

Transforming the Intangible

Interview by: Natalie Lam

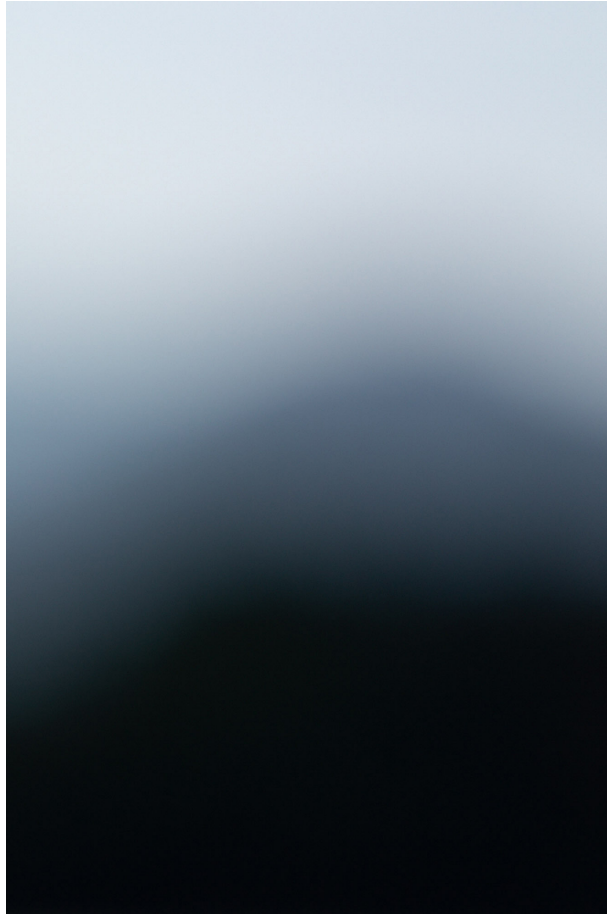
Artwork: Facing Page:
France Percept

"The dream is the liberation of the spirit from the pressure of external nature, a detachment of the soul from the fetters of matter."
- Sigmund Freud

When we awake from our dreams, we may only recall fragmented memories, images that emerge in our minds appear blur and out of focus. They can be colours, lines, or surreal scenes, gifting us with the imagination and motivation to re-explore the things around us.

Founded by Manon and Francois, Onoko, is an art atelier dedicated to giving life to dreams through images. The duo aspires to express their inspirations and personal creations which fall in connection to their artistic universe, architecture, and their travels. Their collection of artworks are currently being exhibited at the Venice Biennale (June till August) as well as at the WRP Foundation in Geneva (May till November).





Facing Page:
Artwork:
Cambodia Percept

Following Pages:
Exhibition:
"Voyage entre les mondes"

Place :
Fondation WRP

City, Country :
Geneva, Switzerland

Hello Manon and Francois! Could you please begin by briefly introducing yourselves and the philosophy behind Onoko?

Manon and Francois: We are a couple of dreamers experimenting art through games, passion and thirst for creation.

Trained as architect and interior designer, we first launched our architectural photography atelier "Think utopia". Then, our art atelier "Onoko" was born at 24:01, in this minute of utopia where the imagination gives life to dreams through images. Always working the image as a factory of dreams, its philosophy is a plea for the imagination.

Where are you from or call home? How has your background or environment influenced your work?

M & F: We live somewhere between France and Switzerland, two countries with close but very different cultures. We are lucky to live in the beautiful region of "Haute-Savoie" in the heart of the French Alps, surrounded by mountains and lakes where the seasons and the strength of the elements are a daily inspiration.

Our studies in architecture have also strongly influenced us and made us aware of the importance of detail.

What is your main priority when starting a project? Is there something that is fundamental to your practice – your philosophy and your creative process?

M & F: We live all our art projects intensely. We tend to live out of the present time, time is ours. We listen, observe, dream to see the slightest flake of poetry that would land on our path.

