATAMORGANA



22 Silas © Ida Munch / FATAMORGANA

Mig og Thorvald was such a boost. The artists Elmgreen & Dragset, at the time the hottest duo around, had been allowed to dress Thorvaldsen's classic characters, the statues in the permanent collection at the Thorvaldsen Museum, had shirts or socks or backpacks, finally something happened in the old dusty museum and it was just right for us, because it was exhibited with photographs, HUGE prints of the inflammatory events that were going on. That we had to experience. And expand on as well. So the assignment was to follow in the tracks of the two artists and make a picture with the theme "Me and Thorvald". The images should then be hung up in the basement when there would be a party. In good spirits, we showed up to find that it cost a fortune to get in. I tried sucking up to the ticket lady, but she was adamant, but we gotten in the day before, there had been no fee then, but nothing worked. On the students' initiative they snuck in while I entertained the lady, and scattered all around the museum with their illegal stands. The result was beyond expectation, vitamin rich imaginative, sexy setups in front of Thorvaldsen naked virgin boys, what a party.

Less festive was to get a letter from the museums inspector, he found nothing amusing about our enthusiastic performances but sent an invoice for admission for 20 students, who he believed had snuck in

I was not welcome back at Thorvaldsen he wrote and added:
 - An the fact that you behaved badly
 - yes, eventually even intimidating
 - towards our officers and even touched a sculpture, which of course is strictly forbidden, of course does not improve matters.

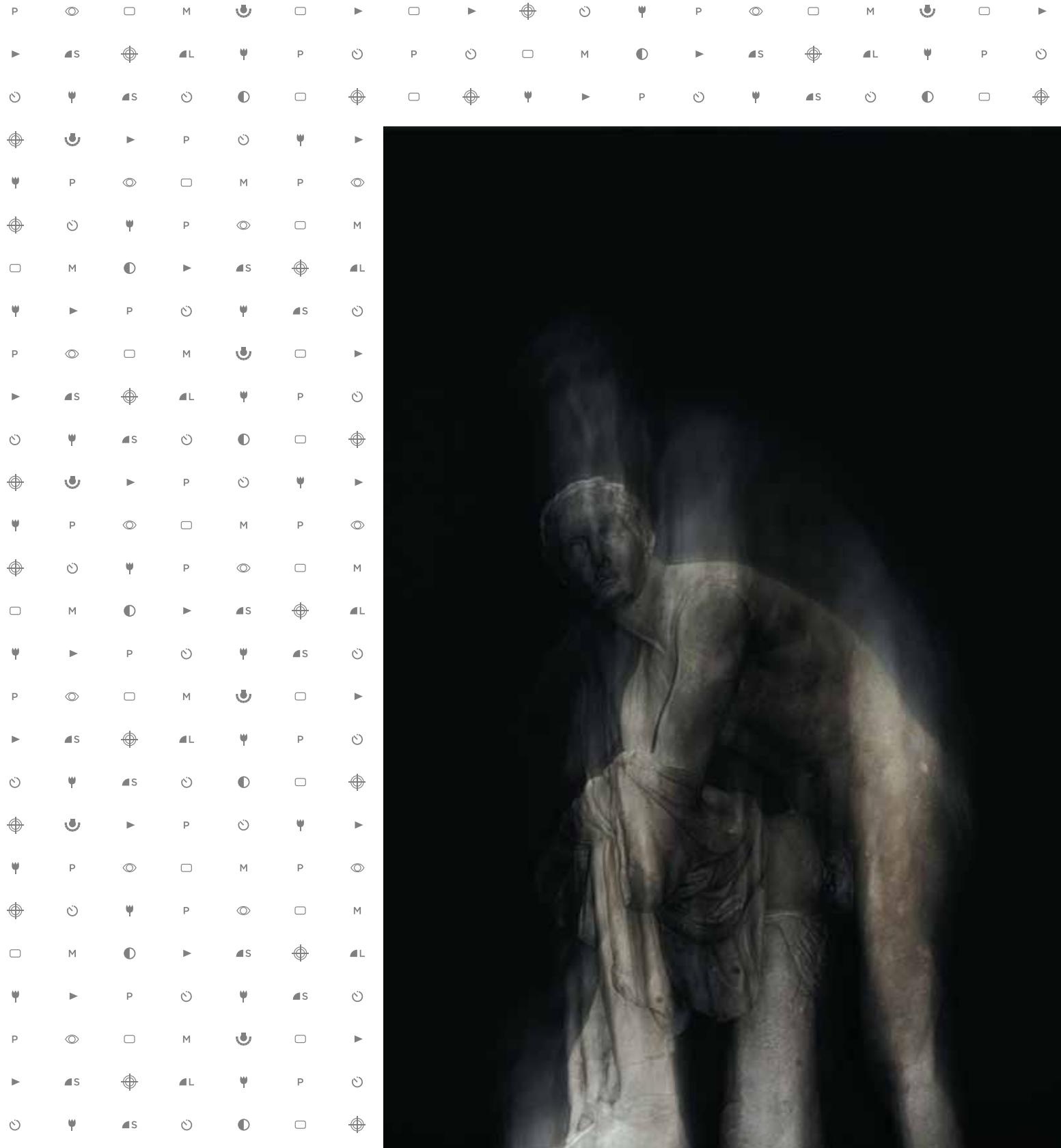
Again I had overdosed the vitamin dosis, I sent an apology and the image where Mie Laurenberg Olsen is trying to put pubic hair between the legs of one of the innocent, I was forgiven and we did not have to pay. But next time I thought the students needed a refreshing dose, it was held at the school. I was dressed as a priest, had baked wafers of flour and water and poured sweet home-brewed wine out of a trophy.
 - This is the blood of Jesus. . .
 Church Minister Manu Sareen had started a campaign about the Church's future, and the task was to create debate posters. The review shaped like a communion, and Thue-held Petersen, in his debate-generating eye, had used the Bible to support a little short legs, it still appeals to me Pastor Bo.

But not all linked high activity with grand gestures and high spirits, Sarah Michelle Riisager saw something else on classic white statues, for the assignment, when time stands still, she created a sad poem with such nerve, the blur was not beat, the composition tight, the statues had gotten soul, the tone was clear and hid no sorrow, the gentlest sadness in the standing figures, she but the to life and took advantage of all her artistic abilities. It was impressive, and it was just Sarah at the time.

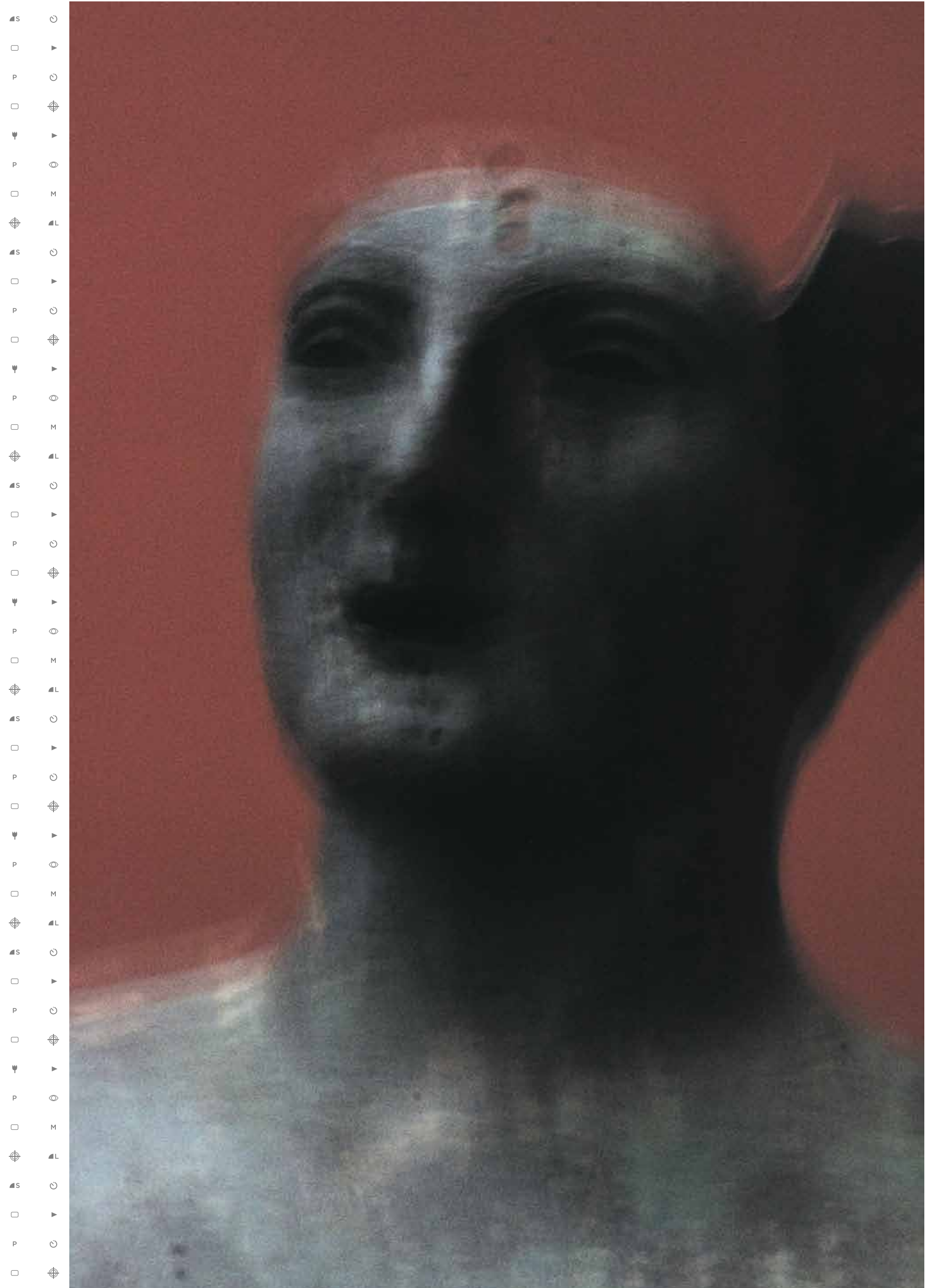
When Sarah started the school, her father was seriously ill, and she had difficulty concentrating, didn't really get going, isolated her self and was understandably mentally elsewhere occupied than at school. But then I gave her the assignment When death knocks and that challenge she accepted and made the most beautiful, most honest story about his father. right ten and there a hospital bed, with no hair on his head. Images of her father but also pictures of her grief. There are clouds in the sky, drops on the glass and ruts that comes off the road. It did not help the mood, but the restlessness, and the following year she went from success to



© Mie Laurenberg Olsen / FATAMORGANA



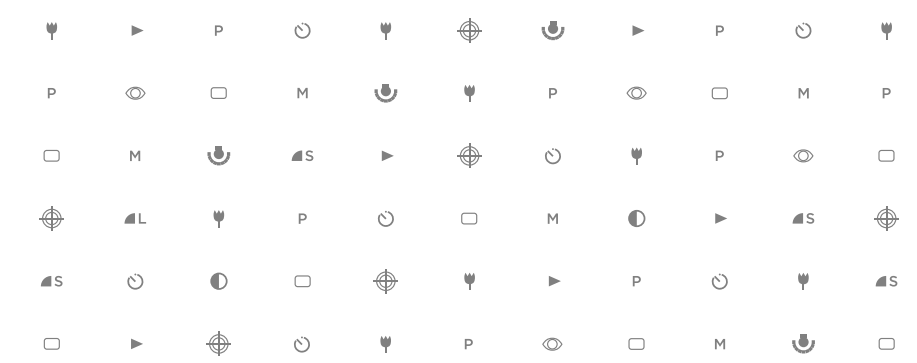
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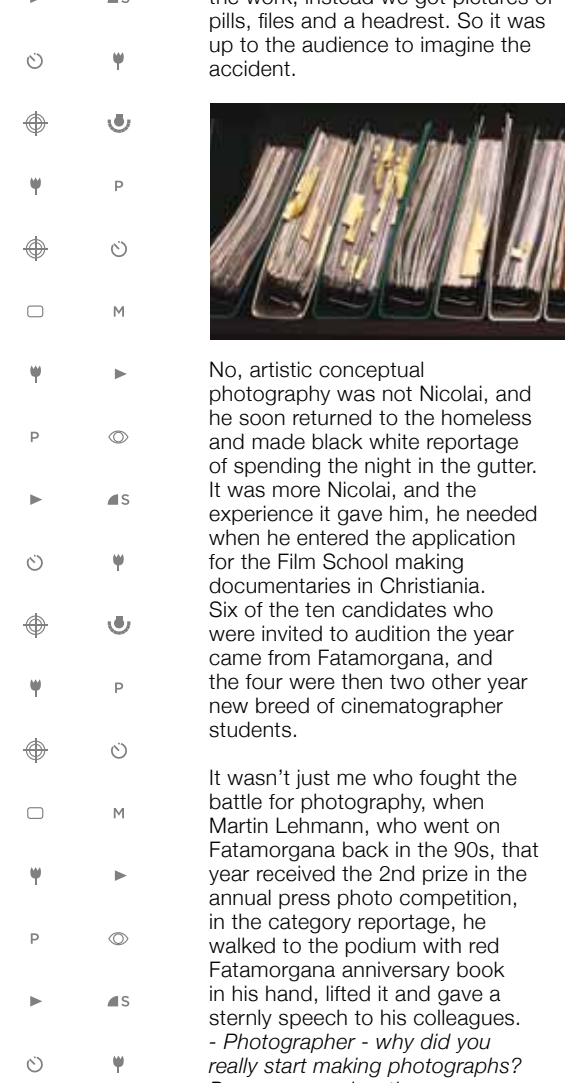
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success, she found her motives, she created situations, video, snapshot, conceptually, black white, color, nothing was impossible for Sarah, and all the pictures were Sarah right now, right here.

