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JAN STEL

MANMADE / NO HUMAN

22 JUNE – 15 SEPTEMBER 2019

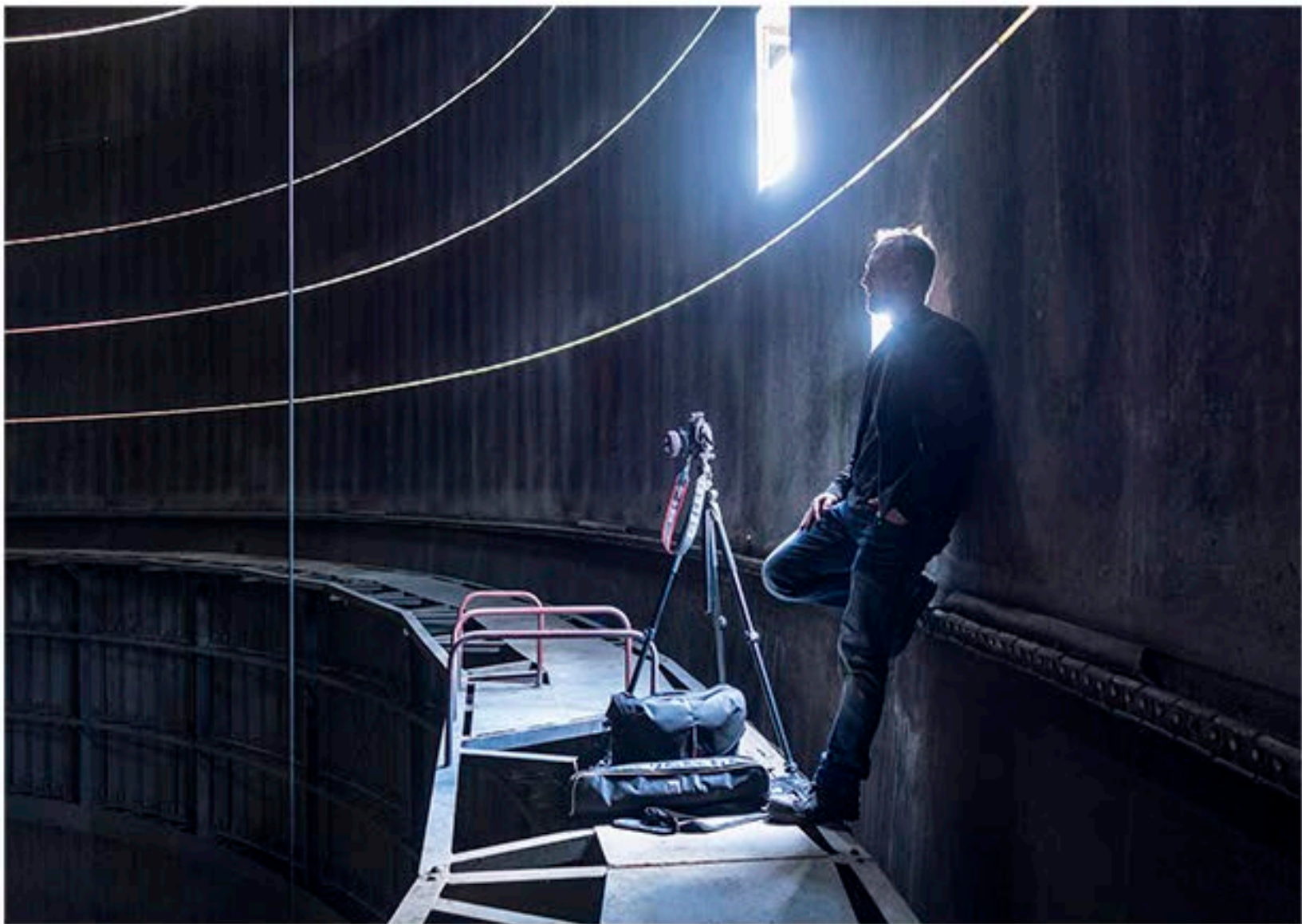
www.janstel.nl

INHOUD

Steel Giant - France
Nieuw Werklust - The Netherlands
Maison Heinen - Luxembourg
Crystal Company - Belgium
Power Station - Belgium
Meer en Berg hospital - The Netherlands
Fabrica Textile - Spain
Steam Locomotive - Germany
Laken Crypte - Belgium
Veterinary School - Belgium
Cathedral di Vino - Spain
Desolate Casino - Romania
Chambre du Commerce - Belgium
Le Gazometre - France
Cooling Tower - Belgium
Zeche Hugo - Germany

COVER PHOTOS

Front: Steel Giant - France
Back: Le Gazometre - France



ABOUT JAN STEL PHOTOGRAPHY

Museum aan het Vrijthof in Maastricht presents a retrospective exhibition of fine art photographer Jan Stel from 22 June until 15 September 2019. The exhibition 'Manmade / no human' comprises 75 photographic artworks of abandoned buildings with characteristic architecture; locations that were once bustling with life and activity. The photographer impressively demonstrates the beauty of decay.

Jan Stel explores and photographs desolate places of our time. A forgotten world from which the human presence has disappeared. Over the past twenty years he has photographed numerous locations at home and abroad.

The artist has a great fascination for the aesthetics of past glory. It is the essence of his photographic work. The history of precious, authentic buildings, the absence of people and lost craftsmanship play a prominent role. The past left behind is photographed with pure, natural light.

The intriguing photographs reflect the philosophical vision of Jan Stel, where the input of people and society can be clearly felt. After all, abandoned buildings, prone to decay and disappearance, are taken over by nature or are given a new destination with a future perspective.



STEEL GIANT - FRANCE

Modern buildings are often referred to as a ‘concrete jungle’, but this abandoned location is nothing but a ‘steel jungle’. A journalist, visiting the PAN Amsterdam Art Fair, called the impressive color palette ‘50 Shades of Rust’.

This massive steel-producing plant feels as if from another dimension. Its sheer size, height and intimidating feel outshine the small city in the background. The interplay of shadow and light that filters through gaps in the roof effects every photograph taken. Thanks to the bright October sunlight, reflecting off the concrete floor, the atmosphere inside lights up. This warm glow gives the plant a look like it is still actively melting ore and producing steel.



NIEUW WERKLUST - THE NETHERLANDS

After its last production, the pictured factory was shut down in 1999. Nowadays the building is covered by the protection of Monuments.

The origin of the factory dates back to 1677. It was a tile bakery as well as a pottery, producing vases and chimney pottery. Around that time the old Rhine was an important traffic-artery with many tile- and stone factories. Raw materials such as sand, peat and clay were sufficiently present. The clay, used in this factory, came from an area across the Rhine and was transported in small boats. After pressing, the tiles and pottery were laid to dry in long open wooden shacks. Depending on its purpose, an oven could be stoked with peat or coal up to a 1000° Celsius.

MAISON HEINEN - LUXEMBOURG

An absolutely gorgeous house in Luxembourg. Check out the bed with the linen still spread over the bed. Such a shame, this is unloved and unlived in. It is pretty surreal being inside here; the curtains blowing in the breeze, while outside the world carries on and inside time stands still.

Maison Heinen is an abandoned farmhouse with a not overly impressive exterior, which is in stark contrast with the beautiful authentic interior. The last inhabitants were devoutly religious, as is witnessed by the many crucifixes and paintings of Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary. Most of the walls and ceilings are decorated and several rooms still have their original antique attributes. Leaking oil jugs are still present to lubricate the dusty machines covered in dust and spider webs.



CRYSTAL COMPANY - BELGIUM

The crystal produced in this ancient factory is world famous for its purity and exceptional brilliance. The depression of the 1930s changed everything for the company. The old glory was never found again.

