

MAC

Press release

« 6 mètres avant Paris »

“6 meters from Paris”

Exhibition by Eustachy Kossakowski

From 22 April to 28 May 2017

Opening on Friday 21 April 2017, 6:30pm

157 photographs from the collection of the Musée Nicéphore Niépce

On the occasion of the “Grand Paris” Month of Photography

**Curated by Frank Lamy
with the assistance of Julien Blanpied**

**Musée d'art contemporain
du Val-de-Marne**

VAL



Eustachy Kossakowski, *6 mètres avant Paris*, 1972. 157 40 x 50 cm photographic prints on baryta silver-gelatine paper, printed in 2004
 At the Musée Niépce from the original negatives of Eustachy Kossakowski. Musée Nicéphore Niépce Collection, City of Chalon-sur-Saône.
 Owner of negatives and slides : Warsaw Museum of Modern Art. © Anka Ptazkowska.

“Our legs were stuck on the suburb’s ground but our eyes could touch Paris and wander around through the lens of our camera.”
 Anka Ptazkowska

Paris, PARIS! The promised land, the Grail of those who run away from their homeland in search of a new life. Such is the meaning of Eustachi Kossakowski’s masterful work, conceptual yet terribly sensitive and moving. The photographer left Poland with his wife in 1970 and decided to settle in Paris, the city of all dreams and fantasies.

This long attempt to break in, to be part of it, translates into the 157 shots he took following the same method, at exactly 6 meters from Paris’ frontier with the suburb, a distance that allows us to grasp and turn each entrance sign of “The” city into the subject of the image and the artwork: goal, hope, joy and fear all at once.

What lies in between these 6 meters that seems like an insurmountable distance? Is it the space of respect, the thrill of adventure or the fear disappointment?

All throughout the exhibition, these road signs seem to build a separation wall that strangely resonates with us today.

At a time when Paris has become a land of asylum for so many refugees, a time when the city is looking for a solution, and when so many of us fear the invasion of foreigners, the 45 years of distance from then to now seem to vanish.

On the occasion of the “Grand Paris” of photography, the MAC VAL, a few meters away from Paris as well, is very happy to present this emblematic, universal and – alas- timeless work in a museum located in the near-suburb of Paris, which mission has always been to be a unique and original presence on the local territory. The “Grand Paris” is coming. Soon, walls and road signs will fall.

Photojournalist in Poland since 1957, Eustachy Kossakowski immigrated to Paris in 1970 and turned toward a more objective photography practice. Starting in the 1980’s, his work explored the question of light as an object (Lumières de Chartres, Pompei). He spent the last years of his life between France, Italy and Poland.

Soon after he arrived in France, in 1971, Eustachy Kossakowski (Warsaw, 1925- Paris, 2001) walked along the indistinct boarder separating Paris and its suburbs. One by one, he shot the 157 signs that circle the entrance of the city and its administrative limit, at the crossing points of suburban and Parisian streets. The artist took frontal and middle-frame shots of these signs at a distance of six meters. Following this strict rule that dismissed any estheticizing intentions, he captured a changing and random reality, and showed Paris under a new light.

MOIS DE LA PHOTO GRAND PARIS



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