To follow her sad position in life, through her work was a journey through despair, protest, acceptance, meditation, thoughtfulness, sexuality, abandonment, hope, it was a touching journey of great artistic quality, which she later continued at the Glasgow School of Art.

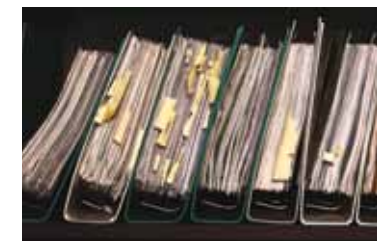
And of course she infected everyone with her quirky, original, soulful snapshots, feel-feel image s was not only allowed but the road to success, and the method was a pocket camera, flash and eyes closed or stripped to the waist. Could you get it to look like Sarah's success, then you were happy, but I was not.

Some learned the method, but many ran into a brick wall, strained images of "poor-little-me", or they distorted their documentary series with self-indulgent feel-feel pictures. No one dared to be himself in photography, all wanted to be Sarah. Jon Bang Carlsen had paid a visit and had shown clips from his ongoing documentary in which he was roleplaying and recreating situations where the teenage children of the night are abducted in their parents' request for an institution for maladjusted, and I gave the assignment *An accident, a documentary story or drama documentary, follow the lead of Jon Bang Carlsen and restore an accident. What happened, who went above and beyond and how was the response?*

The task was tailored to the students. Nicolai Lok Hansen loved working in documentary. He photographed people that were homeless, needed to be quick on the trigger, work impulsively with your gut feeling and create closeness. Black White classic reportage, it was Nicolai. But Nicolai wanted to be serious. He took his studies seriously.

And the seriousness of the time, was to provoke tears and to find or remember a personal crisis.

Nicolai chose to portray his mother's whiplash after a car accident, but reconstruction was not to be found in the work, instead we got pictures of pills, files and a headrest. So it was up to the audience to imagine the accident.



No, artistic conceptual photography was not Nicolai, and he soon returned to the homeless and made black white reportage of spending the night in the gutter. It was more Nicolai, and the experience it gave him, he needed when he entered the application for the Film School making documentaries in Christiania. Six of the ten candidates who were invited to audition the year came from Fatamorgana, and the four were then two other year new breed of cinematographer students.

It wasn't just me who fought the battle for photography, when Martin Lehmann, who went on Fatamorgana back in the 90s, that year received the 2nd prize in the annual press photo competition, in the category reportage, he walked to the podium with red Fatamorgana anniversary book in his hand, lifted it and gave a sternly speech to his colleagues. - *Photographer - why did you really start making photographs? Do you remember the energy,*

the desire, the drive from back then? Can you stay focused on why you wanted to be a photographer, now that everyone wants you to be normal, they want you to get in line and straighten up. Can you stay focused when they give you money, prizes, floodlights, press access, political campaigning, press, polished politicians, pool seats, pathetic portrait tasks, pain in the ass VAT accounting, prestigious competitions, performance anxiety - bullshit ... Will you keep focus? Can you keep your focus when choosing the wrong picture? When they secretly believe that the point of images in the world is to fill the gaps? Can you stay focused when all these things make noise? And then mixing in the words future and danger, they say, it looks bleak. It must be because they press the brake and are looking in the rearview mirror. Take your foot to the accelerator and look straight ahead. The arrow pointing forward. This is the cover of Fata 10-Year Anniversary, it was in 1999. Stay focused on what you are: a Photographer - you are human - you are the boss - you are unique. Keep the focus on your most important tool, it is yourself. Looking to the future, and only then could the photographer move and see what's around the next corner. The biggest danger is not the future. The greatest danger is the photographer - himself.

1st prize went to another Fatamorgana student Tobias Nørgaard Pedersen, he had been an intern at Jyllands Posten and was still a photojournalist student.

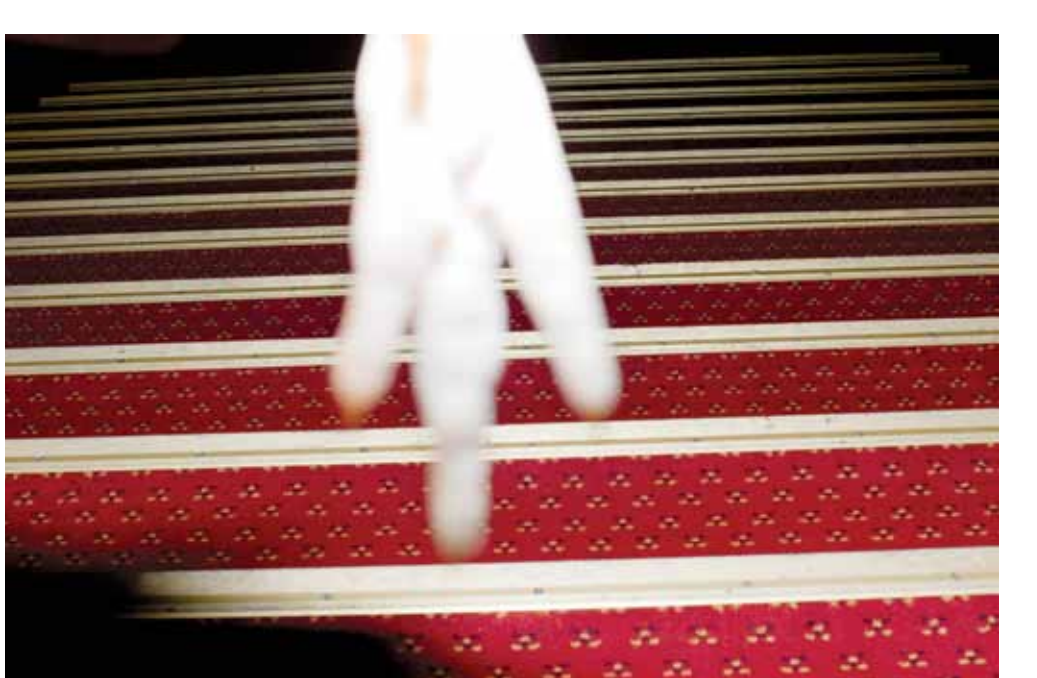
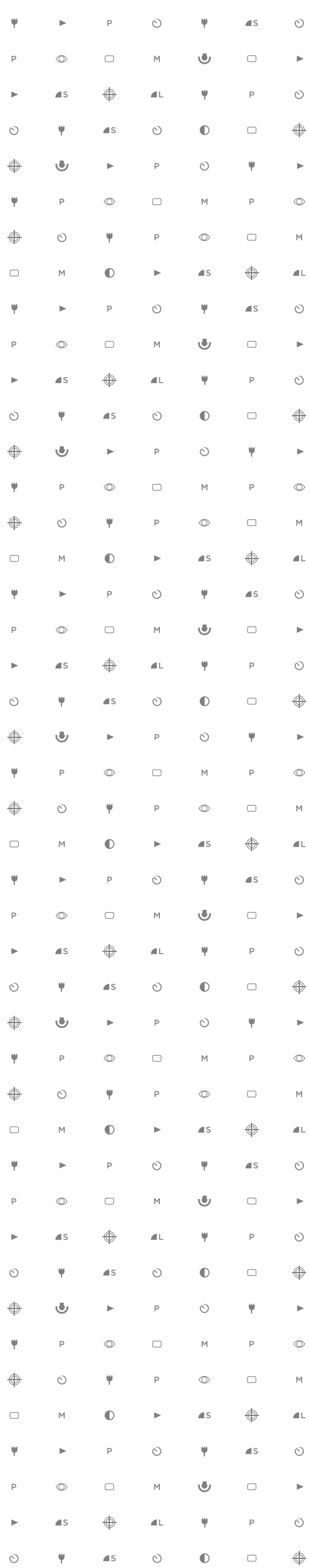
Freedom was ideal, but unification a reality. They listened to the majority rather than the arguments of opinion poll had been legally freedom was to do what you wanted and when you wanted to do as the others, so ended up easily in a queue of identity-less supporters.

Time was not for solidarity and originality, it was one man for himself and no one wanted to stand out. It caused problems for many, for fear of not being anyone, they were never out who they were.

The fear of choosing the wrong held them in contradictory compromises, or nothing at all. Many were caught in frustration and fear where there was neither sense, feelings, soul or freedom.

And I was on my way into my won version of this. It was frustrating to see how discouragement spread and creativity shrank. I was there for the students who applied for admission to higher education, but they would rather praise each other than get criticism of me. Comformaty threatened to become a culture. Then I decided to make and send a newspaper on the street.

6000 copies spread out to Internet cafés, community centers, libraries, exhibition centers, it would be devastating for the school, conformity and similarity were to become the school's new image. So in the 48 pages I promoted the school and bragged about how the largest Danish documentary photographers, cinematographer, photographic artist and designer all had attended Fatamorgana richly illustrated with the best of this year's student pictures. Printed Martin's speech on the front page and bought the library Press Photographer Association's 100th anniversary issue, *Witnesses Story* where I was interviewed about Fatamorgana's success and significance for the photographic community. Because we had significance, it meant something to have studied at Fatamorgana, it meant more to some than others, but often it was not until later in their careers they would realize this. When David Høgsholt made the summer headlines, it was because his project Mia, large displayed,



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black white reportage in Øksnehallen about an addict's life for more than a decade, was so strong, tight and personal. David photographed Mia first time when asked to photograph a stranger, in 2000 while attending Fatamorgana and the swallow, another addict Martin Lehmann had followed and made a book, died, I got a sweet message from Martin that now he was finally finished with the assignment photograph a stranger, and that he was now ready to get a new one. That meant something, and it matters. I shook the frustrations of me and kept the focus on success. Of course I also had to listen to Martin's advice: - Keep the focus on what you do: You're human - you are the boss - you are unique. The biggest danger is not the future. The greatest danger is yourself.

So when Lasse Dearman initially expressed that he would rather not take any advice or criticism, he was allowed to do so. He had attended the journalism school for six months prior, but got a internship at a not very attractive province editorial. A ride at Fatamorgana might better his chances, so Lasse took leave to work as a intern with Sigrid Nygaard at the newspaper Information. He photographed analogue, was experimental, personal in his imagery, and so he was quite ahead of the curve when it came snapshot documentary, photography experience with spirit and intense presence. Lasse could photograph who he was and what he felt like no other, he had aesthetic sense and a great talent. But did not want to shoot anything other than who he was.

There was in his pictures a stumbling arrogance, characteristic dirt and technical incompetence, color and black and white mixed, sloppy ugliness and cheeky flash, anarchism and homelessness. It was original and it was Lasse Dearman.

Jonas' generation portrait had been brought to life in Lasse Dearmans reportage, people had come out of the basement and now they were just in a no man's waste land and made the time to go by smoking joints and sleeping in, while critical questions, revolution and politics had become indifferent. Lasse was great. I praised him, but he did not care, Lasse could manage himself.

Ivan Riordan Boll was not as stylish as Lasse Dearman, he wanted to be a photojournalist but insisted on not making the press images. Wanted to go to the School of Journalism in Aarhus, but also make art. Would like advice and criticism, but rather make others happy, Ivan was caught in the dilemma of doubt, it was no big deal to get him excited for a term trend or maneuver, but it was not for the other, and the result was that a compromise that was neither the one nor the other. But at Aarhus, he came and I wonder if Ivan, like so many others, ends up as one of the best.

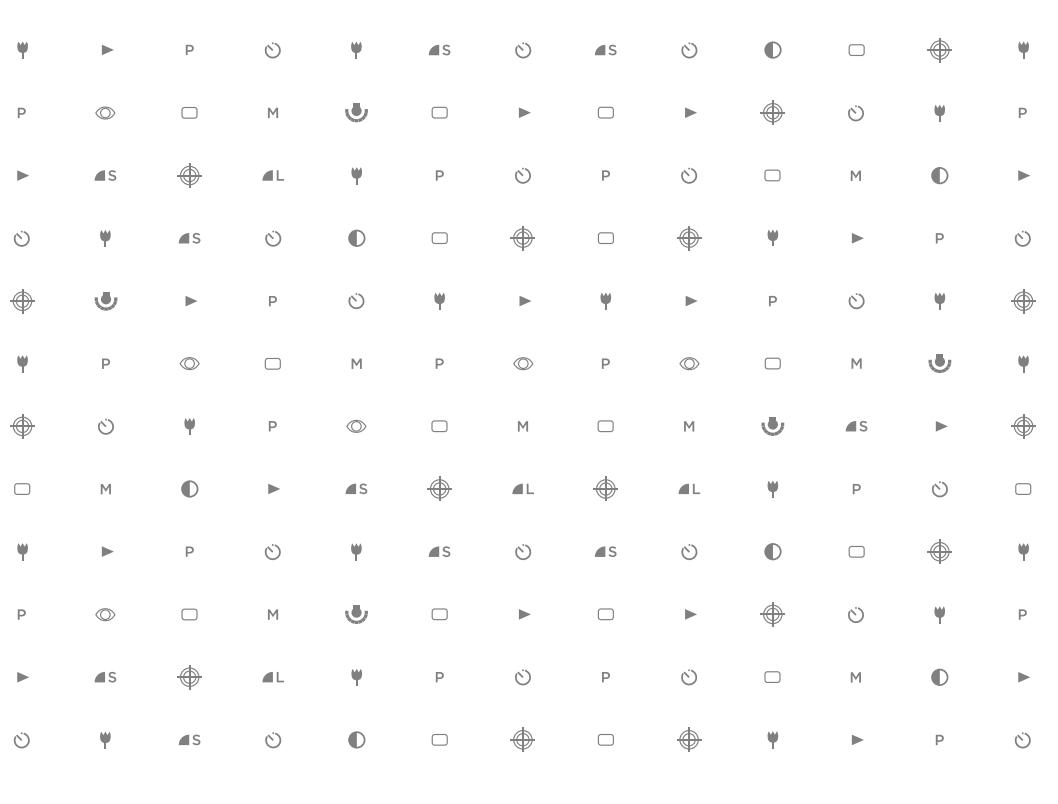
Katherine Marie Kragh was also in doubt, do, do not, video with sensitiveness or reportage. When like Kathrine, you love to try something new and hate to exclude options; it is not easy to make the decision whether to become a photojournalist or a filmmaker.

The day before the deadline, she decided on Journalism, no, decided too strong a word, but exclude the possibility she would not, so she applied to, for safety's sake. And got accepted.

The period "of doubt" was coming to an end. They were disciplined and met on time, but were on repeat and there were far between the actual photographs. Now it was more fun to make strokes of genius than discount art, so when Frederikke Jul Vedelsby arrived, she turned things around. For Frederikke was a genius. Everything



© Frederikke Jul Vedelsby og Mai Sønderborg Keldsen / FATAMORGANA



was different, original and personal, she could what no one else dared, she made the video, impulsive, dynamic, intricate, wonderful. She describes ardent of spiritualism, primitive music, interviewed other originals were probing in its pursuit of nuclear madness, took all tasks very seriously, read poetry, bubbled with talent and artistic soul. It was, as were all the windows opened, and fresh air filled rooms. Frederikke did not understand what was happening, she was only doing her best. Make the best ideas, find the most beautiful quotes, film the strangest subjects play the strangest music, and the beauty was that it all made sense when she had put it together.

It was just Frederikke, but for her it was a game, a matter of course and nothing special.

No wonder that Mai Sønderborg Keldsen, who had fought with the doubt for a year and now wanted six months more to figure out what she wanted to do, no wonder she wanted to be with Frederikke, and Frederikke was ecstatic, for Mai knew how to do everything that she had such a hard time with. Together they made an exhibition, photography installation, video, quotes, audio, everything was connected through Mai's experience and Frederikke's genius, it was an experience.

The reasonable doubt and the brilliant inventor, it was a good constellation. Both applied to The Art Accademi, but the insidious academic culture had infected the artistic environment, so where the geniuses earlier had been self written, eloquence was now more important than image-talent, reason better than intuition, strategic thinking better than impulsive behavior, so Frederikke was rejected, and Mai was selected. Now Mai is studying art and Frederikke? She sent me an email in which she writes:

- *But morten - do you have any idea what's going on? Why do I not go into the schools - do I appear sloppy and must I pull myself together...? I just do not know quite what I'm doing "wrong" or whether it is more about where you should be, or how to express themselves. I do like that it is possible for people to feel what I'm doing, maybe not necessarily read, but to feel.*

There is always a hectic atmosphere up to the application deadlines for higher education - where do I go, who wants me? - But when I asked Ulrike Häussler: - *What should you do?* she smiled and said: - *I just live.* From a position as a teacher in Germany, she came to fatamorgana in a mature age, because she was not yet done with being young.

Ulrike was professional. Where am I, what happens, what do I want and then just do it. Always ready for a push, it was no big deal to teach Ulrike, she listened, smiled and grabbed it all by the balls. Colorful, humorous, satirical and entertaining her school decor, where any one that passed by were photographed. Or her happenings, where she snowfall, slippers and robes mingle with gaping winter clothes Danes who do not understand one honk. Or the portrait of the underpaid Turk who day in and day out, stands in the center of the shopping street with an oversized advertisement for a burger bar. They had something in common. Both were strangers, and both tried to communicate a message. The difference was that Ulrike Holm unlike the poster man, believed in herself and did it with a smile.

It was legal to be entertaining. Art need no longer be boring to be serious, sensitivity did not rule either irony or twinkle originality was appreciated, diversity grew, and creativity flourished.

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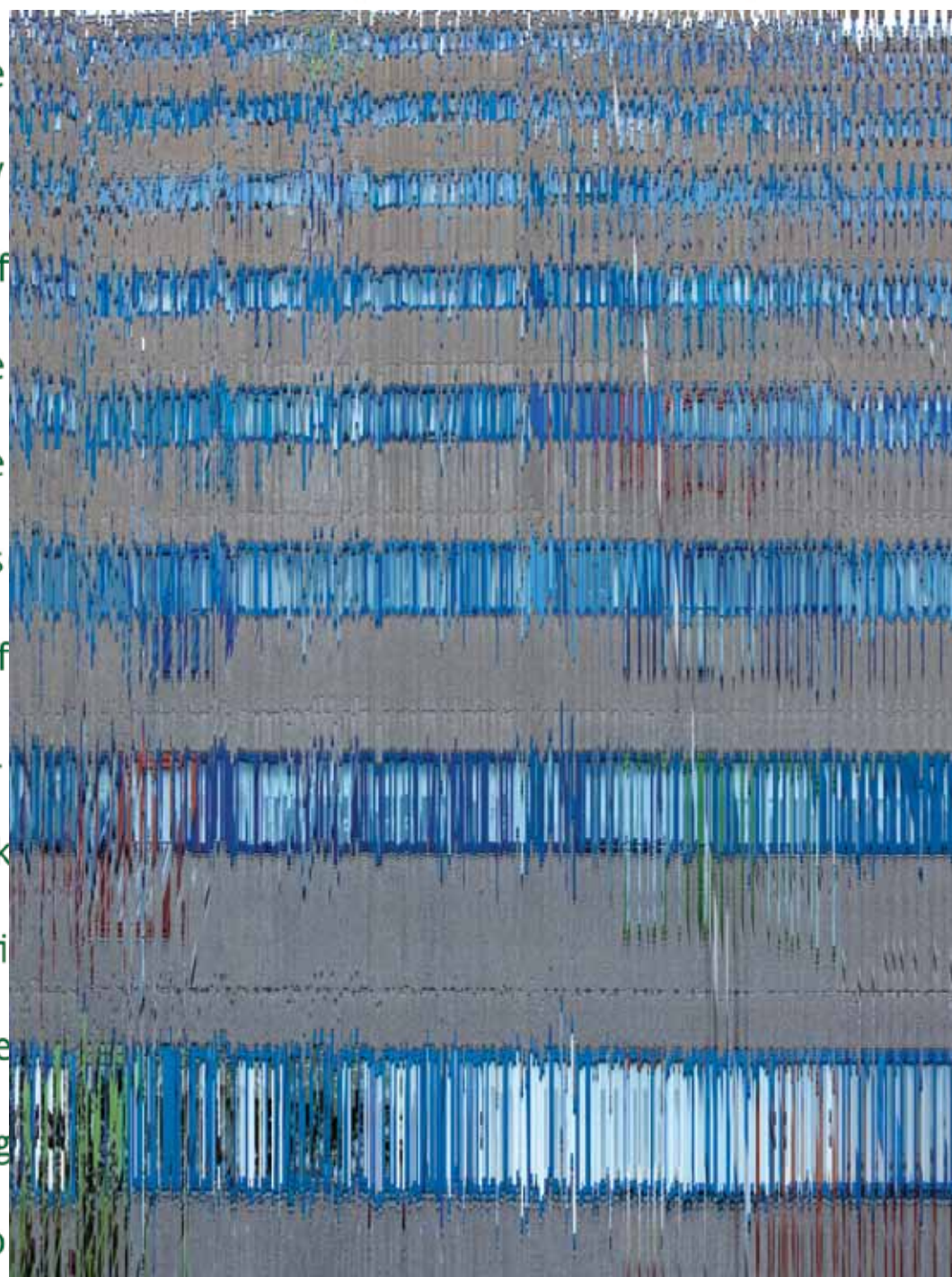
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© Steffen Wendt Andréa / FATAMORGANA

Following in the footsteps of those who were praised, you did not do, finding your own niche where you can express your personal creativity. Finding and identifying. And geniuses stood in line, each with their distinctive point of view, attitude and genres were many. Video, installation, reportage, painted prints, message and portraits, performances and productions, dream vision and documentary, ingenuity was great and everything was allowed. Steffen Wendt Andréa photographed a toothbrush on a strawberry printed table cloth, instead of toothpaste had been a cartridge bristles. Totally pointless, but it looked good and it was just Steffen.

After each success he gave it up a notch for eccentric, jubilant serious, if he had it, he acted like a genius, his latest work was a documentation of Værebroparken, the building projects were cut into strips an inch and put together an image that looked more like a sonofonisk recording in blue and gray than a building, but it was evidence.

Every morning during the semester he came in with circles under his eyes and had worked all night with his thoughtful, imaginative experiments and should like to know immediately whether it was working.

