

# GALERIE JEROME DE NOIRMONT



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On the cover:

*Untitled, 2007*

157 x 125 cm / with frame: 162 x 130 cm

Pigment print on fiber based paper mounted on aluminium

Original photograph - Edition of 6 and 2 artist's proofs

© Valérie Belin. Courtesy Galerie Jérôme de Noirmont, Paris

GALERIE JEROME DE NOIRMONT

*VALÉRIE BELIN*

NOVEMBER 7, 2008

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JANUARY 8, 2009

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**Images :** 300 dpi pictures available on our website :

Press section / User : VB19 / Login : lido

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For any further request, please contact the gallery.

**GALLERY HOURS:** Monday - Saturday / 11am – 7pm (except on bank holidays)

**OPENING:** Thursday, November 6, from 6 to 9 pm (on invitation only)

## AND ALSO... OUTSIDE THE WALLS

*BELIN / MANET*  
*CORRESPONDANCES MUSÉE D'ORSAY / ART CONTEMPORAIN*  
Musée d'Orsay, Paris  
October 8, 2008 – February 1st, 2009

*VALÉRIE BELIN*  
Musée de l'Elysée, Lausanne  
November 6, 2008 – January 4, 2009

*STRIKING RESEMBLANCE : THE PORTRAIT AS MUSE – BELIN, SUGIMOTO, VIOLA*  
Norton Museum of Art, West Palm Beach, Floride  
November 22, 2008 – February 15, 2009

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*McDERMOTT & McGOUGH – AN EXPERIENCE OF AMUSING CHEMISTRY*  
Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Paris  
November 5, 2008 – January 25, 2009  
(cf. enclosed press release)

*PIERRE ET GILLES*  
*PROSPECT 1 – US BIENNAL*  
New Orleans, Louisiana  
November 1st, 2008 – January 18, 2009

## A "NEW" VALÉRIE BELIN

For her very first exhibition at the gallery (that has been representing her since autumn 2007), from November 7, 2008 to January 8, 2009, Valérie Belin will unveil **three new series of black and white photographs**, marking a real turning point in her approach.

At the very time when several European museums are offering her a great retrospective<sup>1</sup>, the exhibition will give evidence of the artist's evolution in her approach and will show her new freedom in treating the subject.

In her first series, particularly those devoted to vases and crystal glasses (1993) or silverware (1994), Valérie Belin worked only on the luminous spectrum of objects, on the "drawing" created by the light, by remaining very close to the original process of photography. As in sculpture, the working impression, in positive or negative, gave a tangible reality to the predefined identity of subjects, such as the bodybuilders (1999), the Moroccan brides (2000) or the transsexuals (2001).

The appearance of new picture technologies resulted for the artist in a **progressive removal from the indexed character of photography to a freer, even more pictorial, treatment of the subject**.

In earlier portraits, such as the Mannequins (2003) or the Models (2006), the spectator was led to question reality, true or false, of the photographed subjects. Nowadays, characters seem to emerge from the virtual sphere. Their existence suddenly seems to be doubted by the image the artist gives us... Valérie Belin's new portraits no longer pick out a given photographic aesthetic, but as for paintings, they belong to a dreamlike vision, to a specific interpretation of the subject, that of the artist.

By giving her the possibility of changing the impression and support technique, of choosing between colour and black and white depending on the effect of the sought-after meaning, the contemporary technological tools led the artist to consider photography over and above its analogical nature, as means of creating a pure image. **The characters of her new series are dedicated to the image. They create a picture before us – as the Lido dancer and the magicians**, all actors of a show.

The centring and production used for the Danseuse du Lido has a certain similarity with the portraits of mixed-race girls (2006), but in a reversed connection. The photographed girls seemed all the same to us, with very resembling physiques, although all different, wearing similar clothes differentiated mainly by each one's colour. This time, it is one and the same girl who changes her costume for each picture whilst keeping an identical posture and the same facial expression. By appearing on the portraits with the same professionalism as on stage, the Lido dancer "makes" the picture and shows the evolution of the subject as an "a priori" motive in Valérie Belin's works.

The dancer's hybrid costumes, evocative of the review's different scenes, were especially chosen for their varied influences – Fellini's cinema, a foreign country and its folklore, a nature where woman mixes with the animal... The artist was attracted here by the fantastic and anachronistic character of the costumes without sparkles or glitter, that put the subject into a

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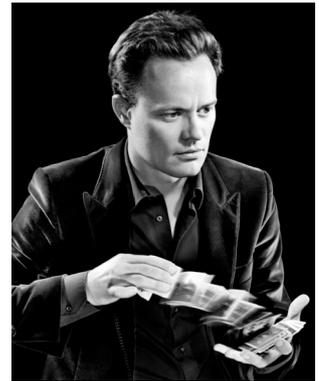
<sup>1</sup> Touring exhibition: Huis Marseille Museum for Photography, Amsterdam, September 1<sup>st</sup> –November 26 ,2007; Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Paris, April 9 –June 8, 2008; Musée de l'Élysée, Lausanne, November 6, 2008 – January 4, 2009.

timeless dimension, far from her initial context. The Lido dancer suddenly evokes the fantastic Middle-Age; its strangeness has finally the beauty of a gargoyle. The fantasising of the portrait is strengthened by the demonstrative and demanded duplication effect that makes up this series.

The series of magicians, which also refers to the entertainment world, emphasis on the illusory and dramatic characters, as in the cinema. Still in black and white, it shows 5 different characters, shuffling cards. Trying to grasp the illusion, which is not intrinsically photographable, Valérie Belin introduces the **movement in the picture**. It is this movement that is going to give its illusionary sense to the picture.

The dichotomy between the movement of the cards recorded through photography and the static status quo of the character gives the pictures a blatant dramatic character. The spectator wonders if they are really magicians; the movement of the cards inspires rather the game, "the player" and recalls some symbolic characters from the black Hollywood cinema of the 1950s.

The particular light used for the series strengthens the film effect: multiple lighting sources create surfacing rays that form a luminous outline of the silhouettes. The luminescence effect dematerialises the subject and also inspires the black American cinema where the characters seem to literally vibrate on the screen.



The latest series to date, those of bouquets, reveals much more of this kind of magic realism that characterises the artist's new works. This series of photographs exudes an aesthetic that makes you think of a dream through its diffused structure, momentum, almost weightlessness. The **5 bunches of flowers**, whilst keeping their natural harmony, seem to have been exposed to radiation – or strictly speaking a solarization, which restores them to the immateriality of the negative picture. The transformation of the flowers flesh into quasi-monochrome designs is accentuated by the pictures' printing technique (inks on paper) chosen for its lack of definition and abnormalities.

Flouting the presupposed techniques linked to a certain photographic tradition, Valérie Belin from now on places her object within evolutions, sometimes worrying, for its era: her new works show a hybrid nature that puts the subject between the organic and the sublime. Everything from now on seems possible...

## CATALOGUE

A bilingual French / English catalogue is published by the gallery at the occasion of this exhibition. Text by Larisa Dryansky.

All exhibited works illustrated full-page.

Limited edition of 2,000 copies. ISBN 2-912303-28-1.

**ALL WORKS:** Edition of 6 copies and 2 artist's proofs. Unique format.