



NEW FACES

Silver Portraits
Jean-Claude Péclet

Exhibition open from 13 Februar to 23 August 2020

Preview on 13 Februar 2020 at 6 pm

Press Release

Downloadable at www.cameramuseum.ch



Demonstration for the climate, Lausanne, 10 August 2019. Picture JC Péclet

Copyright free images for the duration of the exhibition directly downloadable from www.cameramuseum.ch press tab



Silver photography shows remarkable resilience. More and more photographers, especially younger ones, are regaining interest in or discovering it. It has against it its long apprenticeship, its tedious procedures, its costs. It has for it its reassuring materiality, its resistance to the passage of time, the magic of the appearance of an image in a bath of developer.

Jean-Claude Péclet has neither discovered nor returned to silver photography. He has always practiced it, occasionally exploring old processes, without disdaining digital photography. The journalist from Lausanne, former editor-in-chief of L'Hebdo and winner of a Jean Dumur award in 2007, now devotes himself fully to his passion. With a venerable 1938 Rolleiflex loaded with black and white films, he takes portraits of young people driven by passion and a sense of community. Young farmers, climate activists, urban or Olympic sportsmen and women, video game enthusiasts. This Z generation is often taken aback by the baby boomer's camera, a strange box that stands on the photographer's stomach, head down towards the frosted viewfinder. A dialogue is triggered, synchronized with a strong feeling of empathy.

Jean-Claude Péclet developed his photographs in his own darkroom and in the Swiss Camera Museum's darkroom. The forty or so portraits in the exhibition are complemented by a history of the Rolleiflex, whose parent company - Rollei - was founded exactly a century ago in Lower Saxony, Germany. The medium-format reflex camera, with its two characteristic lenses, was used by the greatest photographers of the 20th century. It was also worth a tribute.

Old camera, new generation

Is there a "return" of silver photography? I don't know and I don't care much about it. I developed my own prints in my parents' basement from the 1960s onwards, then experimented with older processes (bichromate gum, platinotype), then left it all to sleep in cardboard boxes. Under its black cover, the enlarger resisted the recurring temptations of large storage rooms. You never know...

When my career as a journalist came to an end, I first fell in love with a Leica M3, one of the most beautiful cases ever made by this brand. I confess an attraction for the elegance of the tool, pure precision mechanics. Speed-diaphragm-focusing, no cell: you go off with it in the desert and, if you're as thrifty with film as you are with water, you can stay there as long as you want, free under the stars!

Two coincidences led to this exhibition. The first is a few hundred meters from this Camera Museum. One of the last photographers-dealers in Vevey was selling, not too expensive, a perfectly functional Rolleiflex whose serial number indicated that it dated from 1937-38. It reminded me of the one my father used to carry slung over his shoulder, bringing back from Brussels, Venice or holidays at the chalet boxes of colour slides that reddish mushrooms gradually devoured in their glass frames .

It is difficult to explain the particular pleasure of this square format camera, whose angle of view is not at eye level but generally one meter lower, which changes everything. It transforms you: you lower your head towards the frosted sight, a discreet gesture, an instinctive sign of respect; from photographer-predator, you have become an object of curiosity yourself! You had vaguely intended to photograph someone, you find yourself sharing Proust's madeleine. Your reward is not so much the image wound on the roll of twelve exposures - which will only reveal itself to you in a few hours or days - as the ritual of loading, the soft hum of the lever, the slight resistance of the film that comes under tension, the click that signals that it is ready. And the encounter.



Without really paying attention to it, I started to make a few series of portraits of the new generation with this valiant ancestor. The Youth of Sévery setting up a log camp to welcome the Giron du Pied du Jura 2017. Video game enthusiasts. Particularly gifted apprentices. Lovers of "parkour" and other urban sports. Until 18 January 2019 when, by a second chance, I found myself in the middle of the first climate event in Lausanne. It surprised everyone, starting with the young people themselves, who were not expecting to find more than five thousand. I had the old "Rollei" with me that day, he was my sesame. I was no longer a voyeur, but a participant in the procession. Interested in the contrast between the topicality of the protest and the timelessness of the images, "Le Matin Dimanche" published a selection of them on one page. The ever-awakening curiosity of Luc Debraine, director of the Swiss Camera Museum, did the rest...

These images have no artistic pretensions. Influenced by the masters of my adolescence (Doisneau, Kertész, Cartier-Bresson, Eugène Smith, Boubat, Imsand...), my eye follows their gaze. The common thread of these series, if there is one, is empathy. I like people who have a passion - whether it's sports, music, a political cause, their profession, bringing a community together. The portraits presented here are a testament to their commitment and their hopes. I thank them for welcoming me for a photograph.

