



Les gens que j'aime

Photographs by **Christophe Farnarier**
Texts by **Ingrid Guardiola**

Visages or love

Christophe Farnarier, a filmmaker from Marseille based in Banyoles, presents *Les gens que j'aime* (The People I Love) from the series of photos he took in the 80s and 90s: *Vivim* (1994), *Le féminin pluriel* (1996), *European Friends* (1999), *Les gens que j'aime* (2002). He sees the photographic camera, just as with the film camera, as a tool that extends the eye, the brain and the heart. A loving gaze is impregnates everything he does and links two feelings inherent to his work: self-education (or amateurism), and love, a little like Maya Deren, who understood amateur filmmaking as a film made with whatever you have at hand and as an act of love. In fact, amateur photography ran in Farnarier's family. When his grandfather died in a car accident one Christmas, he inherited a Canon camera. At the age of 17, he started experimenting with photography. In the summer of 1981 he did a portrait of Louis Aragon which, according to Farnarier, was his first successful portrait. In 1997 he participated in the Arles Photography Festival with a project entitled *Mes amis*, which included 40 photos, one of which was a collage of 120 photos entitled *Les gens que j'aime* (The People I Love). It was an autobiographical mosaic containing clippings of trips, gatherings, loved ones, which aimed to highlight the importance of relationships. Throughout his life, Farnarier has been able to exchange ideas with photographers such as Bernard Plossu, Koldo Chamorro, Josef Koudelka, Helmut Newton, Annie Leibovitz, Nan Goldin, William Klein, Gilles Peress, Elliot Erwitt and Antoine D'Agata. But also with all the anonymous people who have crossed his path in life and who have given him moments, smiles, looks, all that complicity that he wants to preserve through the art of photography.

For Farnarier, each person contains a truth, an authenticity, a soul, and images must be able to capture it. As in Johan Van Der Keuken's photographs, there is an intimacy involved which the auteur shows in a photograph with chromatic contrasts and chains of gazes. The people he

portrays resolutely expose themselves to Farnarier's intense gaze, with total surrender. This concession demonstrates a pact based on trust. The people portrayed do not pose. There is no artifice. They are with the photographer in a material sense, but also in an emotional sense. As in Agnès Varda's photographs, the characters are integrated with the domestic environment without the image becoming a chronicle or a documentary. Also, Farnarier's photography, rooted in observation, attention, time shared and developed, invokes the photogenic quality that Jean Epstein described so well, as that intrinsic quality of the cinematographic image that makes it mysterious, elusive and ineffable. Photography also adds something more to the everyday and to what reality has previously materialised. And that "something more" is what Farnarier is interested in when he photographs Ken Loach, Àngels, his father and mother, Isabelle, Karima, Jamilla, Laurence, Leila, Melanie, Charlie, Christian and David and others.

"And the feeling of the present and of the simultaneity of time, the feeling of Eternity, penetrates his soul. It is then that he has, more deeply than ever, the impression of the indestructibility of each life, of the eternity of each instant".

*Christophe Farnarier on the figure of Siddharta
in Au bord du fleuve
(2021, Bòlit, Contemporary Art Centre of Girona)*

The path

The act of photography is like settling on the banks of a river, *au bord du fleuve*. The static view of creation clashes with the dynamics of life. In this way, photography fixes an instant in the course of a life. As the filmmaker Andrei Tarkovsky said, what is captured through the camera is not so much a representation of facts, but a faithful representation of the feelings that remain of a moment experienced. For Farnarier,

the camera became a window to observe the world around him, a kind of membrane.

In cinematography, Farnarier coincided in time and concept with the documentaries by Mercedes Álvarez and Ariadna Pujol, who, through poetry and a cohabitating gaze, explored outdated worlds or those on the verge of disappearing. Farnarier put a face and voice to the Catalan peasantry as no one had done before with *El somni* (2008). His characters are indistinguishable from the environment in which they live. Lacking the technical gear to capture the power - heavy and poetic - of the natural environment as Werner Herzog, Béla Tarr and Apitchapong Weerasethakul would do, his solitary camera lies on the ground or at table level. And this poverty, this immanence and intimacy, becomes a gift and a highly characteristic feature of Farnarier's gaze. This feeling can also be found in his photographs. Farnarier, the traveller, gives us snapshots of London, Paris, Marseilles, Amsterdam, Montreal and Banyoles. He writes that "natural light is the most beautiful". However, it is not clear whether this is because of its photosensitive quality or because it is the light of outer space, of the movement of things and people and of adventure. Farnarier's photography is based on the sensitivity that comes into play in each encounter as he makes his way with the aim, in his words, of capturing his soul, his humanity. He himself has emphasised his influence of punk music, rock & roll and reggae. He was, therefore, inspired by photographers such as Adrian Boot (who followed groups like The Clash, Suicide and Jamaican music), Roy DeCarava (who showed an unpublished Harlem), Linda McCartney (from family photos to photos of The Beatles 'tours and Roadworks), Chris Stein and his photographs of the punk scene, and figures such as Dennis Hopper. That is why Farnarier has also been interested in rebellious youth, punk, sexual liberation, drugs and AIDS, a disease which some of his friends suffered from to the end. Farnarier photographed this and also talked about it in the short film *Love Kills* in the late 1980s.