It was obvious that Steffen was selected as a participant, as DR-K's tv show and would make a series of master photographers and asked me to come up with qualified candidates. It was Cecile Baudier, who won, but Steffen made a good figure with his tattoos, beard and straightforward language, he was proud to have been involved, Cecile was bullied by her peers.

It was good enough for a little pop reality show, but my feeling was that the course participants had to be from Fatamorgana and with Martin Lehman as a judge, it was quite entertaining.

The moment Zenia Grindorf walked in the door, she felt at home. Her life had been marked by social misery, dad in jail, neglect and abuse, all but her friends turned her back. She was different and used to whine and complain or demand her rights, all guard was up, until she was standing in the living room so she could feel that here she was at home. Originals were appreciated, being different was a quality to have a suitcase full of bitter experiences and the strangest people as friends was a favor of the person to be photographed and communicate how it is to be human.

And she really had a circle of friends, neighbors and family who stood out from what we were used to. A treasure trove of contacts and it was no big deal for Zenia to get them to stand. Nude woman at 220 pounds snakes on the couch with a red wig, Zenia took us by storm. No one would make her footsteps, but her pace, mood and immediate photograph that made it stand out a natural thing and the most difficult piece of cake, infected.

Late one night, she asked if she could use the phone conversation she had just recorded with a man who called her to complain about her father, who owed him money and possibly had gotten beaten up by two immigrants.

A wonderful conversation where Zenia's astonished face and attempt to untangle shimmers in a lousy screen rendering. It was a culture, it was an inside story, this week's task was *The fight*. - *You must make an essay talking about a fight, either your fight one you witness or witnesses, it was excellent, if she could use the conversation unedited for the assignment.*

Zenia put still images into strategic locations in the conversation and let the startup screen to be the gateway



to the Western Prison. There was applause and praised for the little scene was so intense, so close, so bizarre, original and brilliant and Zenia could not understand it, it wasn't something special. Such was her life.

As a final project she started with a documentary account of the great summer market on Bellahøj, beautiful images of life on the site, types and colors but in the midst of it all she is told that her father is wrecked, hospitalized, thrown out from the hospital and now had to stay with her because he had no place to go.

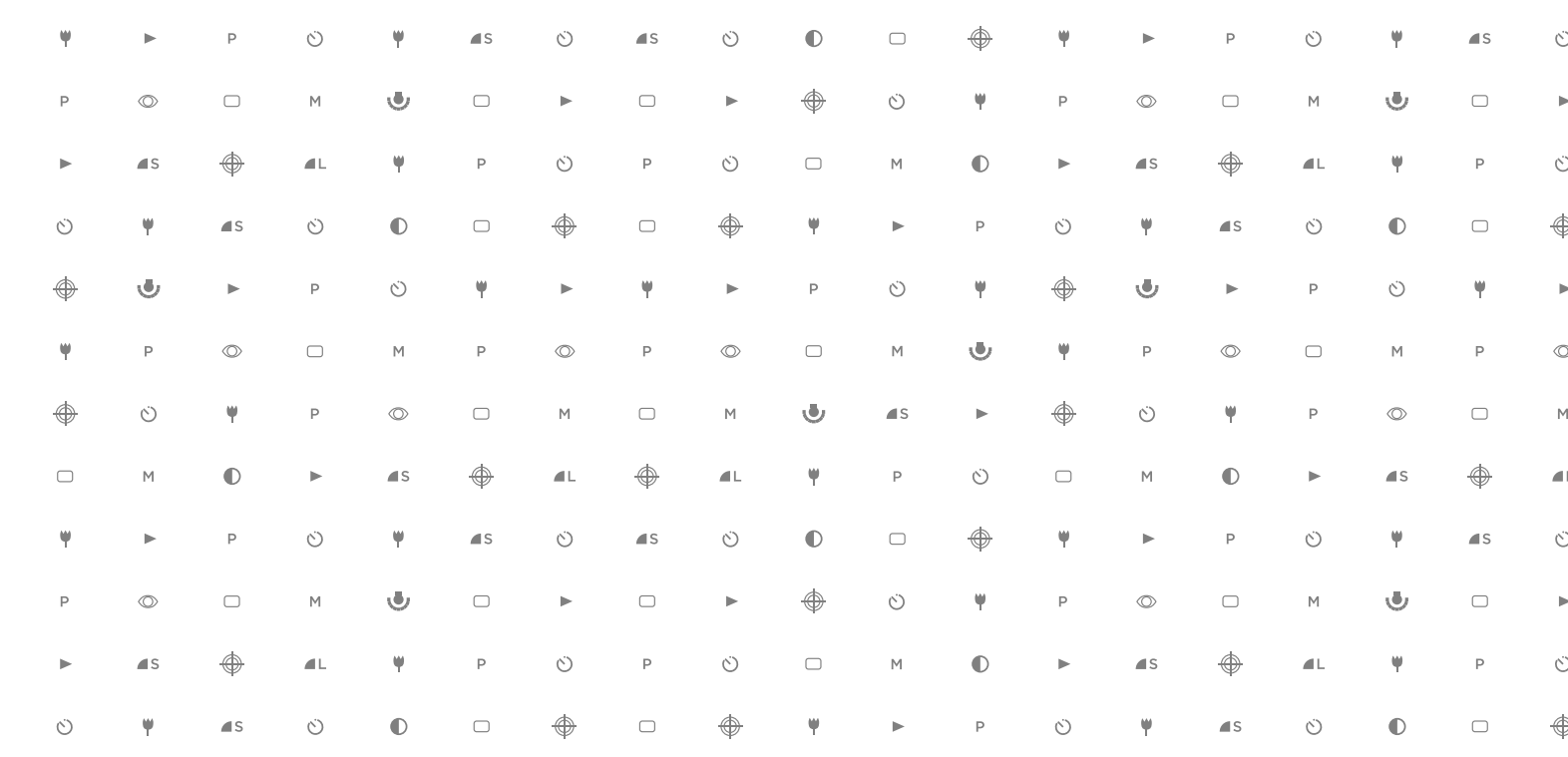
Zenia let the camera run and shoot his arrival, their conversation, and how she throws him out at the end. Next time she turned on the camera is when she arrives at the hospital where her father is now in an unconscious state have been hospitalized. She had a promise to me that if something is happening in her life that is worth telling, she has to turn on the camera. And so she does. Her father never wakes up, but Zenia have made the most beautiful movie about the last days of her father's life, and nothing controversial is omitted, all it is a wonderful film about despair, grief and sudden death. On my recommendation the municipality granted her another semester at Fatamorgana, at the time of Zenia had plenty more to tell, and was not yet ready to let go of the school.

Zenia came with life experience in buckets, Petter Berg was young and unexperienced. She had come home, Petter had come home, Zenia was foul-mouthed and impatient, Petter was polite and courteous. Having Zenia and Petter on the same team was a gift to the community. She highlighted dramatically, he smoothed out, she had to let go, he should learn. And he did, listened and learned. He was a model student, had a huge talent, loved photography and was extremely intelligent. He did not need anything other than sticking your finger in the ground before he knew it all. And it was like a game, his photograph was immediately seen, with creativity and color, filled with youthful zest for life. Petter enjoyed that there was room. And there were. My ambition to embrace the whole spectrum both artistically and socially had succeeded, it worked. There was a diversity both photographically and personally, but school spirit bound them together, and respect for the individual was great.

And Petter was productive. Always photographing, made one book after another, imaginative, challenging image collections with a wonderful mixture of snapshots and pack shots, he soaked up and grew day by day. Petter had speed and excitement, and there was plenty of room. Creative and mentally, I always encourage them to explore the corners of the images with the subject, why lump it together right in the middle, as my mother always did when she had to register that she had been visited, the face right in the middle, why not use the corners now they are there, use proportion and composition to create music in the picture, rhythm and character, so I have it with a group of students, why not pull it completely out of the corners, mixing age, experience, ambition and personality? It worked, they grew at different rates in different directions, they learned to respect the views of others and rely on their own senses. There was room, and there was room for everyone.

I bullied the lazy ones and loved the industrious, mocked parochial and praised the generosity.

Humanism and anti-fascism they dealt with themselves when sparks of racism would fly, it was agreed condemnation. The basic culture of Fatamorgana has always been the same, but the wider spectra that there is in a, the greater is the tolerance. Culture and education is a



© Petter Berg / FATAMORGANA



prerequisite for creative expression, and Fatamorgana there are ample space.

Formal education is always business-oriented, the goal is knowledge and competence, and the formation is not on the table. But at Fatamorgana it is a goal. Attitude, character, personality tools when students must create work or create themselves, photography is the physical expression and form, the way to go.

No should be told how to be, but to create an environment in which they find out it is a prerequisite for success. And the right environment, culture is completely broad, respect and understanding, recognition and pride, generosity and above all the desire. It is the most important, the desire, it is a formidable force to be exploited and promoted. It's very different, what gives you pleasure, whether it is praise and reward or fear of failure, some will only have light when desire is removed, others bathe in light and must practice how to prioritize the good environment