In 1826 two Frenchmen bought a deserted building and started a crystal manufactory. The factory became world famous. It reached its top shortly before WWI, when about 160,000 crystal items were produced daily by more than 5000 workers. The crystal vases and other decorative items found their way to households all over the world. After the depression sales kept going down. By Fall 2008 the Court of Commerce declared the company bankrupt.



POWER STATION - BELGIUM

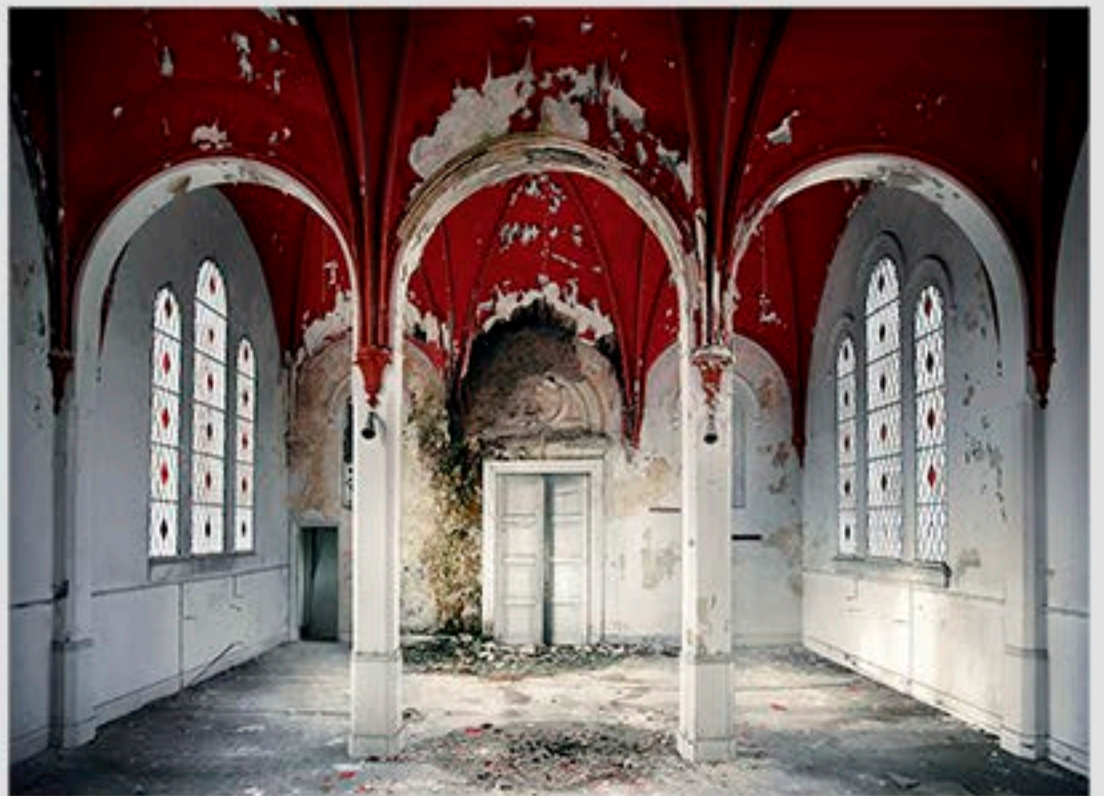
The surreal darkness of this power station reminds one of a scene from The Alien films. The patterns in the ubiquitous black dust resemble the drawings of artist H.R. Giger, who was part of The Alien films' special effects team.

