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**PRESS FOLDER**



**A CARING EYE**

**PORTRAITS BY DANIELLE VAN ZADELHOFF**



# EXHIBITION: 'A CARING EYE, PORTRAITS BY DANIELLE VAN ZADELHOFF'

(Evelien Vanden Berghe)

## IN SHORT

The work of Danielle van Zadelhoff leaves no-one unmoved. It was only as recently as 2013 that she began to take photographs, but her artistic foundations had already been laid in her youth by her art-loving father, a home library packed with books about art and history, and her own experience as a visual artist. It is perhaps little wonder, then, that her penetrating and timeless portraits are reminiscent of the Old Masters of the Renaissance and other more recent artists. Her love of painting and her fascination with the human psyche are combined seamlessly in her photography. A number of Danielle's portraits will be on display in the monastery of the St. John's Hospital, a location for which they could have been made. Without in any way intruding, the modern photographs hang side by side with the centuries' old masterpieces for which this beautiful medieval building is so famous. This exhibition is part of the Bruges Photo 16 Festival.

## MORE INFO

Sometimes it is difficult to escape your destiny, no matter how hard you try. It seems as if everything suddenly comes together in a single movement. All at once, you understand why you made certain choices in the past and realize the value of things that have happened to you previously. That is the story of Danielle van Zadelhoff's art: wholly unexpectedly, everything suddenly fell into place, as if it was meant to be.

## Unexpected success

This is how she must have felt when, just three years ago, she began taking photographs and discovered that all the pieces of her personal puzzle were beginning to fit. Her talent was immediately obvious and was quickly noticed by various magazines and newspapers. While some artists struggle frantically for years to gain attention and recognition, a few photos on Facebook were enough to set the ball rolling for Danielle. Her work was quickly picked up and given a place in the Press Museum, the PAN (Pictura Antiquairs Nationaal) in Amsterdam, SCOPE in Miami / Basel and the Design Museum in London.

Danielle remained calm and serene under all this interest. In her work you can find nothing that reflects the speed and surprise of her success. Quite the reverse... Perhaps this has something to do with the 17th century farm near Antwerp where she lives and works. Born in Amsterdam, she moved to the farm more than 10 years ago, sensing that it was the ideal place to let her art slowly take shape. Before she discovered photography, she made aesthetics, art and everything that is beautiful an inseparable part of her life. She now saw that her youth was one long preparation that would allow her to discover her calling: she grew up with art-loving parents and her father made sculptures and painted pictures in an outhouse that also served as his extensive library. The religious elements in her photos are no doubt a result of her years spent at a Protestant school and the influence of her Catholic grandmother, although her father was a humanist *pur sang*.

## Exceptional

What is it exactly that makes Danielle's photographs so exceptional? Wherein lies the magic of her work that makes us unwittingly stop and stare? At first sight, her work seems so touchingly simple: understated portraits in *clair-obscur* which are reminiscent of the great masters of the 17th century, such as Rembrandt van Rijn. But don't be fooled: it goes much deeper than that...

Fine details - a shy glance, a gossamer lace collar, subtle freckles on milk-white skin - all help to create an atmosphere that quiets and slows down our thoughts. The pureness of her portraits also allows space for diverse emotions. There is a huge difference between the dream-like expression of a young girl, the playfulness of a lute player, and the despairing look of Lucretia. Of this last photo, Danielle has said that she wanted to capture the moment when Lucretia finally decided to take her own life. This preference for displaying different emotions and moods, thereby underlining their universality, is a consequence of her training in psychology.

Her predilection for 'old' art can be seen in the subtle references she makes in clothing, composition and the use of light and shade. With her close attention to detail - expensive fabrics like brocade and lace frequently appear in her photos - she honours the craftsmanship of the masters of yesteryear: a delicate fold here, a velvet ribbon there, a luxurious turban, little things that set the atmosphere. The light in her work comes from an indeterminate source, so that the subjects are pushed forward out of a background that never distracts attention from what is essential: the humanness of emotions.