That is how our series of photographs tends to evolve through our different trips around the world. The "Percept" series was born in India and continued its way to Hong-Kong, Japan, Cambodia, Italy, France and many other countries and is impatiently waiting for the next trip to capture new atmospheric colours from here and elsewhere.

Has this process changed in any way due to the pandemic?

M & F: The Pandemic has limited travel opportunities, thus limiting our creative process. Indeed, we draw much of our inspiration from our travels. These wanderings from here and elsewhere disconnect us from time and make us more attentive to our deepest desires of creation. The absence of these creative escapes has therefore slowed down the evolution of certain series.

But we took it as a great opportunity to look at things differently and deeply. Our relationship with time has changed, no more rush, no more deadlines. Time was suspended and became a great source of inspiration. 24 hours a day, there was no more morning nor evening. At the same time, there was unprecedented quietness and thus a deeper journey into our minds.

What does travel give you that everyday life does not?

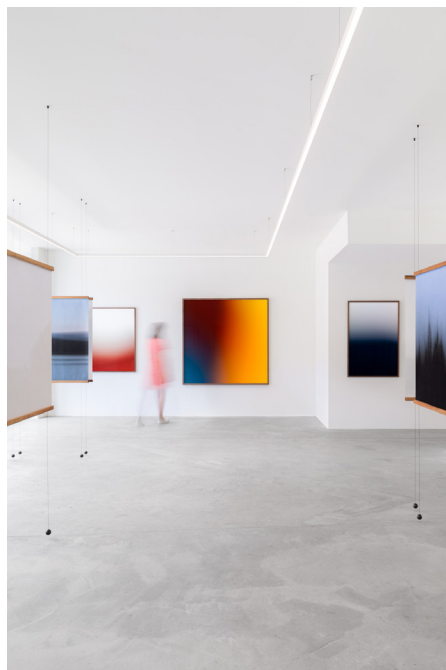
M & F: Traveling is a source of inspiration as it cultivates our curiosity.

To wander, to go where our desires guide us and to let ourselves be surprised by the unknown.

We like the French word "flânerie" which is in a way a physical or intellectual wander, aimless, out of time. An unlearning process where action gives way to reflection and imagination.

We particularly like to observe all the details and habits that are different from home, such as human relations and the way of receiving or meeting people, shops and the way of consuming, architecture and the way of living, spirituality and its influences and of course the different atmospheres and their colours.

Travel is for us a creative break where our ideas emerge, it is in these moments that we have the most passionate discussions from which our projects are born.



This & Facing Page:

Exhibition: "Voyage entre les mondes"
Place: Fondation WRP
City, Country: Geneva, Switzerland

Is there a particular country/city/place that really speaks to you?

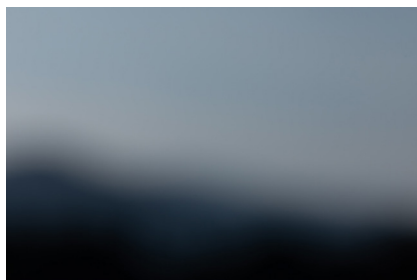
M & F: We are attracted by big cities as well as wild landscapes. We like urban jungles, suburbs, abandoned spaces out of times, sounds of cities and at the same time quietness and poetry of nature, from the deepest ocean abyss to the highest mountain peak where the elements are unleashed and expose their power.

But if we have to make a choice...

A country would be Japan being composed of a mixture of all these elements. We love its culture, its way of life, its sensitivity and its subtlety. A city would be Hong-Kong for its incessant activity and its infinite vertical density springing from a luxuriant nature. A place would be the Lofoten Islands in the Arctic Circle, where in the middle of a winter blizzard, a powerful atmosphere of world genesis is being felt.

What kind of message or sense do you want to convey through your photographs?

M & F: Image, Imagination, Imaginary...
Through images where the whole is not acquired but suggested, we seek to leave room to the imagination so that each one escapes in this emotional infinity, thus producing its imaginary, its emotion, its dream...
Imagination through images.