In 1911 a classic example of 'industrial decay' was built in Belgium. The power station started to deliver power to the heavily industrialized area around Gent. The station contained two 2,000 KW.

turbo alternators running at 3,000 rpm, generating a 3 phase current at 12,000 Volts and 50 cycles. Steam was supplied by three Babcock & Wilcox marine-type boilers at 200 pounds of pressure and around 620°F (330°C). Succumbing to extreme economic pressures, the ECVB was abandoned in 2001. Sadly, she was then ripped apart. Copper thieves stole many parts and thus all the historic heritage was lost. With its unearthly steel jungle of valves, pipe networks, gauges and controlsystems, this architectural masterpiece could easily be mistaken for an abandoned spaceship.

MEER EN BERG HOSPITAL - THE NETHERLANDS

This former psychiatric hospital is tucked away in a beautiful natural setting and surrounded by old trees. The silence inside makes you wonder about the mentally ill who lived here. What happened to them? Did they ever recover their sanity? Perhaps the serene chapel with the eye-catching red ceiling provided them with some temporary solace.



Located close to the sea and just outside the dunes, there is an abandoned psychiatric hospital known as Meer en Berg. Up until the 19th century there was hardly any treatment available for the mentally ill. They were cared for and sheltered, but didn't receive the necessary treatment. Outsiders had no idea what was going on in these asylums. Rumors got around that extreme and experimental treatments were used. Patients had to endure shock therapy, isolation cells and contrast-bath therapy while being tied down. Starting in 1849, the hospital, also called a madhouse, was continuously enlarged. Until the 1930s it housed around 1,500 patients. The last patients left the hospital in 2002.

FABRICA TEXTILE - SPAIN

Hidden behind concrete walls, this factory houses the remains of great textile craftsmanship. It is a time capsule from a forgotten era of textile production. Everything has been left as it was; untouched and protected by forgetfulness.

“Near a small village, I was searching for the remains of an abandoned textile factory. Once found, the outside gave no indication of the surprising beauty inside. With my face pressed against the cracked windows, I took a look inside. This old family-owned factory had a very ancient, authentic atmosphere. Its charm laid frozen in time from the yarn still threaded in abandoned looms to the old business documents spread around the office area and the dust-covered machinery. Around the old wooden worktables, rusty tools hung from the cupboards. Much to my delight, the history was totally intact with no signs of graffiti, theft or trashing. A true time warp!” - Jan Stel



STEAM LOCOMOTIVE - GERMANY

The DRB CLASS 52 abandoned locomotive in this photograph was found on a trainyard in the formerly DDR. Corei Jensen (USA) made an amazing detailed replica in wood.

“When I found www.janstel.nl on the web I was stunned by his photography. The deeper I went into the site, the more stunned I became at Jan’s ability to

capture the energy and story of these magical places. I had to have them and recreate them in my world. So, I mailed Jan and asked his permission. As I read his message, granting his permission, I was so moved that he would allow me to copy his work in wood. He wanted no money, portion of profits if I sold a piece or credit, other than a mention of his website and work. It has taken a year I think, on and off. I started by researching what kind of train it was. I never did find the exact train or photos of one like it. It is not to scale, from any plans and has incorrect parts, I’m sure. I did try to make it as authentic as I could, but artistic license did come into play, when I couldn’t find answers. It is made of poplar wood from my own dad’s shop, who has passed away, and was an absolute joy to create for Jan. I tried to instill the energy and spirit that Jan captures in his photography.” - Corei Jenssen



LAKEN CRYPTS - BELGIUM

It is very strange to walk the paths of the crypt of Laken, experiencing the intriguing atmosphere between the ones who have passed away. The beautiful decorations and artworks, made in honour of the once beloved, are unique to see.

To offer a solution for the large shortage of graves on the cemetery of Laken, the Council of the city of Brussels decided to create an underground sepulchre gallery. This was developed by the alderman of public works, Emile Bockstael. The principle was to place the bodies in separate hermetically sealed niches in order to avoid odours. Characteristic concrete niches were built; high panels placed beside each other to create partitions, so the metal coffins could be placed horizontally.

