



# Photographic compositions with a meditative touch

↳ EXHIBITION: Jean-Daniel Forestier has thrived on continuous change all his life. It made for the fertile ground on which his photographic career could flourish. The artistic development of a photographer born to wander.

Gusta van Dobbenburgh  
Curator

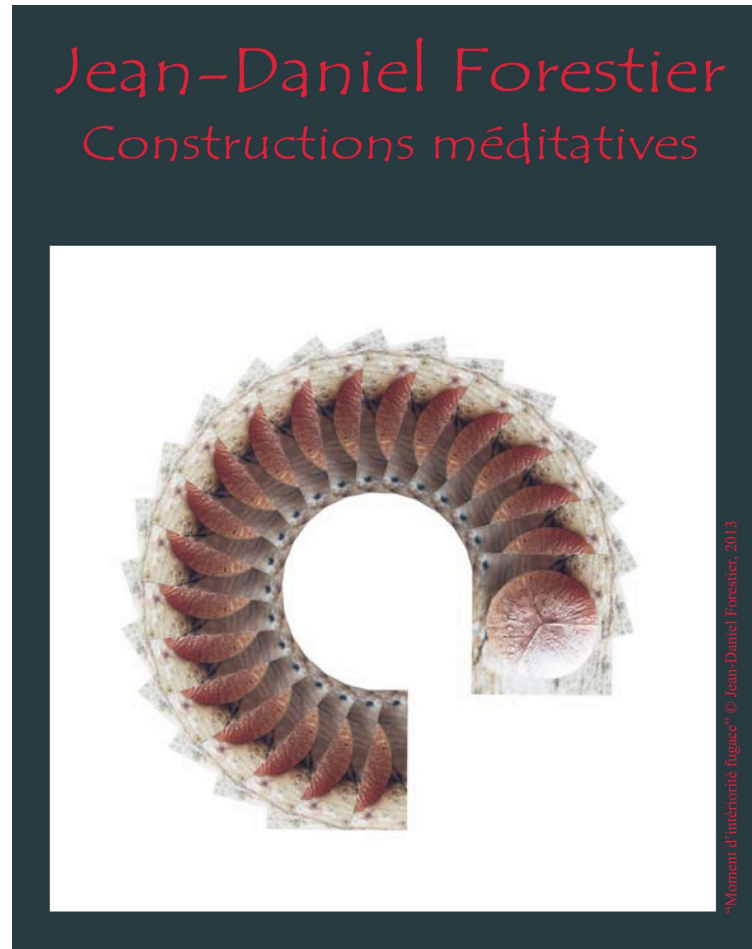
He always interspersed his professional development with intense travel. Or was it the other way around? Voyages provided Jean-Daniel with two very important things: freedom and breaking with routine.

His first 'virus', as he calls his travel fever, broke out at the age of fifteen. He jumped on a moped and crisscrossed Switzerland. "Perhaps my godfather's existence played a role in this," he says, reflecting. "He sailed on deep-sea operations and came back with stories, showed me maps of foreign countries and brought back exotic artifacts from faraway places. His adventures and experiences always intrigued me and had a contagious effect on me."

"My first big journey, from 1979 to 1980, took me from the USA to Colombia, Equator, Peru and Bolivia. In the seventies those places were very much the trend." Later on, he visited North and East Africa, Madagascar, Mexico, Belize and Guatemala, but the Orient was going to play a much more important role in his life.

In 1983, Jean-Daniel went to India and Asia for the first time. He traveled to Nepal, Thailand, Indonesia and a few years later to Sri Lanka, Laos, Cambodia, South Korea and China but discovered that his heart went out to India. So much so that in 1989 he created the Lausanne-based travel agency "Sakadoh." It still exists today and exclusively focuses on group tours to India. By now Jean-Daniel has visited India at least a hundred times.

What intrigues him the most about that part of the world? "To me India is all about emotions. The country and its culture constantly keep you thinking and wondering about life, and cause our sturdy Western pillars



to tremble. The people in India entirely live in the moment. It's possible that I have accepted some of that into my own life. It is likely that it made my own way of living easier. But whatever the case may be, at some point I wanted to share what I found in India with others, hence the travel agency."

Having earned a degree in photography at the Ecole des Arts et Métiers de Vevey in 1976 he took pictures of every town and country he visited throughout the eighties. It was a way to take his adventures 'home.' But when the photo journalism had served its purpose a long break followed.

Jean-Daniel did not revisit his love for taking pictures

until the world had entered the 21st century. His newest photography expressed a different approach with much detail, often enlarged; "it became pure camera work."

In 2008 his first big solo show "Asian Anima," referring to Asian religions and traces of devotions, saw the light at the Galerie Marsens in Chexbres.

"I still use the old fashioned camera and film to take pictures of details, going close to abstract works. Perhaps I am a frustrated painter who creates art with photography rather than with paint. You could call the result 'compositions with light,' which is basically what photography is all about. It is my way of being an artist."

Jean-Daniel frames all his pieces in the same way, which makes for a very serene atmosphere in his shows. For his actual work (Constructions Méditatives) he creates collages with images of circles, then scans the result and prints it on canvas. Numerous images display circular compositions, surely in harmony with the mandala concept. Others trun diagonally across the canvas in a straight line or move about space more freely. The repetitive circular effect of some compositions makes for elegant fan-like impressions.

The colors of his images are often set in beautiful earth tones, reminiscent of the opaque shades of spicy exotic dishes of the countries where color and the palette of different kinds of curry very much belong to daily life. Where existence can change in a split second; where people survive in their own unique photographic moment all the time.

Enjoy the show! ☰

Constructions méditatives - Photographic compositions  
Jean-Daniel Forestier  
Photographer  
([www.jdforestier.ch](http://www.jdforestier.ch))  
Show: November 10 - December 19  
Monday to Friday  
8h45 - 17h00  
Vernissage: Thursday, November 13  
18h00 - 20h00  
Location: ELA Gallery, Room EL 010  
Information:  
[astie.epfl.ch](mailto:astie.epfl.ch)  
or call 021 691 11 88