

Caimi & Piccinni

La Citadelle
Villefranche-sur-Mer
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Le Cœur caché

La Citadelle
Centre d'art & Musées
Place Emmanuel Philibert
Villefranche-sur-Mer

Everyday
10h - 17h

+33(4)93 76 33 27

Contact: musees@villefranche-sur-mer.fr
Presse : presse@villefranche-sur-mer.fr

www.lacitadellevsm.fr



Le Coeur caché (The Hidden Heart)

Jean-Marc Caimi & Valentina Piccinni

Under the sweltering skies of the Côte d'Azur, between the sparkling reflections of the Mediterranean and the deep shadows of the mountains, one question arises: What lies beyond this light that both fascinates and consumes everything? In "Le Coeur caché", Jean-Marc Caimi and Valentina Piccinni invite us to explore the other side of the French Riviera—a territory overexposed by the sun and saturated with clichéd images that conceal its intimate reality.

For the past thirteen years, this duo of Italian photographers has been weaving a body of work that straddles the realms of documentary and visual poetry. Their approach, imbued with humanity and curiosity, goes beyond merely capturing images. At the invitation of the Mougins Photography Center and La Citadelle in Villefranche-sur-Mer, they were welcomed for an artistic research residency.

From Fréjus to Sospel, from the Lérins Islands to the streets of Villefranche-sur-Mer, their photography is all about immersion—depicting a territory through the eyes of its residents. These encounters with locals become suspended moments in which the unexpected takes over.

The photographers explore intimate details, capture fragile moments, and reveal a raw beauty far removed from artifice. Here, an isolated silhouette on a deserted beach; there, a fragment of conversation whispered in the half-light of a bistro. Lush landscapes mingle with harsh details—a forgotten weapon, a shadow escaping the glare of daylight.

The geometry of the setting blends with the organic roundness of nature, reflecting a space in constant tension between order and chaos.

Each image is an invitation to see differently, to pierce the surface of things. Nothing is forced, yet every element speaks volumes. Caimi and Piccinni do more than simply capture; they provoke, seek, and collaborate. The click of the camera becomes an exchange—a pulse that reveals the hidden vitality of places and people.

What do we expect from resident photographers if not to make subjects, landscapes, and everyday objects come alive? Photography does not provide answers; it asks questions. Their exhibition is a pretense—a recomposed and filtered reality, a "new truth" uniquely their own. It offers proof through images, instills doubt in the viewer, and embraces the spirit of play.

"Le Coeur caché (The Hidden Heart)" invites you to experience this pivotal threshold.

Curators :

Yasmine Chemali, Director, Mougins photography Center

Camille Frasca, Director, La Citadelle - Centre d'art & Musées

Biography

Jean-Marc Caimi and Valentina Piccinni are a photographic duo specializing in documentary photography, with a particular emphasis on the relationship between humans and their environment, as well as socio-political transformations.

Since 2013, they have blended a documentary approach with contemporary language, creating rich, multi-dimensional visual narratives.

Their work is frequently published in leading international media outlets such as Le Monde, Libération, Epic, Society, The Guardian, National Geographic, Die Zeit, Wired, and L'Espresso, among others.

Their projects have earned prestigious awards, including the Sony World Photography Award and the Earth Photo Award. As the authors of several critically acclaimed books, they have exhibited across Europe and Asia in galleries and festivals such as the Biennale Für Aktuelle Fotografie, the Delhi Photo Festival, the Lumix Festival, Fotografia Europea, Phest, Fotodoks, and Voies Off.

The duo has also participated in numerous artistic residencies in France, including in Normandy with the Planches Contact+Photo4food festival, in Strasbourg at the La Chambre gallery, and in Amiens at the Diaphane photography center.

Their recent publications include Fastidiosa (Overlapse) and En Présence de L'Absence (Éditions Bessard). They previously published a trilogy on cities in transition, which includes "Cüle Cüle" (André Frère Éditions), focusing on "Forcella" in Naples, and "RHOME", which was a finalist for the Photo Espana Best Photobook of the Year 2019. "Cüle Cüle" received a special mention at the Kassel Dummy Book Award 2019, was a finalist for the Luma Rencontres Dummy Book Award in Arles, and was a finalist for the PHotoEspana Best Photobook of the Year 2019.

Find the locations of the photographs exhibited:

