

PRESS RELEASE

# Jean-Christophe B chet

## Accidents

**SHOW January 16 - March 15, 2014**

Wednesday to Saturday, 2-7pm and by appointment

We are thrilled to show for the second time the photography of Jean-Christophe B chet.

In 2012 we presented his series *“American Puzzle”* and now in 2014 we’re showing “Accidents”, photographic prints originating from his different series. They’re unintended images, taken by chance or resulting from technical flukes that the photographer has selected to use: initial film tips, darkroom accidents, bungled photographs. These are all serendipitous moments when chance and the photographic medium itself, escaping from the photographer’s technical control and mastery, come into play.

Employing various photographic processes, Jean-Christophe B chet remains deeply connected to the silver print. This series was shown in Arles in the summer of 2012 during the International “Rencontres” there.

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## Accidents

Seeking unsuccessfully to represent the drool of a panting animal, the Greek painter, Protogenes wound up frustrated and threw a sponge at his work. This gesture enabled him by “chance” to realize the effect that he had been looking for.

This anecdote, related by Pliny, the Elder is quoted by Pierre Soulages to explain how “accidents” affect his painting.

Each artistic medium creates its own fortuitous accidents. They don't correspond to the artist's technical mastery nor to his “professionalism”, but they do permit a space for improvisation and creativity.

In photography, a so-called “mechanical” art form, the idea of an “accident” depends on the instrument used just as in music when the instrument imposes its unique sound and personality.

By its very nature an accident is an adverse, negative, unfortunate event, and so, in photography as well as in other arts, the accident must always be a mistake, a bungling of sorts, a failure. If it is deliberately sought out, then it becomes a stylistic effect or a mannerism.

In each of my books, I included prints of the real world that were “involuntary” and “unintentional”. Confronting them, and not unlike Protogenes confronted by the effect of his sponge, I can talk about an aesthetic miracle. I think that every creative artist likes this moment when his/her work is freed from his/her own controlled mastery and savoir-faire.

My photographic “accidents” show signs of silver based techniques in both black and white and color. The accidents that are important to me are those that possess a fictional density. Often they stretch time, creating a sensation of traveling. The image is no longer cut off from its focal range. The irruption of light, matter, scratches... anchor the images in a new documentary dimension. The accident reveals here the uniqueness of photography which can blend the real and fiction, narration and documentation, poetry and truth of the moment.

The “true” photographic accident happens through the powers of the unconscious or by chance. It takes shape as an objective, random fluke that one probably has hoped for a little...but this is never a conscious process. You don’t choose a photographic material because of its improbable unpredictability.

On the contrary you’re usually skeptical if the material at hand is proclaimed foolproof guaranteeing no error nor accident.

The discovery of a successful, photographic accident is deeply satisfying like a breath of contentment. Deciding to make it into a full-fledged work of art is like setting up a dialogue and complicity with the public.

It’s also a way of demonstrating how the absurd and random chance, in these moments of improvisation and even bungling, hold our work together. This attests to the liberty of style similar to the jazzmen who play free jazz brilliantly and stretch their instrument technically to the extreme limit.

Accidents come along then when there is total openness to these random chances which create happiness from the disorder. Accidents disturb order, electronics, safety, repetition, mastery. They are needed more than ever in photographing objective reality.

Jean-Christophe Béchet

2012

## Selection of copyright free photographs for press publications

*Las Vegas, Nevada, USA, 2009*  
From the series « American Puzzle »

Color Print on photographic paper,  
made from a Lambda printer  
95 x 80 cm, edition of 3

Cibachrome print  
40 x 50 cm, edition of 5



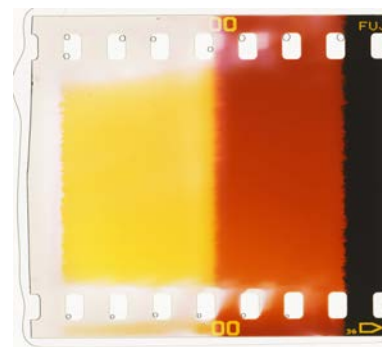
*Hôtel, Paris, France, 2013*  
Unique print  
24 x 30 cm



*Marseille, France, 2001*  
From the series "Marseille, ville natale"