124

Could you tell us a little bit more about your new series, Exposition, and what you aim to share with it?

M & F: We thought this exhibition as a "Journey between the worlds" of the imagination. Two series are intertwined in a scenography that seeks to transport the viewer into his own "imaginary wanderings".

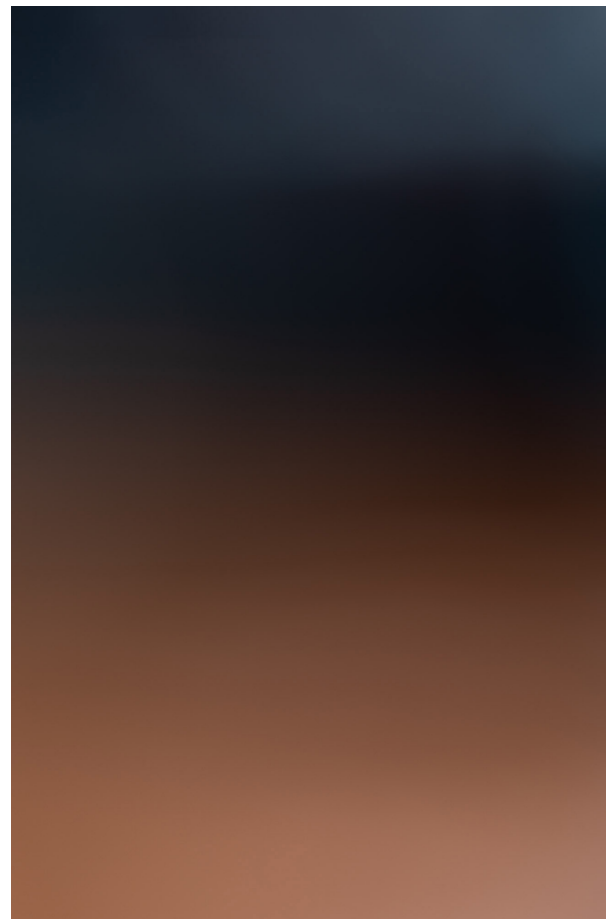
The "Percept" series first adorns the walls with atmospheric colours, and then we wander through the "Kakko" series, suspended and suspending time.

The "Percept" series is an analogy to painting, which attenuates the forms to the point of abstraction, leaving room, like impressionism, for colours and their relationship to light. They are thus raw shots freezing the dance of colours of the void.

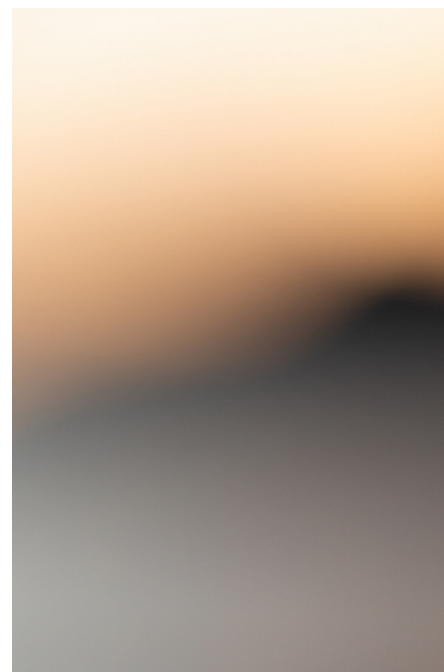
The series "Kakko" (which means parenthesis in Japanese), captures the time in the air and suspends the course of these propitious hours. These dream-like atmospheres frozen in their dances, keep a slight movement, suspended, thanks to the scenography imagined for this exhibition.

This Page:
Artwork:
Cambodia Percept

Following Pages:
Artwork:
Cambodia Percept



125



This Page:
Artwork Cambodia Percept
Facing Page:
Artwork Cambodia Percept