

Saint-Erwann

Since the XIX century, neuropsychology and psychology have taken a significant progression. We now have a better understanding of the human brain complexity, mind and behaviour. Numerous physical and mental disabilities are recognised and studied, offering the best assistance to those in need. Despite this, not everyone is yet familiar with it. This series of portraiture presents a positive approach to disabilities. Marion, the photographer, pictures her brother Erwann.

Erwann is 13 years old and was born with an intellectual disability. His handicap is rare and can be characterised by a learning disability, developmental, hearing and vision disorder. Close to autism, he shares the same difficulties with social interaction, communication, restricted and repetitive behaviour.

These photographs aimed to capture the pure and genuine character of Erwann. The idea of translating her brother's personality into pictures took place a few years ago. While this time, it became clear for her that the vision that she has of her brother was going above than just a sister's love. A profound admiration and respect emerged toward this courageous being, fighting every day to be able to execute what you and I have acquired so easily.

"This work aims to raise awareness by sharing a more refined view of disabilities, building a place where my brother would be the centre of the attention. He has a lot to teach us.

This work does intend to parents, siblings; familiar or not with disabilities. It furthermore proposes to younger ages (which we know can tend to be more severe on differences) another approach."

Influenced by many pieces of work, this project found its first inspiration in the book *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry; a novella remaining to any grown-up the sincerity of the child they were once.



Closely followed by the French film *Le Huitième Jour*, a movie in which Jaco Van Dormael narrates the meeting between Harry, an unhappy businessman and Georges, a young man with Down syndrome. A happy coincidence leading to a sincere friendship. Lastly, from the photographic series *Echolilia* by Timothy Archibald and *Inseparable* by Vladimir Mishukov. Archibald, father of an

autistic young boy, beautifully portrayed the world of his son. Mishukov's work composed of portraits of people with down syndrome. These photographs were exhibited in a church.



Ferris, La Rochelle, 2020

This picture presents a central composition and an eye level angle. Three guiding lines are leading to the model face. The blue sky is complemented by the orange roof top of the building, the red scarf and the model skin's colour. Aesthetically, the composition is well executed. The two buildings on each sides of the model seem to be drawing wings. The obstruction and darken shadow on the right side was not initially wanted by the photographer. However, it has been kept in post-production. It provides a following in the inclination of the model face and dynamism in the picture. It also gives a curvature effect and brings indication of the structural context in which the model is.

Behind the scene:

"This photograph had been taken aboard a big wheel. It is something that Erwann very much likes and that we often do together. I wanted to portray my brother in altitude, above the city, superior to everyone; beyond all concerns and closer from the sky. Erwann is authentic and clear of any evil. This picture was a manner to say how closer from Truth, I think my brother is. How closer from sensation, emotion and from life. The sun caressing his cheek, him smiling and experiencing something in its authenticity."



Colour Wheel, Erwann's bedroom, 2020

Aesthetically, the frame is thoughtfully composed. The subject and his shadow appear secondly, although it doesn't seem to break the pattern. It looks in continuity with it, due to the low exposure and the green light on the model's chin. The low angle gives the model an imposing aspect, as well as the capacity to discover a fantastic world through his eyes. The dynamism of the composition let suppose that the lights are turning above the subject.

Behind the scene:

“Erwann started a few months ago a therapy called Snoezelen. This therapy presents a controlled multisensory environment and is specialised for people with autism or other developmental disabilities. With the will to recreate this universe, I picked this forgotten disco-light in our basement. The effect rendered gives a very dreamlike ambience. Lights are performing and give a dance that only Erwann can conduct. He owns the space as he owns his imagination, reflexion of his consciousness.”



Pause, the familial house, 2018

This picture is a central composition with a low angle. Diagonal lines are present, forming two triangles and giving a sense of motion; enforced by the person walking up the stairs. The bannister and the person's arm leads to the subject face. Texture is present with the wallpaper.

Technically, the photograph seems a little underexposed and presents noise. The model's face could have been more enhanced. Aesthetically, the composition is adequately accomplished. The colours are contrasted, everything is dark, except the walls et model's skin. The house architecture, the wallpaper and the stairs are dark, dismal, juxtaposing the model smiling at us.

Behind the scene:

“This photograph intends to illustrate the different impact that time has on Erwann. Expressed by the movement in the picture, the personification of Time walks beside him, dressed in black. Following its owner, a shadow steps into the stairs belatedly _ it did not reach my brother yet. Innocently, Erwann smiles, predicting something. Time is in constant motion, things change and evolve. People grow up and old; as Erwann will so. Despite, I believe, safe to neglect these qualities that all children had once. Safe to lose what his disability gifted him.”

After viewing this series of portraiture, it seems evident now that it could be compared with the work of Giovanni Cocco, *Monia*. The approach and sensibility expressed in both works are similar. They both focus on the sensitive interaction that these two beings experience in their everyday life. A profound admiration seems to be shared by these two photographers. A related feeling, found in questioning the nature of these perceptions. A fascination with the authentic way of life.