VETERINARY SCHOOL - BELGIUM

“Early one Sunday morning we entered the basement of a veterinary school, also known as the Horror Labs. This seemingly innocent building houses the remains of what could have been a mad scientist’s laboratory. It is an astonishing sight with dozens of labeled jars, containing preserved farm animals, the heads of cats and dogs and even a fox. Beware!” - Jan Stel

The school of veterinary surgeons used the complex from 1969 up to 1990. The labeled jars with animal parts can be found in the cellar and on the first floor, together with medical instruments and some bottles of medicine/chemicals. “It was completely dark inside, so I had to use a small torch to lighten up specific areas to take the photographs. Due to the many open and broken jars, the smell inside was horrible and the room probably full of bacteria. An unforgettable experience.” - Jan Stel



CATHEDRAL DE VINO - SPAIN

On the outskirts of a small city lies a hidden concrete wine cathedral. The exterior is plastered with graffiti, but the interior is very serene and beautiful. Besides the sounds of the nearby city, only the sound of some pigeons are audible.

The buildings of the Cathedral de Vino were constructed between 1920 and 1922. The factory was a cooperative in the manufacture and sale of

wine. Local winegrowers would bring their grapes to the winery and they would use the communal fermenting- and bottling plant to produce their own volumes of wines. They trampled the grapes to pulp with their bare feet in wooden barrels. Big cast iron presses squeezed the juice out of the pulp. The wine was then transported by small rails to concrete cylinders, where it had time to age. The size of these cylinders is absolutely massive, yet they seem elegant and feminine as well.



DESOLATE CASINO - ROMANIA

In Eastern Europe lies a charming and beautiful casino. The building is in desperate need of investors, who can protect this piece of heritage. In order to prevent more damage, but also against vandalism, the place is guarded and monitored 24h.

Perched on a cliffside overlooking the sea lies the magnificent casino with art deco shapes and details still intact, despite the shutdown decades ago. There are so many details to enjoy: the beautiful refined shapes and structures, the remains of a majestic history, subtleties with the colour pallet (though becoming paler as time passes by) and the fabulous ambiance inside and outside.





ABANDONED CARS - GERMANY

This might be a painful sight for classic car enthusiasts. Jaguar, Rolls-Royce, Porsche, Mercedes-Benz, BMW, just a few of the iconic names whose logos you would never expect to find on vehicles in such a sorry state. But what might really shock you is that these unfortunate automobiles are not actually abandoned, and their owner is in fact a classic car lover and expert himself. In his early years he has raced with most of the cars and for dozens of years has deliberately left these cars at the mercy of mother nature.

"Mounting the tripod in the backside of the BMW was very difficult, the floor was so rusty and rotten that little movement could collapse the crumbled floor. So little space to move to the exact position for the best photo composition, without destructing the spider webs. Also it was a real challenge to get sharp and focussed photographs. Because the rear seats of the car was so worn, it was almost not possible for me to place the tripod without obtain movements to the camera." - Jan Stel

The red car is a BMW-EMW 340-2 DeLuxe.
And the Champagne color interior is a 1950 Buick.



CHAMBRE DU COMMERCE - BELGIUM

Right in the middle of a large European city one can find this abandoned trade center building rapidly falling into disrepair. The richly decorated Late-Gothic complex must have cost fortunes. Nowadays, however, this piece of heritage remains abandoned, presumably because refurbishing would be too expensive.

The Chambre du Commerce is a Late-Gothic trade center, located in a busy Belgian city close to a crowded shopping center. Its origin dates back to 1531 and it has burned down twice (in 1583 and 1858). Around 1853 the square and galleries were covered with a dome, modeled on Crystal Palace in London. Today the building is in a dilapidated state. In 2003 it was closed following a fire-safety report. Despite the decline, the majestic building and rich decorations still exude the grandeur of past times. The trade center closed in 1997 and the building has remained empty and neglected ever since.