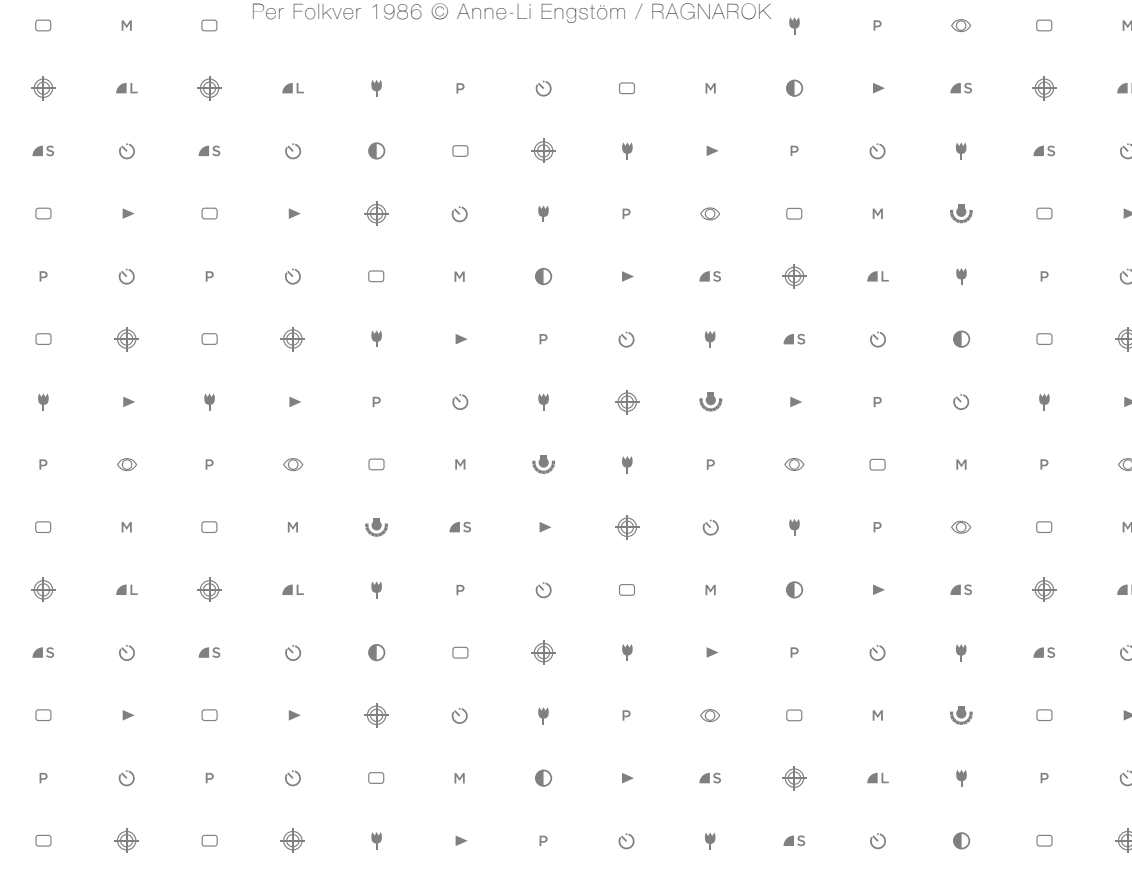
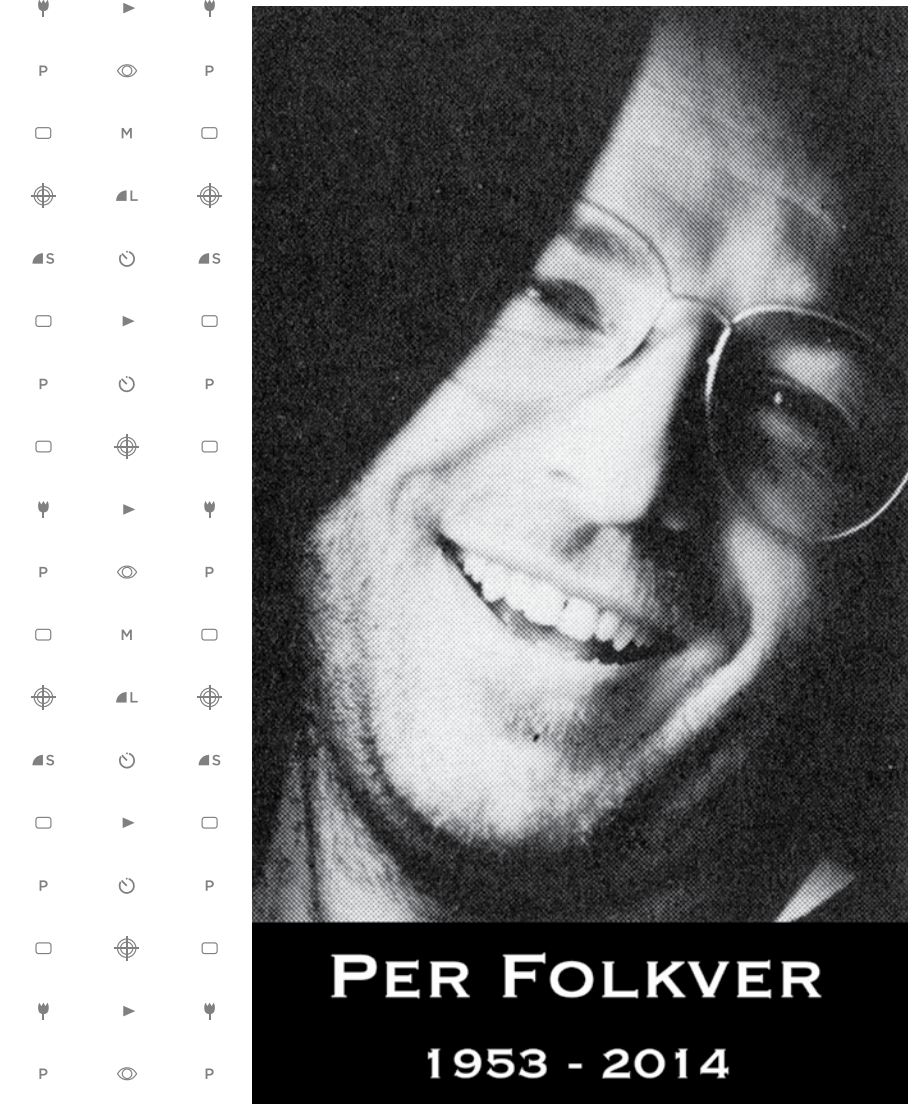
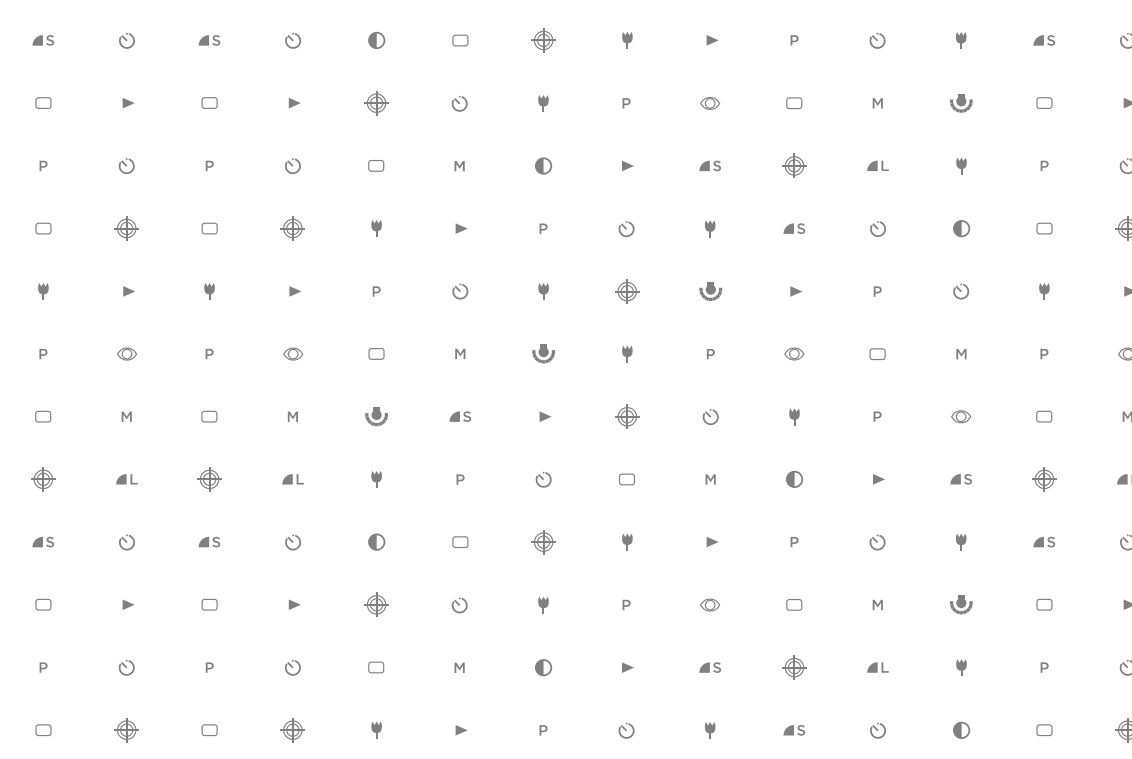
Your character and personality is shaped from intuitive desire and cultural sense, and it is your most important tools when you need to create the world in pictures. And yourself.

Stretched into all the corners, on the edge, it applies to students, but it also applies to all the teachers, they need and should be different. The best teachers are those who creates the best environments, when Jens Olof Lasthein comes for a week from Stockholm, and spends every night at the school, it sizzles from all the activity, as they grow and bloom, and when Tove Kurtzweil comes, then there a whole different privacy, the environment changes character. Or when Sigrd Nygaard, image editor at the newspaper, information is a guest teacher, then there is laced arguments and stimulate competition, each guest teacher has his or hers specialty, but their common quality is that they can create the environment. Give space so that to the environment can form.

If a guest teacher loses the desire and spark, it is only the students that will rate it, and they wont be returning to teach, new teachers are standing in line, because teaching at Fatamorgana is a privilege. To experience the silence between the words when they are listened to, to test concentration and to be allowed to ask challenging questions, it is a gift. To give a part of yourself and feel the acceptance, it makes the best people to come again and again. Joachim Adrian is one of them. The first thing I did when he was elected the Year Press photographer was to ask him to come to Fatamorgana so that we could celebrate. We were excited filled with joy, balloons anxious to see his new pictures. But two days prior to him coming, Per Folkver had died in a tragic accident. He, Joachim, Martin and everyone else in Politiken's photo department was at the annual cabin weekend as Per falls down a dark, steep staircase and dies. Martin is ready to cry, Joachim deeply affected, but not canceling the visit with us. So instead of a celebration of Joachim, there was a Per Folkver Memorial. Joachim told Per's profits, and the environment he created around him in Politiken.

The day after was his funeral, there were totally crowded in and outside the chapel. Per created space, he made the environment, for he knew that without that, you wont be able to create the good image.

And when Jacob Aue Sobol is a guest teacher, there is a hectic but positive atmosphere, a book or an exhibition has to be done in a week, fast-paced, high requirements, the critique is



harsh, but redemption when it all hangs, or the book is assembled, correspondingly large. The feeling of We-Did-It. It creates community, it gives responsibility. Jacob knows how to do that better than anyone else. And when Charlotte Hjorth-Rohde goes into the darkroom for a week with a studio team, the tone is muted and coats smells of chemistry, so hang it together so that helped you, take turns and wait for each other. There are bubbles in the darkness of close proximity, physically and mentally, they work as a team, then you are a member of the secret society and participate in every single image, with shared pride and above all a shared community.



The faint-hearted loosened up, the uptight ones smiled and the shy ones were flirting, a cascade of opportunities opened up and I was ecstatic.

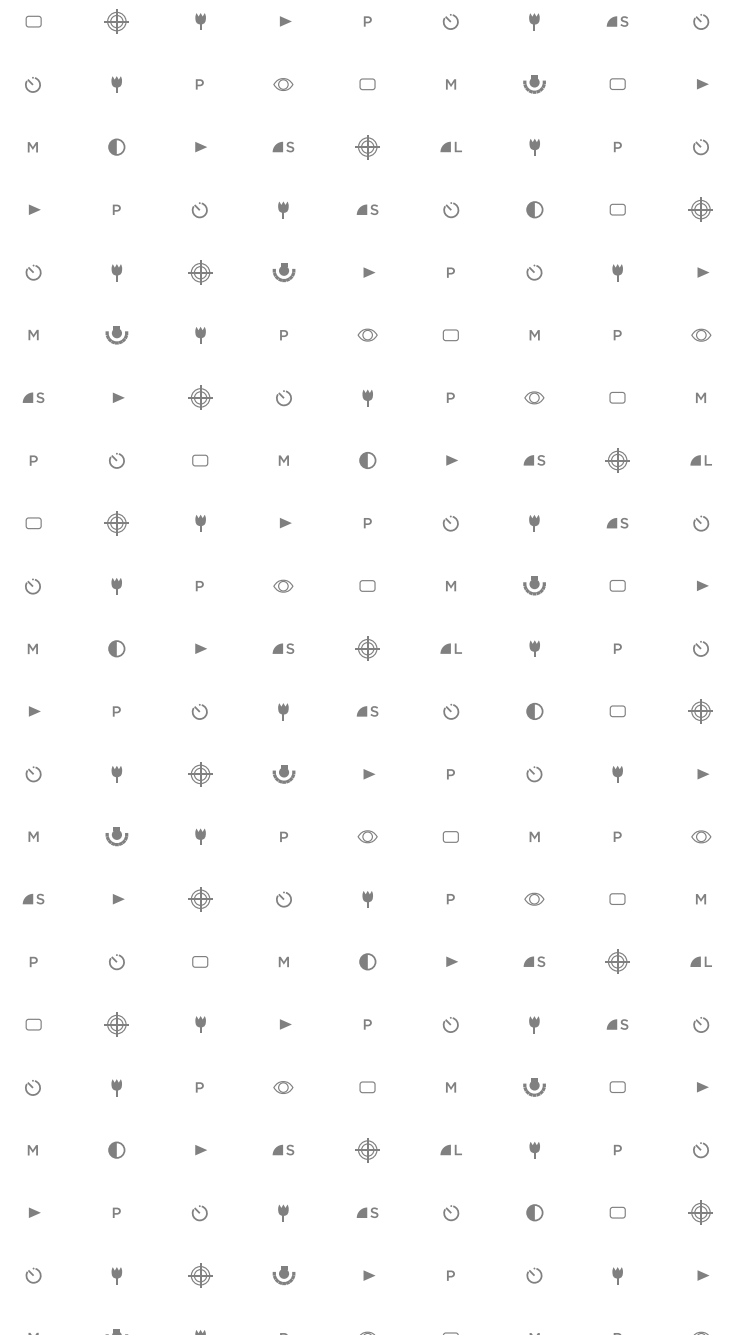
It was repeated the next time, she taught and next time again. The spark that ignites students' creativity, it is impossible to describe, but the evidence is clear, bright eyes, shoulders relaxed, easy smile and an indulgent belief in the future, it looks a lot like falling in love. Of course, that is what happens, the students fall in love. Fryd catches them with love, she seduces them, it must be her secret. The students have not been taught, they have been loved.

