

WIZOWA

Impressions from East by **Grégoire Eloy**

Exhibition from 8 November until 22 December, 2006
Opening on Tuesday 7 November 7:00 PM

Gallery **CONFLUENCES** 



Grégoire Eloy uncovers and photographs traces of history and fragments of the collective memory in forgotten regions of Eastern Europe and former Soviet republics.

In his first trip, right before the historic enlargement of the EU, he explores the boundaries of this new territory in seven of the ex-eastern Bloc countries – Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Slovakia, Hungary and Slovenia.

This first series on the new fringes of Europe was awarded the 'Bourse de Talent Reportage' (Photographie.com, Kodak, Picto, Prophot) in May 2004 and was exhibited at the Lodz Photo Festival in Poland the following year.

The contact sheets from his first trip reveal imposing themes: the scars of history, a collective memory tied to Soviet occupation and the nostalgia that remains.

These chronicles drive him further in his exploration, from the Russian enclave of Kaliningrad to Constanta on the Black Sea coast in Romania (winter 2004), then to Ukraine and Crimea (winter 2005). His travels in the ex-Soviet states will lead him beyond the Caucasus up to Central Asia.

This photographer journeys through these empty and isolated regions alone. He sets off to meet people, to hear their stories. Above all Grégoire is compelled by man's place in empty space and the indelible scars he leaves in the landscape.

Grégoire Eloy works with negative film and prints his photographs himself.

« The black and white images of Grégoire Eloy are full of atmosphere, purposely incredibly dense and impressive. They translate a sooty atmosphere into a ideological residue that 'colors' the intense solitude of urban wastelands.

Be it on almost cemeterial terrain or warlike fields in the shadows of unsettling statues of Lenin or Stalin, Grégoire's eye is that of a poet of memories of an ailing society, of the past and the fears of the future.

The setting is magnificently placed to put idealistic dreams to rest in the darkness of a failure, a failure that ended with the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Grégoire Eloy is the perfect example of a photographer who documents the "lobotomization" of minds which affected the ex-soviet world from Lithuania to the Urals.»

Alain Mingam

Translated by Matthew Kay



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