LE GAZOMÈTRE - FRANCE

If you have any fear of heights or suffer from claustrophobia, you should never enter a gasometer. It is a weird, unnatural place, a purely technical construction meant to hold and distribute gas.

A gasometer is a large container in which coal gas was stored under atmospheric pressure at ambient temperatures. Inside this forgotten gasholder the oxygen levels were dangerously low, especially when the weather was hot and there was hardly any wind. It is a giant, closed tube with just a few openings for breathing. These openings were in fact used for control- and construction works. The volume of the container followed the quantity of stored gas. Pressure was applied using the weight of a telescopic, movable cap. Heavy-weight pulleys mounted on the cap were connected with steel cables, rolling up or down.

COOLING TOWER - BELGIUM

Imagine standing inside an active cooling tower with roaring wind circulators cooling 480,000 gallons of water a minute. In this abandoned tower, the acoustics are oddly circular and the natural airflow is silenced. Many of us have seen these cloud makers from afar, but the inside is unique to behold.

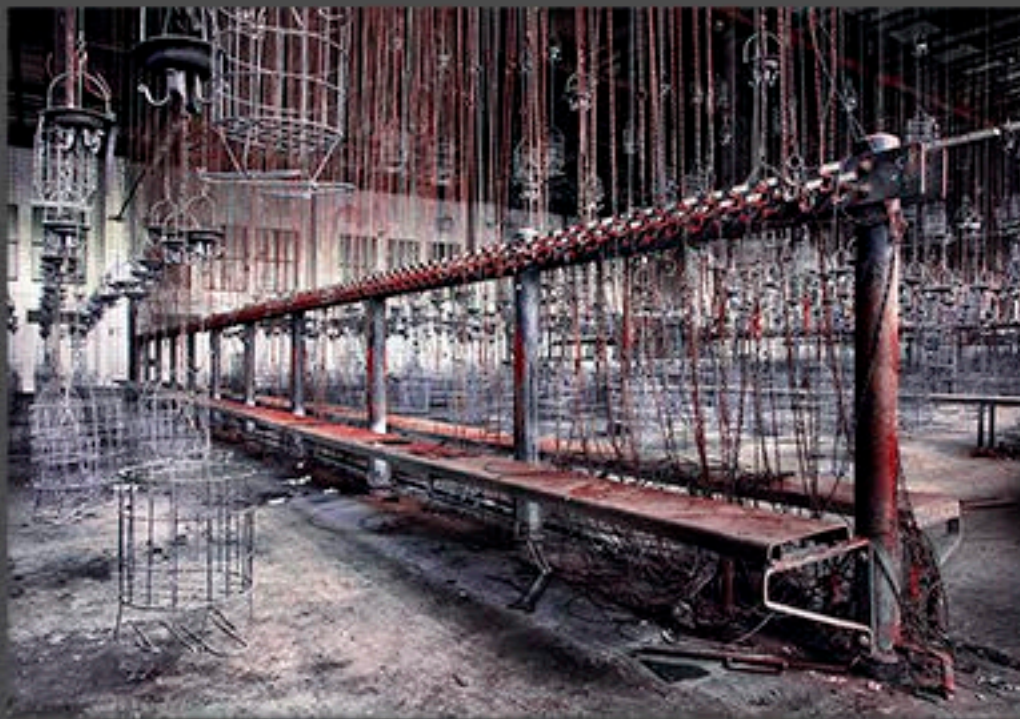
This is a hyperboloid style cooling tower. It has become the standard design for all natural-draft cooling towers, because of their structural strength and minimum usage of material. The hyperbolic shape of the tower enhances aerodynamic lift of the passing wind and it increases the air-flow rate. The air flows into the openings in the bottom and then rises up and cools the entering hot water. The cooled water cascades down to the bottom of the tower whilst the warm, moist air exits out of the top.



