





VANDIÈRE

Photographer Anne de Vandière on letting culture speak through the hands

Since 2009, you travelled continents meeting numerous ethnic groups and photographing the gestures of their hands. Previously, you photographed artisans of Parisian haute couture. What is the link for you?

Anne de Vandière: The elegance of the gesture and the intelligence of hands are linked through *savoir-faire*, or know-how, passed from generation to generation. Whether it is in Parisian haute couture workshops where scores of *petite mains* apply themselves or in the very heart of the bush, the excellence of the work and the beauty of the animated hands is the same. Except for one detail: indigenous populations, through their way of life, which they don't necessarily want to be identical to ours, need to fight in order to defend their culture and prove that it is very much alive.

Why do you photograph in black and white? Can you discuss your technique?

A.V: Paradoxically, black and white brings to me what is true, sensitive, and 'in-between'. It is timeless and reveals shaded areas, bursts of sunlight, the magic of a flame; it is alive and malleable. Even accidents, botched photos, can be transformed into first choices. I only work with silver photography methods but technique is not my priority. I humbly share the vision of Henri Cartier-Bresson: 'It is an illusion that photos are made with the camera... they are made with the eye, heart and head.' I choose to never reframe my photos.

Each image is an instant *in situ* at a given time. Staging does not interest me, perhaps out of respect and honesty. Why would one want to make a vision more beautiful, more 'aesthetic' when, in my eyes, this vision already has all this?

Can you describe a particularly poetic encounter between you and one of your subjects?

A.V: In these people I only see poetry. They live in harmony with nature and each of their gestures naturally reaches out towards the beauty that is communicated to them. Even if their daily life is somewhat difficult, they have nothing to prove. Their balance, made fragile today by the on-going march of the world, is an example. They are the last sentinels of our Earth. We must draw inspiration from them, support them and remain by their side as they reconquer their rights.

What does the future hold?

A.V: *Tribes of the World* must travel and reach out to as many people as possible. But I will surely venture out to encounter other populations, forests and beautiful souls, to learn from them, again and again...

www.annedevandiere.com