C-Print on photographic paper, made  
from a Lambda printer  
50 x 55 cm, edition of 3

Cibachrome print  
50 x 60 cm, edition of 5



*Séoul, Corée du Sud, 2002*  
From the series « Electric Cité »

C-Print on photographic paper, made  
from a Lambda printer  
70 x 80 cm, edition of 3

Inkjet Print on Hahnemühle paper,  
Rag Baryta 325  
40 x 60 cm, edition of 5



*Paris, France, 2000*  
From the series "Noirs, Paris"

Printed on b&w Ilford Baryta paper  
from a Lambda printer, from a  
polaroid/polapan  
120 x 60 cm, edition of 5



*Butte Montana, USA, 2009*  
From the series « American Puzzle »

Gelatin silver print, printed under an  
enlarger on Baryta paper.  
70 x 60 cm, edition of 3



*Mercantour, France, 2005*  
From the series « Discontinué »  
Gelatin silver contact print from a  
polaroid, film 665  
20 x 30 cm, edition of 10

Gelatin silver print, printed under an  
enlarger on warmtone Ilford Baryta  
paper  
80 x 120 cm, edition of 3



Inkjet Print on Hahnemühle paper,  
Rag Baryta 325  
40 x 60 cm, edition of 5

*Californie, USA, 2004*

From the series « American Puzzle »  
Gelatin silver print, printed under an enlarger on warmtone Ilford Baryta paper  
55 x 100 cm, edition of 3

Inkjet Print on Hahnemühle paper,  
Rag Baryta 325  
40 x 60 cm, edition of 5



*Paris, France, 2000*

From the series « Noirs, Paris »  
Printed on b&w Ilford Baryta paper  
from a Lambda printer, from a  
polaroid/polapan  
55 x 100 cm, edition of 5

Inkjet Print on Hahnemühle paper,  
Rag Baryta 325  
40 x 60 cm, edition of 5



*Trinidad, Cuba, 1995*

Color Print on photographic paper,  
made from a Lambda printer  
55 x 100 cm, edition of 3

Inkjet Print on Hahnemühle paper,  
Rag Baryta 325  
40 x 60 cm, edition of 5



*Masque, 2008*

Polaroid print  
Unique print



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ACCIDENTS - Show January 16 to March 15, 2014  
Opening reception Wednesday, January 15, 6-9pm

LES DOUCHES  
LA GALERIE

## Jean-Christophe B chet

Born in 1964 in Marseille

Jean-Christophe B chet lives and works in Paris.

Jean-Christophe B chet seeks out and chooses the appropriate “instrument” for each of his photographic projects that can be in black and white or color, silver prints or digital, 35 mm or medium format. Close to the tradition of “street photography”, be it American, French or Japanese, he likes to be in the thick of things, in reality, in a subjective document taken on the spot despite the current photographic trends towards staging an image (the art market as image rights or digital retouching). Turning his back on photographic series limited to just that sequential order, he seeks rather to show a photographic moment. Book after book, B chet builds a subjective approach-- a vision of reality-- that dialogues with the very nature of the medium that he uses. The place of the individual in contemporary landscape, urban or natural, is at the center of his concerns.