I give them desire, Fryd gives them love. That is the secret, that the best teachers are those who love, the job and the students. To teach is to love, unconditional, sincere love is contagious. It is Fryd's secret and all other teachers.

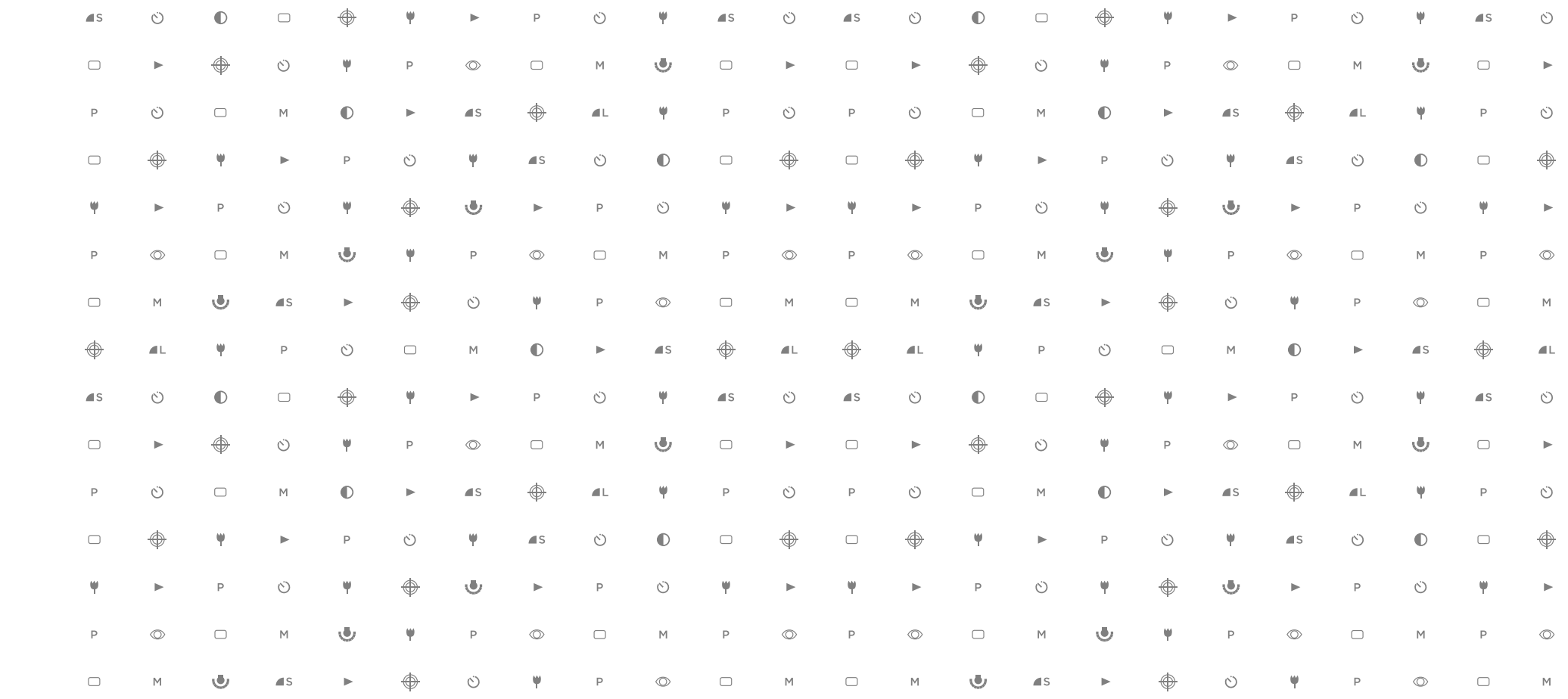
I love teaching and feel the rush when you succeed, when Patrick Søndergaard Wassmann came home

with a bull's-eye. For a few weeks he had been circling the retired man on the 3rd floor to the right, moved in with his sleeping bag to get as close as possible, photographed him in all possible situations with and without clothes, but now I want all of it, out of the and into his world, who is he among others? And Patrick, who is modest and tries to get out of it but I insisted! - *You should not ask, just do.* And when he came home after following his willing model for Tuesday brunch at the Salvation Army, I cheer for the splendid grandmother that fluctuates with the pitcher, she has everything that the old ones have lost. Youthful flirty optimism in the finest gown, stumbling adorable with youthful motor skills, there is love in both personal and portrayal. It makes it fun to teach.

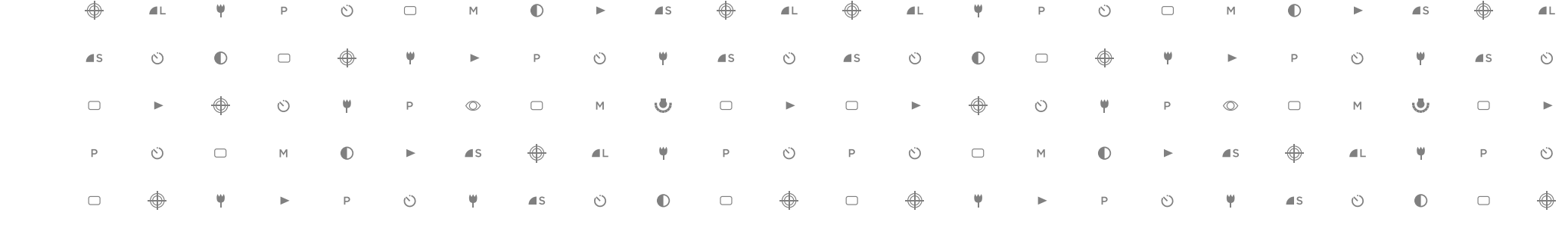
Or when Kristian Dalby Arbs two weeks before the big tabloids scandal at se og hoer, showcases the hierarchy of Ekstrabladet editorial, here, there is no doubt about who is boss. One wonders in the media about how the 14 journalists on tabloids knew of the illegal activities, but didn't respond. Why not? Look at Kristian's picture, and you'll understand. It's a wonderful moment, he has caught the finger, the back says it all about the red-haired boss, and the look and the shirt says it all for a bullied employee, such is the atmosphere at Eksta bladet, and such it is all newsrooms. Love and challenges, Patrick went to the Salvation Army and allowed himself to be seduced by a youthful grandmother and Kristian to Ekstra Bladet where he unveiled the editorial hierarchy. Both were the storytellers, highly motivated and fast, the key moment created the story. The stories, concentrated bursts, detection and wonder, when it all falls into place, then I get high it feels like love.



© Patrick Søndergaard Wassmann / FATAMORGANA

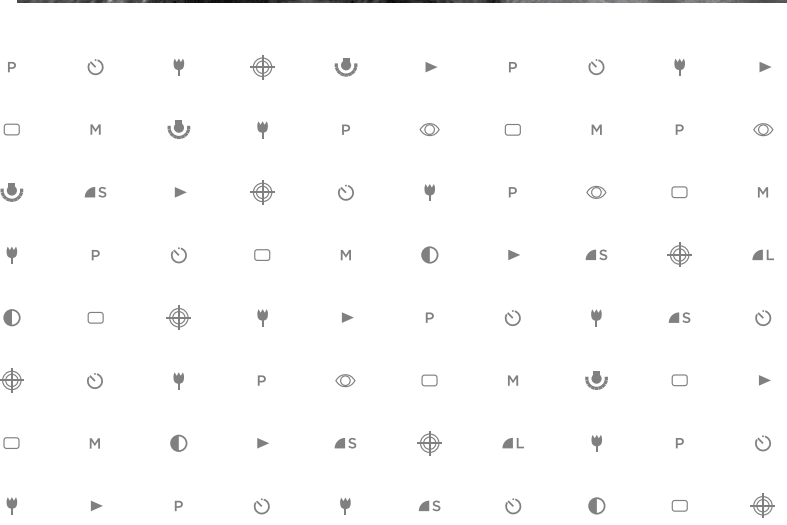
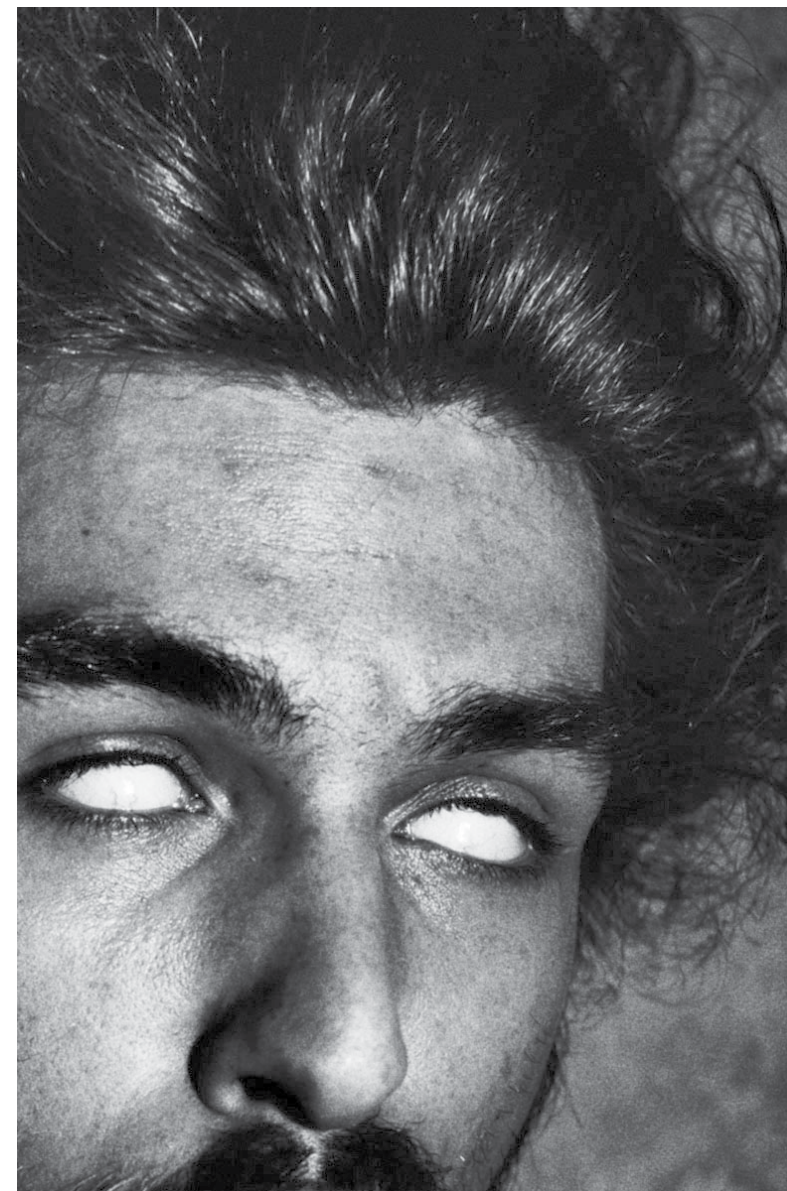
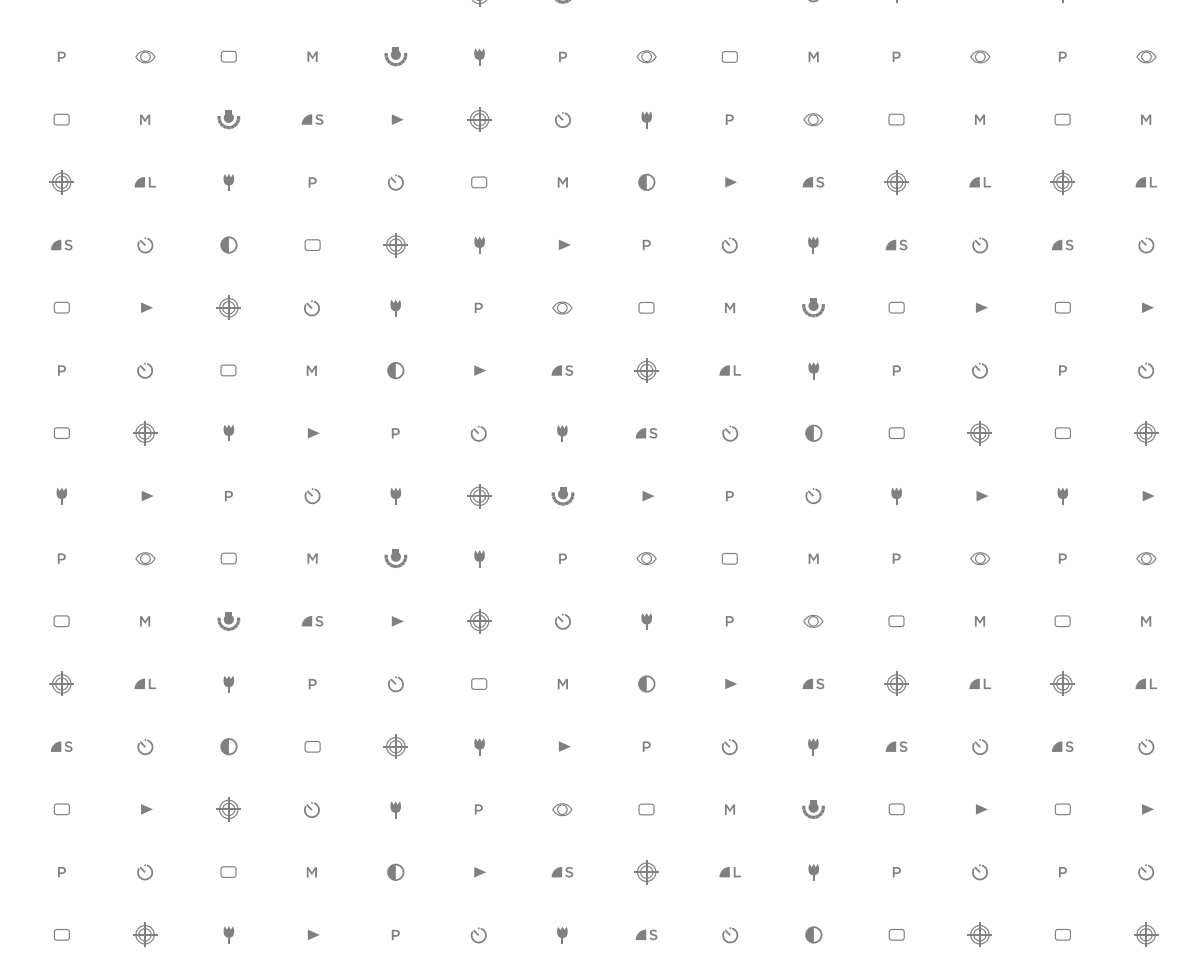


