

What you see is a photograph in black and white. Then a luminous rectangular shape is drawing your attention. At first you don't see anything else but this structure, positioned in the exact centre of the composition. Its glow attracts you and swallows you. You are compelled to fixate it and penetrate it. Slowly, your gaze starts wondering around the geometrical shape and you discover a landscape. It's the sea, a bushy dune or a sandy beach. There is a soothing atmosphere, a stillness and calmness in the landscape that makes you wonder. Your attention goes back to the glowing structure and now you are puzzled by its presence in this landscape. Is this real or is it an illusion?

After the initial puzzlement you do realize that the landscape is indeed real. Gerniers has traveled around the world to shoot in cold wintery landscapes with the only purpose to catch that elusive natural phenomenon that the impressionists painted obsessively over and over again: light. But isn't it a paradox to say that a photographer is trying to capture light? Isn't that the essence of photography itself?

Gerniers is not a photographer. He has studied drawing and was always fascinated with the concept of light and the challenge to create light through his craft. Slowly he migrated to photography but used the medium only for documenting his attempts to catch this element. A modern light catcher, Gerniers traveled to countries such as Japan, Canada, Belgium and the Netherlands with the purpose to "plant" in diverse landscapes, in the wee hours of the day, his rectangular structure, previously painted with a light attracting paint. Then, with his camera, he stood in front of his landscape tableaux shooting for endless hours with the aperture of his camera open for each shoot for about 1 hour. The result is a view of Gerniers's experiment of the element of paint absorbing the dim light of the atmosphere and its intense reflection that is created naturally and with no artifice, thus rendering it almost mystical.

By shooting in black and white Gerniers is accentuating the phenomenon and its metaphysical feel, whilst gently keeping our focus and attention to light rather than landscape. Nevertheless, it is space that we are contemplating, a spiritual one, as the rectangular structure transforms into a drawing in real space. The structure becomes a frame that looks into nothing, aside from the void of the horizon. Gerniers chooses to place his frame in deserted and unfriendly landscapes to better accentuate the void, in that the purpose of the frame is not to lead the eye at something precise, but, on the contrary, to become aware of the immensity and tranquility of space.

The photographs are mysterious. It is not only the experiment of capturing light and the game between real and fictitious landscape that is puzzling the viewer. Looking at one of Gerniers's photographs one has the impression that he is experiencing also time, a time that is subtly perceptible. The rectangular frame, a window opening up to the horizon's void, seems transcended by the luminous beams that it emanates, thus projecting a mystical and ethereal sense of not only space but time as well.

Gernier's experimentations have also been conducted indoors. Through hand-drawn slides projected on big walls or miniature and intimate boxes - all installed into pitch-black spaces - Gernier's attempts focus always on showing light and the sensations that it procures. For his latest indoors installation, the artist has chosen to show instead the absence of light. The same familiar by now hollow rectangular shape, hangs on a white wall and reflects light thanks to an electroluminescent strip attached around its perimeter. When the strip is lit, the white wall inside the frame of the structure, turns into black. Like in the photographs, Gernier is attached to the sensation of staring at the void, staring at an indefinite time and space, something intangible, although this time, he managed to do this by creating the opposite of light: darkness.

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