Jean-Claude Péclet, January 2020

Biography of Jean-Claude Péclet

Born in Lausanne in 1950

First photographic memory... and contact with the Authority: an image, made with a Kodak "box", of two policemen on their wooden cart pulled by two horses, towards the Avenches cigognier in the early 1960s.

Education: Licence en Hautes Etudes Internationales, Geneva.

Professional career: journalist. 24-hour correspondent for the Vaud Riviera from 1974 to 1976. A dozen years at "L'Hebdo", including five as editor-in-chief, as well as assistant (one of whose tasks was to organise the first "Nuit de la Photo" with Charles-Henri Favrod at the Musée de l'Elysée, another to manage the double page "Galerie" double page reserved for photography). A dozen years at "Le Temps", in charge of the Economy, Debates and Surveys sections. Jean Dumur Prize 2007.

Practiced photography, both film and digital, with about forty different cameras, including two large-format wooden cameras that you can mount yourself.

Lives in Prilly. Married, two children.



Technical notes

"Can we still find films for this kind of camera?" This is often the first question asked by curious people who have glanced at the Rolleiflex. Yes, we do find them. The choice has even widened a little in recent years since young photographers have shown a renewed interest in film technology. All the images in this exhibition have been made with products that can be bought fairly easily in shops.

The film (12 exposures) used for these portraits is either Kodak Tri-X 400 ISO or T-Max 100 ISO film exposed at the sensitivity recommended by the manufacturer and developed in Kodak D-76 developer. Other films and developers are available, but I assume that it is best to stick to a proven combination to ensure consistent results. A good negative is the basis for everything!

There are two possible ways to go from here. Purists will find that there is no substitute for a silver print, i.e. on pre-sensitized paper exposed under an enlarger, then successively treated in three baths: developer, stop, fix, followed by washing. All the framed images in this exhibition were made using this process, in my cellar or in the Museum's well-equipped laboratory. Two different types of paper were used. The portraits of video gamers are printed on Ilford Multigrade IV RC, the most common and cheapest. This laminated paper requires shorter fixing and washing times, so it is easier to use. The other framed portraits have been printed on 300 grams Multigrade Art baryta paper, cotton-based, matte texture and warm tone. The surface rendering is more intense, closer to the old prints. On the reverse side, this paper requires longer fixing and washing times, it also tends to curl when drying.

The range of photo-sensitive papers has shrunk considerably over the last twenty years. Exposing, developing, washing and drying them takes time; moreover, the process requires a certain amount of practice. Even an experienced printer can waste a number of sheets on a bad day...

This is why the majority of photographers using silver film prefer to scan their negatives and print their images on inkjet printers. The eight large portraits in this exhibition were made using this technique. The scanner is an Epson v700 Perfection, a mid-range model that is available for amateurs. Professional scanners such as the Hasselblad Flextight give even more precise results, but cost several thousand francs! The prints on inkjet printer and Canson Infinity Baryta Prestige 340 g paper were made by Roger Emmenegger in Lausanne. The advantage of this process is that the scanned negatives can be reworked in broad daylight with image processing software. The range of papers for inkjet printers is today wider than that of photo-sensitive papers. Purists will observe that these are no longer "real" prints. In this exhibition, we leave visitors free to make up their own minds.

Jean-Claude Péclet, January 2020



The story of Rollei

100 years ago, on February 1, 1920, businessman Paul Franke and the manufacturer Reinhold Heidecke founded the German company that produced the famous Rollei two-lens cameras: Franke & Heidecke.

Here we take a closer look at the first years of a photographic achievement:

1 February 1920: Paul Franke and Reinhold Heidecke founded the company Franke & Heidecke at Viewegstrasse 32 in Brunswick (Lower Saxony).

1921: Market launch of the Heidoscop, a stereoscopic reflex plate camera with three lenses. Its production will continue until 1941.

1922: Purchase of the building at Viewegstrasse 32, which becomes the headquarters of Franke & Heidecke.

1925: The company has 57 employees.

1926: First appearance of the name Rollei, which is made up of the names Rollfilm and Heidecke, with the introduction of the Rolleidoscop, which is similar in all respects to the Heidoscop, but allows the use of a film reel. Its production will stop in 1941.

December 1928: Manufacture of 10 pieces of the prototype Rolleiflex 6x6, a bi-lens reflex camera using 120 film.

1929: The Rolleiflex 6x6 is put on the market, and the different models will follow one another until 1976.

1930: The premises at Viewegstrasse 32 no longer offer sufficient space, so the company has new buildings built at Salzdahlumer Strasse 196.

1931: Introduction of the Rolleiflex 4x4, also known as the Baby-Rolleiflex or Babyflex, using film 127. Three different models will follow one another until 1968.

1933 : Launch of the Rolleicord 6x6. This simpler version of the Rolleiflex, however, offers the same image quality. Its attractive price makes it particularly suitable for amateur photographers. Fourteen models will be produced until 1976.