© Kristian Dalby Arbs / FATAMORGANA





© Jannis Tordheim / FATAMORGANA

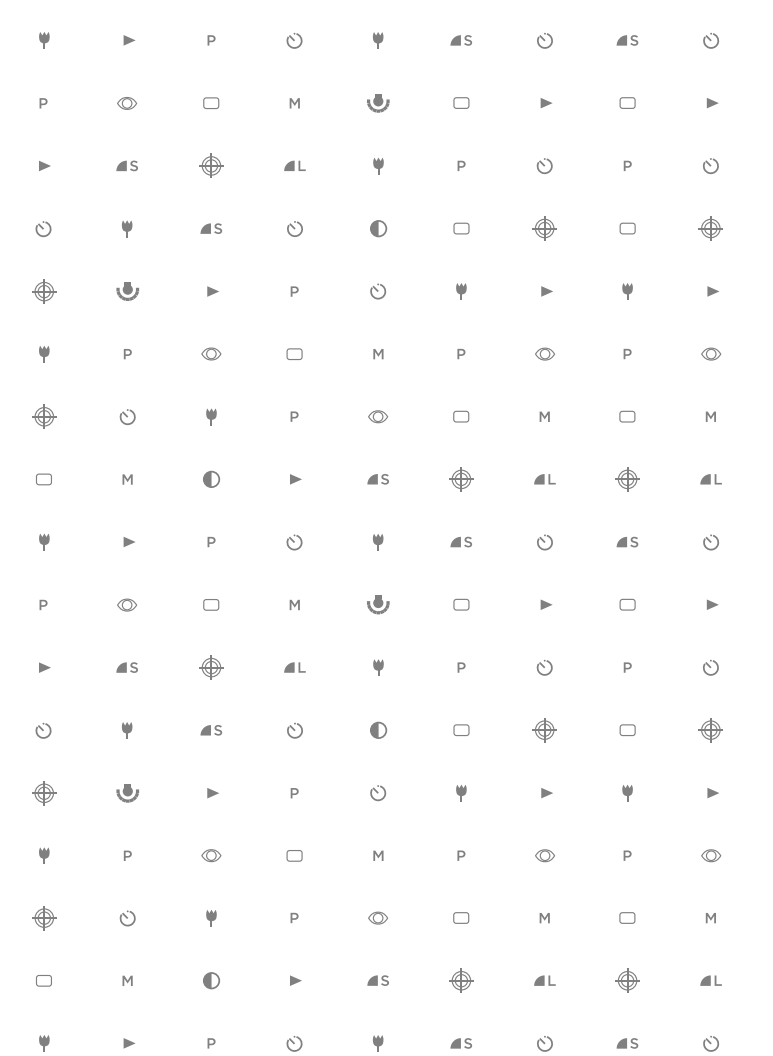
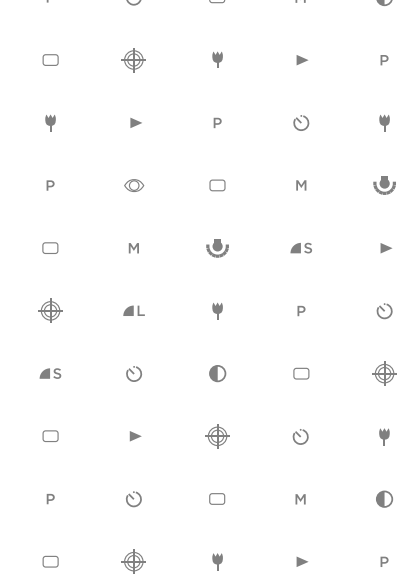


Like when Jannis Tordheim after a huge crisis, goes back home to Stockholm sends an email with his latest pictures. Jannis came to Fatamorgana from the nordic Photo School, where he had found it difficult to adapt herself, and I he was keen on the idea that at Fatamorgana he should feel at home. But the ties to Stockholm and friends were too strong, and when his fiancée announces that it is over, he goes back to Stockholm. I feared that he not only left Fatamorgana and Copenhagen, but also what he had achieved, he was on his way back to the starting point, which he had fled. But then I got the wonderful pictures of vain touch and wanton eyes, a strong visualization of unrequited love, so it looks like desperation to have been rejected. In the eyes, in the fingertips, in the dark, the images exude suicidal emptiness, that was how he felt, Jannis, and I were delighted and excited, I loved him. He had succeeded, Jannis had taken Fatamorgana with him when he left, he could, and he did.

There was room and there was room for everyone. The students were greeted with love, they were entitled to be loved. Anna de Beer was filled with aggression, fierce anger, she dreaded having to let it all out. She was a wonderful human image-maker, photographed by day and painted at night. Anna was scared, felt like a victim, had earlier in the Netherlands had great success with the photograph of the self-pitying deformity, none of her photographing showed aggression or protest, but it her everyday image did! She has a punk look with studs, dreadlocks and heavy makeup. When people in the subway on the way to and from school looked judgmental of her, she was furious, but didn't move a muscle.

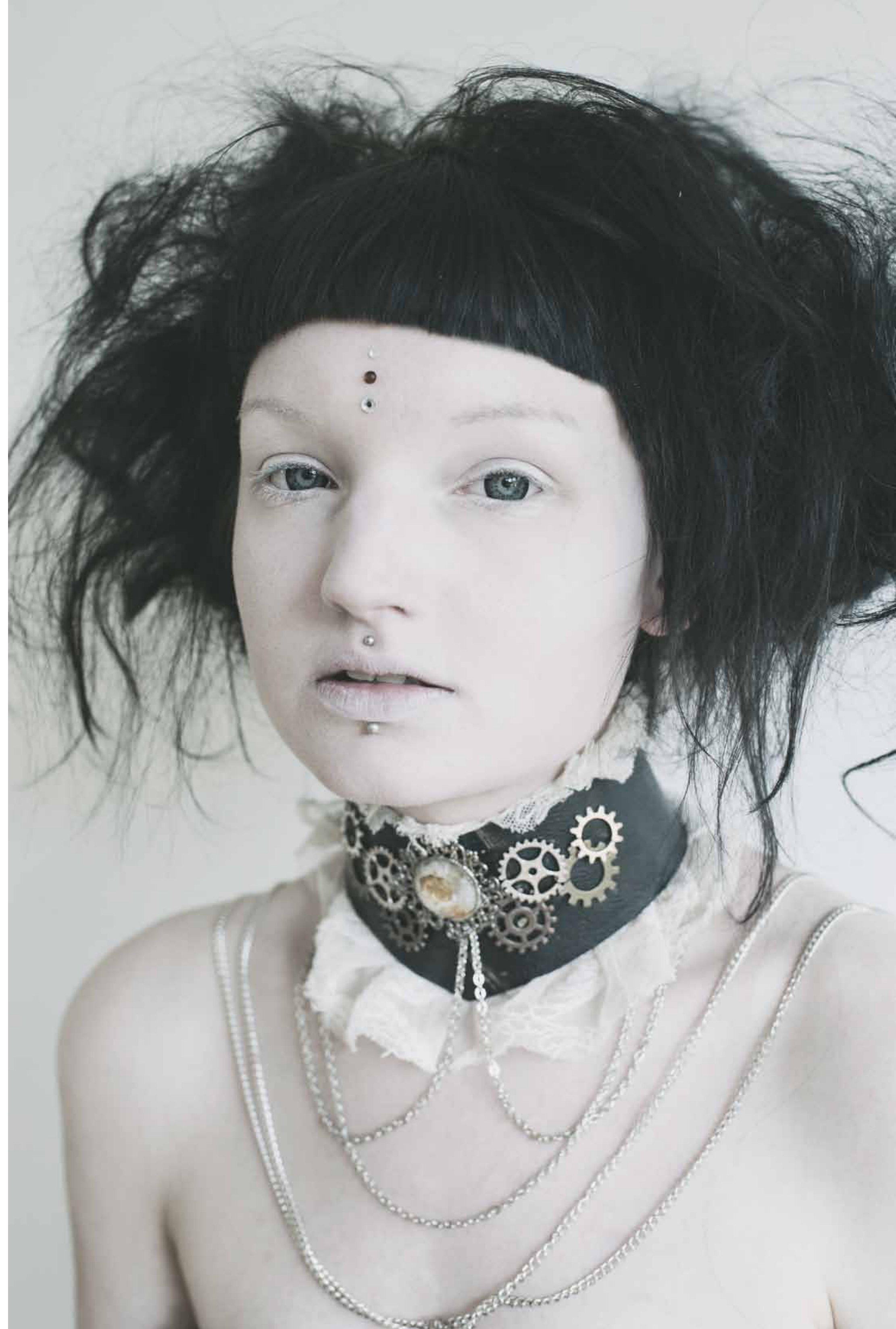
One day I asked her dress up like little girl in the role of a victim, like no one looked at her with judgment. Seeking after soreness and was devoid of aggression, naive and innocent, an afternoon role-play.

The change was overwhelming for me and for her. She hurried home after class and put on her usual outfit, but the outer identity change had made an impact. Anna managed to use the aggressiveness in her art, in the beginning it was a pig's head that was burnt on a bonfire in the garden and chopped into pieces with an ax, one filmed the happening, Anna as the executioner, now she have it as deserved, the hog. Anna said it was a rebellion against meat-eaters and the industry, she worked with video, stills and for her final project she handed in the most beautiful of her boyfriend, a girlfriend and herself. It was wonderful. There was forgiveness, hope and pain, acceptance and recognition in the photos the aggression was not locked up, but turned into creativity.