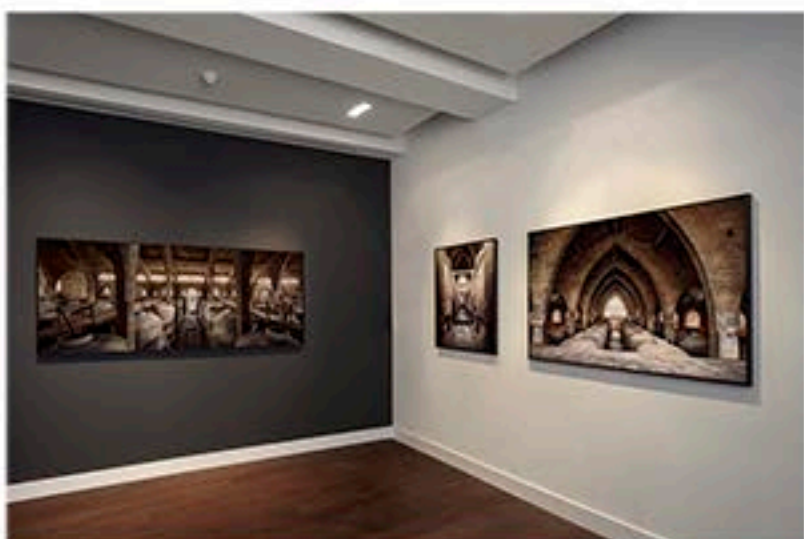
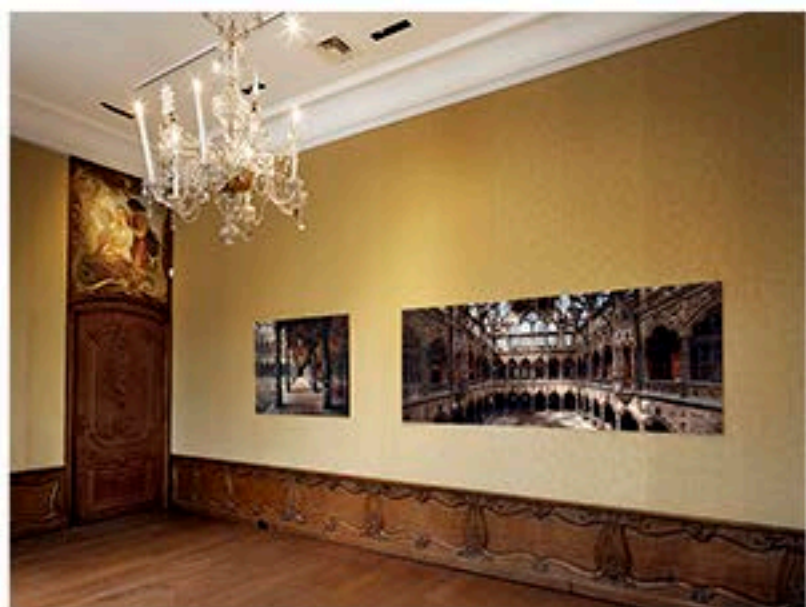
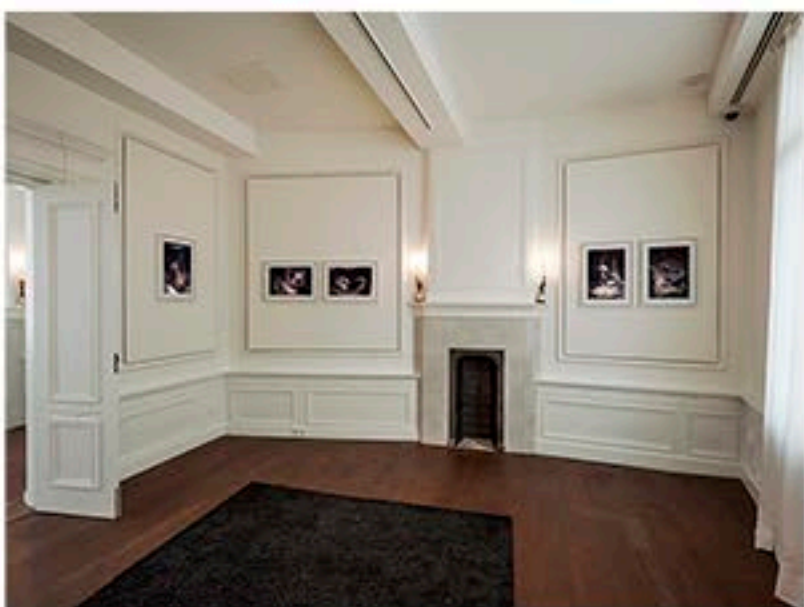
ZECHE HUGO - GERMANY