### **Authenticity**

Danielle explains her success in part as a result of the honesty and authenticity of her work. She never uses Photoshop and her models only wear minimal make-up. These models are either passers-by she meets on the street or are drawn from her own circle of friends. This integrity in an age where nothing is what it seems appeals to people. Her sober but intense portraits respond to a growing social need for genuineness and timeless beauty, serving a public that has had enough of superficiality and transience.

### **Location**

Her photographs perfectly match the setting of the historic monastery in the St. John's Hospital. It is almost as if they were made especially for this remarkable location. Without intruding and in a wholly natural way, her photos hang alongside the portraits of the great and the good from centuries gone by. You don't ask questions and you don't compare; it is just as though it was always meant to be this way: hundreds of years apart, yet somehow belonging together; complementing each other without wanting to be each other.

The aesthetic pleasure that many people experience when viewing her work has been tellingly expressed by one of Danielle's patrons: 'What a delight and what luxury to have two of her photos hanging in my office!' Even if some things are (un)affordable, in life you need to hold on to whatever makes you happy. For some people, the portraits of Danielle van Zadelhoff seem to be a rewarding alternative.

# IMAGES IN HR

Images to be used exclusively for promotional purposes related to this project can be downloaded via the following link: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/museabrugge/sets/>. Please mention the correct credits.



1. Blue Turban
2. Secret
3. Vulnerable
4. Living Doll
5. Egg
6. Purity
7. Invisible Line

## ALL THE WORKS IN THIS EXPO



SECRET / 2016



INVISIBLE LINE / 2015



YOUNG VIRGINS / 2015



THOUGHTS / 2015



TRANSCIENCE / 2016



EGG / 2016



BELIEVE 1 / 2014



BELIEVE 2 / 2014



BLUE TURBAN / 2015



TIMELESS / 2015



LIVING DOLL / 2015



VULNERABLE / 2015



BACK / 2014



FRAGILITY / 2016



PARADISE / 2016

The diptych Paradise is the only work exhibited next door in St. John's Hospital Museum.



JUSTICE / 2016



PURITY / 2015



SCHOOLGIRL / 2015

## PRATICAL INFO EXHIBITION

<b>Title:</b>	<b>A Caring Eye, Portraits by Danielle van Zadelhoff</b>
<b>Location:</b>	<b>Sint-Janshospitaal (St. John's Hospital, monastery), Mariastraat 38, 8000 Bruges</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>from 8 December 2016 to 5 March 2017</b>
<b>Hours of opening:</b>	<b>Tuesday to Sunday, from 09.30 to 17.00.</b> Closed on Monday, 25/12 and 01/01
<b>Tickets:</b>	€ 8 (26-64 y.)   € 6 (>65 y. & 12-25 y.) [incl. permanent collection]   free for children younger than 12 years and for the residents of Bruges
<b>More info:</b>	<a href="http://www.museabrugge.be">www.museabrugge.be</a>   <a href="http://www.bruggefoto.be">www.bruggefoto.be</a>

The exhibition is part of the **BRUGES PHOTO 16 FESTIVAL**, with expositions at 14 different locations throughout the city centre, including the exposition **BRUGES CORNER SHOPS** by **FOTOHUIS BRUGGE** in the **Volkskundemuseum (Folklore Museum)**.

## MORE INFO

**Appointments can be arranged** via [sarah.bauwens@brugge.be](mailto:sarah.bauwens@brugge.be) or tel. +32 50 44 87 08.  
**Press visits to the exhibition are possible with an appointment;** see the section 'press' on [www.museabrugge.be](http://www.museabrugge.be).

The press folder can also be consulted online and texts can be extracted via [www.museabrugge.be](http://www.museabrugge.be), section 'press'.

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You can also forward files digitally (please give the ftp or url) for the attention of [sarah.bauwens@brugge.be](mailto:sarah.bauwens@brugge.be)

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