



# An impression on a work in progress.

Stephanie Van de Velde

[ **homesession** ]

viernes 27 de julio 2012, 19.30  
During the opening, music by DJ Dedikke  
(member of Kenji Minogue)

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ENGLISH

## Intro

Stephanie Van de Velde [1981, Ghent, Belgium] is presenting an ongoing photography project she started in 2008.

During one month residency, Stephanie has explored the beaches of Barcelona, using a traditional 4 x 5 inches photographic camera. Her daily practice as well as the production time and perseverance that such a camera implies, gives to the process a singular status in the age of digital photography and souvenirs. Beyond her interest in human behavior and social posture, her practice connects with the contemporary art concern about the production and circulation of images.

<http://www.vandveldestephanie.be>

## Away from the individual

Even before it was known what was being looked for, the sea exerted an irrefutable gravitational pull. The journey's starting point was intuitively found in the place where the sea allows her waves to savour the land, slowly eating it and spitting it out again. Nature once again is acknowledged as the mysterious stage and as the imposing antagonist in a play that seeks to scrutinize man's most inner core. This place unrelentingly challenges the oblivious human to participate in a dialogue with his surroundings.

The one able to perceive this stage play is not the neutral spectator, a dreamlike character that by effacing itself could reveal the essence of what is seen. As a true spectator – and a photographer – one has to learn about this strip of Belgian seashore into which the cold North Sea bites. Only then can this geographical knowledge eventually be abstracted from the scene. Thus, what remains, is a sandy, nameless arena that could be located anywhere.

Walking between groups of people and lone individuals, faces open up and reveal shreds of a personality. One enters – inconspicuously or not – in invisible circles of intimacy. These people that shed their clothes and social characteristics and think that they can discard their deterministic nature in the same way, are trying to be, just be, without others defining them. They stride towards the water, the cleansing sea, but the heap of clothes and social traits left behind on the beach, is carried with them right underneath their skin.

The skin is bulging with a carefully accumulated identity. Languor and tiresomeness sits on the faces and asses that are pressed against the warm sand. At this end of the beach, closer to civilization, loose sand blows up and covers the sticky bodies of unaware people. They are indifferent to their surroundings, which makes that the searching photographer prefers to just let them be. Closer to the water, other things are visible. In the shallow part, old bones wade with determination, leaving pleasure and vain expectations to the youth. Impassioned spying eyes – who am I? They seem to ask – are confronted with the deep warmth that pours itself over the scene.

The change of tone is a fact. The spectator discerns the first who dare to strike up a dialogue with the sea. The result is a merging of a cultural identity with nature. Children rejoice in a sentiment of unity that the tide drags in, and even the youngest one cares to be part of the gathering. Other small ones stand in awe before nature and seek out their anchor. A young man timidly rises from the crowd and watches how his questions on identity are reflected on the horizon. These people are self-aware individuals who create lifebuoys to keep themselves and their past afloat.

By taking more distance the perception fundamentally shifts and people not only shrink to the size of pawns, they also become embedded in an orchestrated game in which they are put by no one in particular. The forces of nature overhang the scene like giant clouds and show their influence in the connection that arises between man's primitive core and the surrounding nature. No one knows the rules of the game but they are intrinsically present in the tableaux.

On the road travelled, it started with people that attempted to lose their social constructions but nonetheless beamed with personality. By looking in a different manner at man and his relationship with nature, the journey seems to end with figures that are solidified into statues – a completion of the disindividualisation. They are imperturbable, unshakable figures that found their predestination in a perennial moment. So it ends with universal stories – populated with Everyman-characters – in which the players are connected through the unknown and peer at the horizon only to learn that everything has an end.

Dieter Dewilde

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## Próximos eventos homesession:

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|-------------------|---|
| agosto 2012       | > Residencia<br><b>Rimma Arslanov</b> (Bélgica)   |
| 4 septiembre 2012 | > Exposición PRE- a continuación.<br><b>Rafael Castañer</b> (BCN)                       |
| septiembre 2012   | > Proyecto de Residencia<br>(en el Instituto Francés)<br><b>Gabriel Desplanque</b> (Fr) |
| septiembre 2012   | > Residencia<br>Paul Maheke   |

con la colaboración de:



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