

« MUCHISMO » DE CRISTINA DE MIDDEL

In the work *Muchismo*, the photographer Cristina de Middel digs around in her studios and brings all of her images to light, exactly the way she has them stored, in colossal, gorgeous chaos, to show them in the exhibition of the same name. This is a sui generis display of her entire oeuvre, with neither a curator nor any apparent order, which seeks to question the art market and its rules.

In 1911 a group of explorers failed in their efforts to discover for the second time the Arctic island of Jan Mayen. Things didn't go well for them, but they tried with the same determination displayed fifty years later in a different expedition by a group of Zambian scholars. Led by a schoolteacher they intended to travel to the moon - and from there to Mars - using a catapult system they had designed in the outskirts of Lusaka. At the time, the revolution was just gathering pace in China and Mao still had to decide what color to give to the cover of a book that in due course would become the second most printed book in history, after the Bible. Meanwhile in New York immigrants jumped up and down the streets of a country that would prove to be the epicenter of freedom, and in Nigeria a boy was obliged to seek refuge in the jungle among the Yoruba spirits, in order to escape the soldiers who had attacked his village.

These are all stories that I've been telling in publications and exhibitions since 2012, publishing five books and printing over four hundred photographs in the process. In 2016, photography is still the subject of different debates, not least due to the unbounded versatility and uniqueness of the medium, which makes it hard to categorize. For some, it constitutes an unquestionable document, a tool to represent the world we live in as it truly is. For others it can be lyrical. If we consider art history as a whole, however, photography has always been a collectible object: work, art, but an object nonetheless. I've been fortunate enough to have had the opportunity of exploring its various forms and experimenting with its limits and dogmas.

I first tried photography as part of my education, in connection to the arts. The result was that I found myself surrounded by unintelligible messages, which seemed to have completely bypassed the artist's true calling: to communicate and convey meaning. In response to all of this I entered the field of photo journalism, where I found exactly the opposite: a kind of literalness and neutrality, which simultaneously surpassed and limited the potential that I adhere to the photographic image. Since 2012, I have advocated for a middle ground, away from the extremes. I no longer give so much thought to how to get the most of an image, nor do I find the obviously manipulated images of the world present in the media so offensive either. My concerns are focused instead of the art market, on the value of an image as an object, and on the understanding that restricts its unlimited reproduction. The truth is that some of the images in this exhibition shouldn't be here, since all the copies are part of private collections. At the same time none of these images have any value, but they all say something about a story that I was telling. As objects they don't exist and have no value. Only as words are they indispensable in my narratives, and therefore I've decided to show these images all together, to sum up my dictionary and make some room in my warehouse.

And so, using a system similar to money laundering in *Muchismo* (*Muchism*), my inventory is officially inaugurated as an independent entity, converted into a conglomerate with its own mission. I give you my sincere thanks, because without each and every one of you it would not have been possible.

CRISTINA DE MIDDEL

[exposition « Muchismo » de Cristina de Middel](#)

commissariat Christian Caujolle

exposition du 11 janv. au 9 mars 2018 à La Filature, Scène nationale – Mulhouse

rencontre mercredi 10 janv. 18h avec Christian Caujolle et Cristina de Middel

vernissage mercredi 10 janv. 19h lors de l'inauguration du [festival les Vagabondes](#)

visite guidée jeudi 12 janv. 12h30 « club sandwich »