### Expositions

2014 « Accidents », Les Douches La Galerie, Paris

2013 « Kodak City », Images de ville, Negpos, Nimes

« Marseille, Ville Natale », Institut Culturel Franais of Belgrade, Serbia

« Paysages », St Benoit, 11th Festival

« Marseille, Ville Natale », Galerie Detaille, Marseille

« Discontinu ... », Metz

« Marseille, Ville Natale », Fnac Marseille

« Discontinu ... », Nancy

« American Puzzle », Salon Phocal, Allauch

« Trajectoires Urbaines », Commanderie de Corbeil-Essonnes

« American Puzzle », Nuit de la photo, La Chaux-de-Fonds, Switzerland

2012 « France Nord », Quinzaine Photographique de Cholet

« G om trie », Toulouse, Jardin Raymond VI, Mus e des Abattoirs

« Accidents », Atelier des Forges, Rencontres d'Arles 2012

« American Puzzle, Part II », Galerie Photo4, Paris

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- « American Puzzle, Part I », Les Douches La Galerie, Paris
- « Le Parking /Les espaces du quotidien » Cambre d'architecture, Brussels
- 2011 « Périmètre », exposition Collective, Arsenal-Musée des Arts Contemporains, Sofia, Bulgaria
- « La France vue par F14 », Corbeil-Essonnes, Commanderie St-Jean
- « Ad Massalia (Vers Marseille) », exposition collective, Espace Eperluette, Cavaillon
- « France Nord- un road-movie » Lille, 10th festival Transphoto
- « Tokyo Station » Fodar, Pleven, Bulgaria
- « Climats », Galerie Creapolis, Le Havre
- « Discontinué... », Galerie Photo4, Paris
- 2010 « La France vue par F14 », Mois de la photo 2010, Paris, BNF François Mitterrand
- « La France vue par F14 », Rencontres d'Arles 2010, Abbaye de Montmajour
- « Villes », Mois de la photo d'Auxerre
- « Noir Vertical » Galerie Photo4, Paris
- « Tokyo Nights », Galerie Negpos, Nimes
- Group show with the gallery Photo4 in « Cutlog » and « Photo Off » fairs
- 2009 « Pol/A », group show of Polaroids, galerie Nivet-Carzon, Paris
- 2008 « Tokyo Station » , Institut Français of Valence, Espagne
- « Politiques Urbaines » , à la Cambre d'architecture, Brussels, Belgium
- « Tokyo Station » , Biennale Urbi & Orbi de Sedan, France
- 2007 « Vues n°0 » et « Tokyo Station » , 20th semaine photo de Riedisheim
- 2006 « Tokyo Station » , 40ème Salon Phocal, Allauch
- « Politiques urbaines », Rencontres d'Arles (chosen by Raymond Depardon)
- « Vues n°0 » Paris, Mois de la Photo 2006, la Chambre Claire
- 2005 « Tokyo Station » in the Fnac Montparnasse (and then in the Fnac of Lille, Bordeaux, Marseille, Reims...)



- « La collection photographique de la Fnac-Images entre histoire et poésie », Bordeaux,  
and then on the gate of the Jardin du Luxembourg
- 2004 Mois de la photo, Paris. Conciergerie, 50th Birthday of the FNAC
- 2003 « Electric' Cités », Espace Electra, Paris  
« Electric' Cités », exposition + audiovisuel at Festival Biarritz Terre d'Images  
« 2...3 », Exposition collective, Camera Obscura, Paris  
« Electric' Cités », Vandoeuvre-Les-Nancy, Centre André Malraux
- 2001 « Tous Européens », Vandoeuvre-Les-Nancy, Centre André Malraux, 1er prix des  
Paysages Européens
- 2000 « PSQF, Paris Sans Quitter ma Fenêtre », Mois de la Photo, group show, galerie  
Caméra Obscura, Paris

## Monographies

- 2013 Marseille, ville natale (editions Trans Photographic Press)
- 2012 Carnets # 5 : Minéral/Altitude (editions Trans Photographic Press)
- 2012 Carnets # 4 : Tambouctou, peut-être... (editions Trans Photographic Press)
- 2012 Accidents, catalog of the exhibition « Accidents », Rencontres d'Arles 2012
- 2011 American Puzzle (editions Trans Photographic Press)
- 2010 Carnets # 3 : Discontinué... (editions Trans Photographic Press)
- 2008 Carnets # 2 : Climats (editions Trans Photographic Press)
- 2008 Carnets # 1 : Noir Vertical (editions Trans Photographic Press)
- 2006 Vues n°0, un manifeste photographique (editions Trans Photographic Press)
- 2005 Tokyo Station (editions Trans Photographic Press)
- 2004 Sax, Sex, 23h (editions Filigranes)
- 2002 Electric' cités (editions Marval)

## Catalogs and collective works

- Trajectoires Urbaines (Corbeil-Essonnes, l'Oeil Urbain, 2013)
- Géométrie (Toulouse, 2012, Biz' Art Populaire)

Accidents (editions Trans Photographic Press, 2012)

Fra-For (editions Verlhac, 2011)

France 14 (editions Trans Photographic Press, 2010)

Est-ce ainsi que les hommes vivent ? Tome 1 et Tome 2 (editions Le Chêne, 2005 & 2006)

Libertés (editions Filigranes-Reporters sans Frontières, 2002)