Inside this abandoned coal mining facility there is an immense hall filled with hundreds of baskets hanging on chains. It is a unique sight to behold. Walking about, it feels like being in a scene from a horror movie.

For many years the Ruhr area of Germany was one of Europe's largest and most successful coal-mining regions. The economic crisis in the scale decline resulting in



in the closure of many mines, including Zeche Hugo. The facility's large changing room is a most astonishing sight. It contains hundreds of steel baskets hanging from the ceiling on long iron chains. The miners placed their shoes, clothing and personal belongings into the baskets before going underground. Using the chain, the miners would hoist their baskets up to the roof, protecting their belongings from dust and theft. Doing this would lower another basket containing soap and other items for washing off the coal dust, when returning from the mine.



AWARDS AND MEDIA

Jan Stel's photography received a lot of interest from (inter)national media and has been published in De Volkskrant, De Telegraaf, FD Persoonlijk, NRC Handelsblad, The Daily Mail, in dozens of magazines (Focus, PF Magazine, ...) and on many websites and blogs. He also obtained several awards like the Sony World Photography Award, International Color Award and the Epson Pano Award. His work is exhibited on a regular basis and is part of many private and corporate collections.



FINE ART PRINTING

High-quality, limited edition artworks are available as archival pigment prints, professionally printed on 320 grams Harman Baryta Art Paper. The pigment-based inkjet printer and acid-free paper are a guarantee for long term protection. It has a rich depth in the blacks and it has true colours with a beautiful look and feel; a smooth, silky small structure surface.

Each print is personally signed by the artist, titled and numbered on the back and comes with a signed Certificate of Authenticity. Artwork, ordered overseas, will be transported in a special protective cylinder.

REPRESENTATION JAN STEL

For more details and inquiries contact Feiko Koster at the Eduard Planting Gallery.

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Eduard Planting Gallery
FINE Art Photographs

COLOPHON

Photography: Jan Stel

Design: Jan Stel

Translation: Maria Kamphuis / Judith Maassen

Publisher: Museum aan het Vrijthof

PR: Richard Hermes & Hervé Seeuws: Monsieur PR

SPECIAL THANKS

Menno Alkema, Tobias Duysens, Huub Geurten, Jack Houben, Joep de Jong, Guy van Loo, Gijs mommers, Rob Oostdam en Johan Rijken. Volenteers of Museum aan het Vrijthof.

Printing: The Final Art Print, Rene Bierman. www.thefinalartprint.nl

Finishing and framing: Bootsma Technologies. www.bootsma-technologies.com

Gallery: Eduard Planting Gallery, Feiko Koster. www.eduardplanting.com



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MUSEUM AAN HET VRIJTHOF

Museum aan het Vrijthof is a young museum located at the heart of the city in one of the oldest buildings in Maastricht; the former retreat of Charles V. This private museum re-opened after major renovations in 2012 and receives no government funding. Museum aan het Vrijthof organizes temporary exhibitions two to three times each year. They are always looking for surprising combinations and unconventional collaborations.

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Opening times: Tuesday - Sunday 10:00 - 17:30