Anna de Beer Rollespil © Anna de Beer FATAMORGANA





After a successful week with the charismatic Dagmar Attladottir, a week of laughter, fun and hard work, I was notified that Carl-Mikael during the critique had said that life was not worth living, that was superfluous, and that there was no point to it all. There had been an earnest and desperation in his words that had made the other students afraid of what he might do.

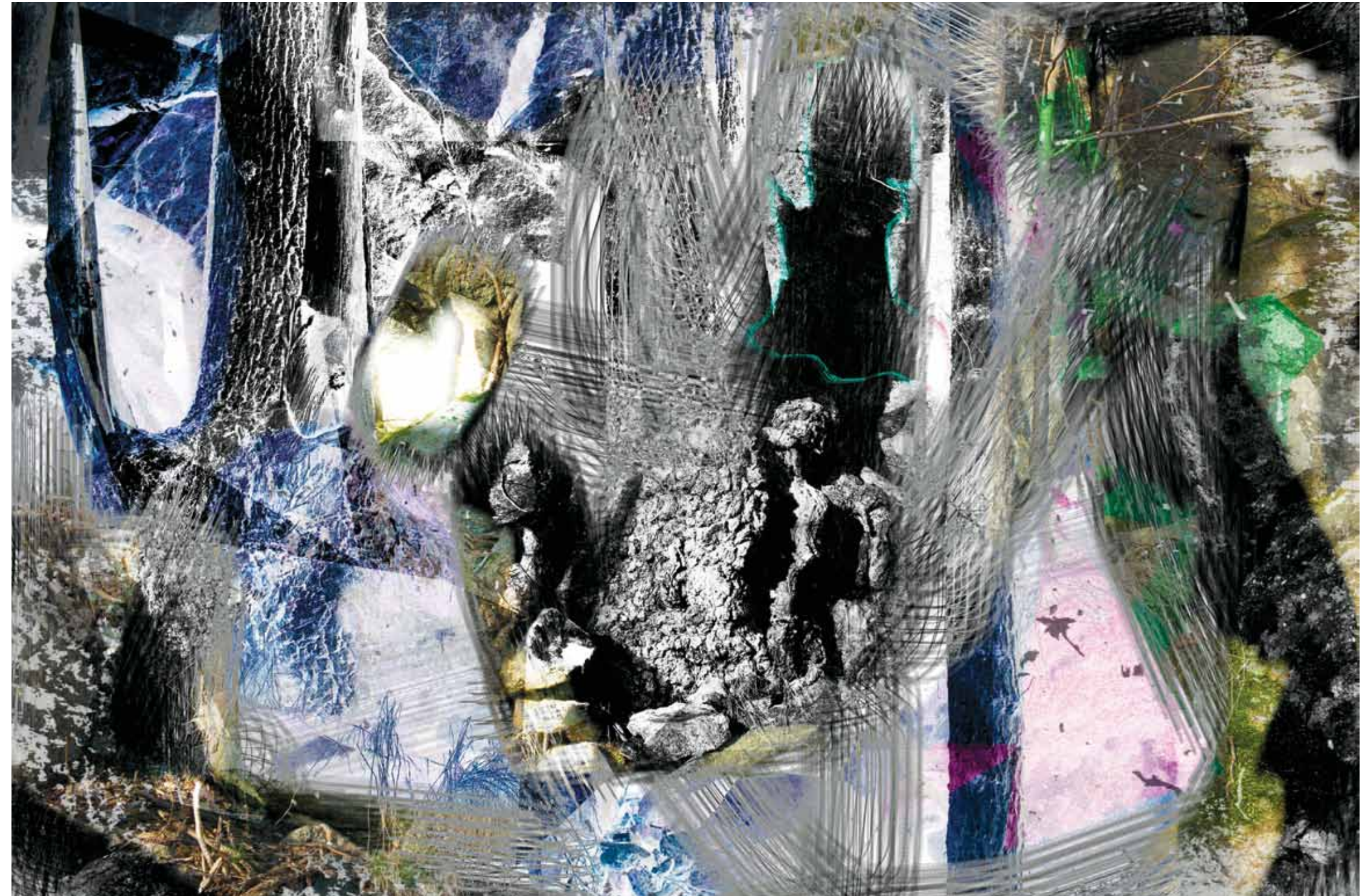
Carl-Mikael Ström was extremely ambitious, wanted to photograph everything, EVERYTHING and be the absolute best. He worked extremely hard, black white analog and enjoyed getting criticism and comments; his pictures were dynamic, experienced and as restless as himself. Carl-Mikael was on the run from everything that was ordinary, on the run from his family in Sweden, from the ordinary and dull and the safe, on the run from mediocrity, habits and expectations, and I supported him. But now he was also on the run from his own life.

I had no doubt, this was not a situation for talking but acting. The next morning I asked him to empty his pockets for ID cards, coins and keys and go out on the town with his camera, film and a sleeping bag, the task was to live as a homeless person on the street for three days, now he would really feel life. When he dirty, hungry and tired returned home, it was with a new perspective on life and a few rolls of exposed film.

Carl-Mikael was explosive, full of energy, it couldn't get large enough, dynamic enough, with fragmentary collages, with dynamic and excitement, stained and blast, after the ride on the street, Carl-Mikael's manic creativity. His counselor would rather that he photographed his childhood home and was reconciled with his mother, but Carl-Mikael did not feel the same way. The energy needed to get out, now life had to be lived.



© Carl-Mikael Ström / FATAMORGANA



© Carl-Mikael Ström / FATAMORGANA





© Carl-Mikael Ström / FATAMORGANA

He made several books during the year at Fatamorgana, never did he compromise, it was always the truth, he sought and always, he thought that it could be better. Carl-Mikael was hunting and in his last collection of photos, *Paradigm*, he could proudly show me a rare authority, it is a trophy collection that shows the way.

The stage is set, the spotlights lit as a landing place, glare, there are weeds and drainage and a reflective circle of light, everything is ready, now it can begin, here starts the adventure.

He turns the world upside down and dictates its truth. Simplifies a profile and mask it with plaster of arithmetic perfection. He now speaks with artistic superiority, talks about how it is to be human. The language is clear, the message is clear, it must be the image that we send on the trip to a distant galaxy to tell you we found. Identity and technology.

For some Fatamorgana is personal development, for others springboard to a career. Foreign students often with Danish mother or a father looking to go to Denmark to learn the language and Danish culture, the rumor that fame starts at Fatamorgana is circulating in the photographic world. Some are highly qualified, professional in their approach and product, others has to be forced to take out the camera and come home with just a little more than a lone dandelion in the asphalt. There are the chattering kind that never learn the language and the tongue-tied that babble in pictures, there are "her: hiding under the table when we see her video piece and "him" that takes the leap and pops out. Spirit and the environment, individual they can do something, together they can do everything.

At the school's 10th anniversary we held a major exhibition and celebration, and now on our 25th anniversary, we held the festival. Inviting all of those who are interested in photography to the island of Hven, where Tycho Brahe with the naked eye observed celestial process and created a new world. I wonder if it will be a clear sky, 22-24th August.

Back in 99 school Fatamorgana faced a move from the small premises in the city center to a bigger space in Amager, the digital development required that we in a transitional period had room for both darkrooms and computers, an era was coming to an end and a new one could slowly begin. Now we are again in front of moving to new premises, the property stands to be demolished, residential buildings are being build around us and soon it comes the turn to us. First 10 years of analog photography, then 10 with digital and analog, and over the past 5 years, the dark-rooms has mostly been empty. Fall Team 2014 is chosen, there is Femjae Olsen Hack, who was an apprentice at Fatamorgana. During a winter at the age of 16 and Dalin Waldo, who participated in the television show, Master photographer, but otherwise the new students are still faceless names. Guest Teachers are booked, veterans Tove Kurtzweil, Kent Klich and Arne Bro, the experienced Dagmar Atladóttir, Nina Korhonen and Fryd Frydendahl and the debutant's Jacob Jessen, Marie Hald and Absalon Kirkeby. And then I got the on half of the duo, The Pier, Nils Petter Løfstedt to be the counselor for the eight students in the 2nd semester. They were guest teachers for a week in the spring, The Pier, and it was a great success, artist from Malmo, controversial, conceptual, their latest

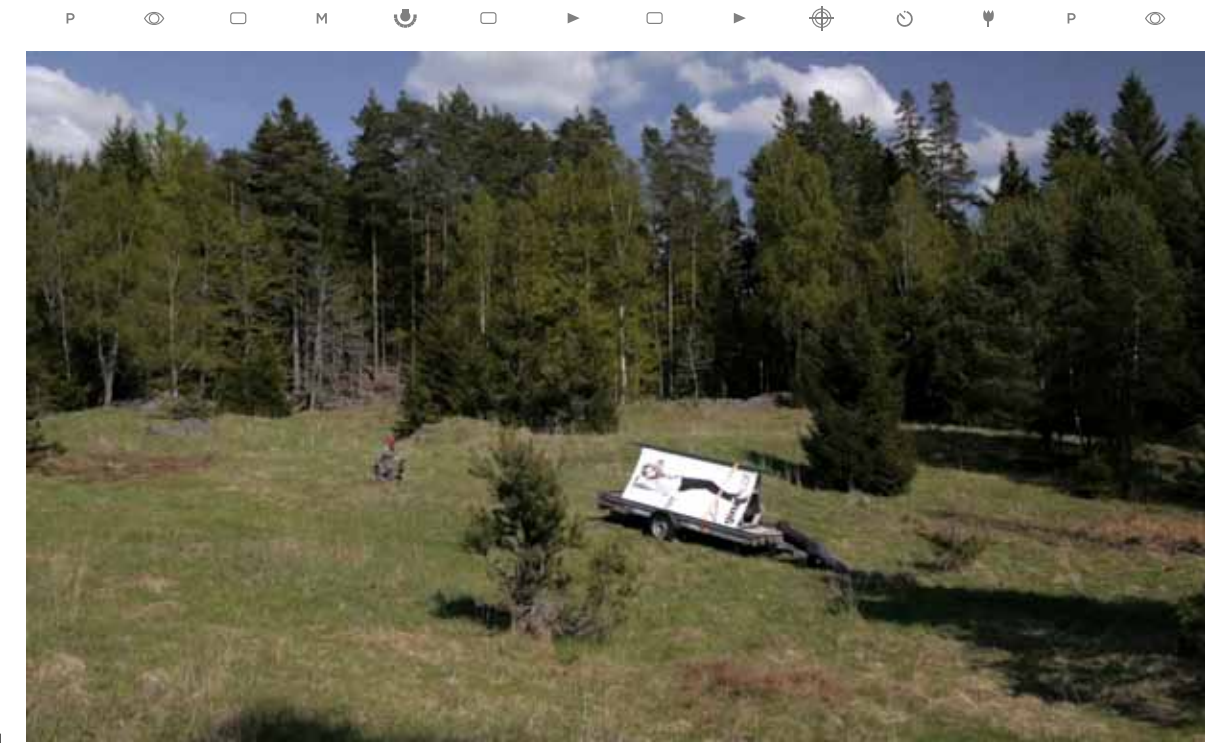
project is to dismantle one of the big billboards which advertised Ginatricot and run it into the woods for re-election in a beautiful green light.

The process is then captured on video, and displayed at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. How is it to be an artist today, you have to come up with constructive suggestions for a better world and frankly, I am convinced that the beauty on the poster will enjoy to get a break from the stressful noise of the street and the stinking traffic. Turning natural pollution upside down and think creatively, it is the mandate of The Pier, as when they furnished an apartment in an unused cubicle under a concrete bridge with 1.60 m ceilings and earth as the floor. I love their controversial initiatives, which are much more than fabrications and gags. It is a viable option for the visual arts.

To turn the world upside down, making fun of the redeemed, take the piss out of the formal and provide an alternative to the academic world.

Everything is prepared for another semester at Fatamorgana, images are created and displayed, and others put in place. But what is the absolute best out of it all is that I am happily looking forward.

Translation Fryd Frydendahl



Video Tower by Nils Petter Løfstedt and Erik Vestman © The Pier

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