1937: The Rolleiflex Automat 6x6, on which a lever allows automatic film advance and shutter arming, wins the Grand Prix at the Paris World's Fair.

It is equipped with a Rolleiflex Automat type 2, most likely manufactured in 1938, that Jean-Claude Péclet took a good part of the photographs exhibited at the Swiss Camera Museum - Vevey.

1939: The company has 752 employees.

1940: At the beginning of the war the production of cameras drops by 90% in favour of the production of optical instruments for the army.



15 October 1944: During a bombing by the Royal Air Force, 65% of the company's buildings are destroyed.

1945: During the occupation period, patents are seized, the production area decreases from 12,000 to 6,000 m². Only 72 employees are allowed to work in the factory. No device can be sold without authorization.

1948: Import restrictions end. The company is able to take off again. There are now 500 employees.

1950: Manufacture of the first Rolleiflex 2.8, intended only for export to the USA.

18 March 1950: Paul Franke dies. His son Horst succeeds him in the company.

1954: Launch of the waterproof Rolleimarin case developed for the Rolleiflex with the help of diver and documentarian Hans Haas. It allows pictures to be taken at depths of up to 100m and will remain an essential accessory for underwater photography until the 1970s.

1957: The company has 2100 employees.

1959: Sales decline due to Japanese copies of Rolleiflex and professional photographers' preference for Hasselblad. Introduction of the Tele Rolleiflex 6x6 which will be produced until 1974. The company has 1500 employees.

1960: Market launch of the first Rollei P11 Universal projector and the Rollei Magic equipped with an automatic exposure control cell. This device will be produced until 1968. It is also between 1960 and 1965 that the Rolleiflex 6x6 2.8 F equipped with a Zeiss Planar lens is produced. This last model was also used by Jean-Claude Péclet for his shots.

26 February 1960: Death of Reinhold Heidecke.

1961 : Launch of the Rolleiflex wide-angle lens. It will be produced until 1967.

1962 : The company takes the name Rollei Werke Franke & Heidecke.

1963: Introduction of the Rollei 16, a miniature camera using 16mm film, which is also the first camera without the two lens principle. Three models will follow one another until 1973.

1964: Engineer Heinrich Peesel is appointed director.

The brand will continue to develop cameras and photographic accessories, some of which will be very successful such as the Rollei 35, the smallest camera using 35mm film at the time, or the Rolleiflex SL 66.

1976: end of the series production of Rollei bi-lenses.

The company subsequently encounters financial difficulties which lead it to relocate production to Singapore. It will also experience several bankruptcies and ownerships between 1982 and 2015.

2020: The Rolleiflex Hy6 mod2 is included in the catalogue of DW Photo GmbH in Brunswick. Rollei GmbH and Co. KG in Norderstedt sells professional accessories for photography.



NEW FACES

Silver Portraits
Jean-Claude Péclet

Exhibition open from 13 Februar to 23 August 2020

Preview on 13 Februar 2020 at 6 pm

Copyright-free images for the duration of the exhibition can be downloaded from www.cameramuseum.ch, press tab.

Photo captions :

1. Climate demonstration, Lausanne, 10 August 2019. Picture JC Péclet
2. Christian Théo Baptiste, skater, Vevey, 2019. Picture JC Péclet
3. Tsusaba Watanabe, street artist, Vevey, 2019. Picture JC Péclet
4. Christian Triventi, dancer, Vevey, 2019. Picture JC Péclet
5. Olivier, Jeunesse de Sévery, Giron du Pied du Jura, 2017. Picture JC Péclet
6. National Climate Demonstration, Bern, 28 September 2019. Picture JC Péclet.

Short text approx. 900 characters

Silver photography is resilient. More and more photographers are regaining interest or discovering it. Jean-Claude Péclet has always been practicing it. The journalist from Lausanne, former editor-in-chief of L'Hebdo and winner of a Jean Dumur award in 2007, now devotes himself fully to his passion. With a venerable 1938 Rolleiflex loaded with black and white film, he takes the portrait of young people driven by passion and a sense of collective purpose. Young farmers, climate activists, urban or Olympic sportsmen and women, video game enthusiasts. This Z generation is often taken aback by the baby boomer's camera, a strange casing that stands on its stomach, head down towards the viewfinder. The forty or so portraits in the exhibition are complemented by a history of the Rolleiflex, whose parent company - Rollei - was founded a century ago in Germany.

If you need more information, please contact us. Tel : + 41 21 925 34 80

Swiss Camera Museum - Grande Place 99 - CH-1800 Vevey
Internet : www.cameramuseum.ch – E-mail : cameramuseum@vevey.ch - Tel : +41 21 925 34 80
Open Tuesdays to Sundays from 11.00 to 17.30 and bank holidays.