The foreigner

In creative moments Farnarier has always spoken to me in French, as if the linguistic split made an artistic split possible: the filmmaker/photographer Farnarier vs. the kind, shy and discreet Farnarier. With his work, he has been able to combine the local and foreign. He settles in places without holding any particular burden or information and listens through the camera to all the fragments of life that speak to him in a different language and come from who knows where. In *Vivim* (1994) he took over 7,000 photographs of the first African communities that settled in Catalonia. He went on

to portray a family of Algerian women settled in France (*Le féminin pluriel*, 1996). Whether they are family members or strangers from cultures and ways of life different from his own, Farnarier knows how to find the right distance between prudence and trust and ends up being a member of the community he photographs. When his subject loses themselves, so does he. When they sleep on the floor, so does he. To the point of disappearing behind the camera so that "the people he loves" can emerge and the noise of life gives way to the fertile, harmonious silence of the image.

"When I am close to a person, I feel their breath and they feel mine."

Christophe Farnarier

AUTHOR'S NOTE

**See, behold, approach, observe, feel.
Discover, experience, understand, love.
Photograph.**

In 1986, on the advice of my friend Cyril, I raided my piggy bank and bought a second-hand Leica M4-P camera. I chose to work with incident light, always using natural light. Cyril taught me everything he knew. For more than 15 years, during the 80s and 90s, I always kept my camera around my neck. For me, it became a window through which I viewed the world, especially the people around me. I was very shy and would hide behind the lens to get close to the people I wanted to photograph: my friends, my family, the people I love. With this exhibition, I am opening a door into what is most intimate for me: my personal relationships.

These photos were not prepared or premeditated. They arose from real life, from a moment, from places and the existing light. I went out to meet them. The photos express my feelings for others, the internal beauty of their soul, their gaze, their breath. By capturing these instants, I hope to propose an aesthetic and humanistic discourse on our society, sick and perverse as it is. But also on the absolute beauty of beings and of the world, and their extreme fragility. Life is ephemeral; photography seeks to make it eternal.

To photograph someone is to capture a piece of their soul. But to do this, the person needs to allow it to happen; you need to earn their trust. To photograph someone is to create a space for exchange. Yes, you can photograph with your heart.

Christophe Farnarier

Photographic works

Vivim, 1994
Le féminin pluriel, 1996
European friends, 1999
Les gens que j'aime, 2024

Cinematographic works

Le camion et la décapotable, 1986
Love kills, 1988
Narco, 1997
El silenci, 2002
Trip to Madrid, 2003
Paris on speed, 2004
El somni, 2008
Le premier rasta, 2011
La primavera, 2012
El perdut, 2016
L'eternitat, 2020
Au bord du fleuve, 2021
Nadie quiere ser paisaje, 2024

EXHIBITED PHOTOGRAPHS

1 Màrius i Christian, Marsella, 1996.
2 Isabelle, Marsella, 1986.
3 Kateri, París, 1986.
4 Philippe, París, 1995.
5 El meu pare, Marsella, 1987.
6 Charlie, Amsterdam, 1987.
7 Sylvie, Sèvres, 1986.
8 Laurence, Cap de Creus, 1995.
9 Kateri, París, 1986.
10 Àngels, Marsella, 1997.
11 Florian, París, 1986.
12 Aïcha, París, 1996.
13 Àngels i Joseph, Marsella, 1997.
14 Jérôme, La Camarga, 1986.
15 Els meus pares, París, 1986.
16 Marc i Màrius, Barcelona, 1995.
17 Peter i Samira, Montreal, 1991.
18 Julianne, Montreal, 1991.
19 Audrey, Amsterdam, 1987.
20 Isabelle, París, 1986.
21 Leïla, Marsella, 1994.
22 Karima, Marsella, 1994.
23 Sylvie, Sèvres, 1995.
24 Delphine et Juliette, París, 1996.
25 Mélanie i Soraya, Clichy, 1995.
26 Els meus pares, Marsella, 1996.
27 Joseph i Àngels, S'Agaró, 2000.
28 El meu pare, Marsella, 1986.
29 Gemma i Txema, Barcelona, 1995.
30 Enric i Gloria, Banyoles, 1996.
31 Jeremy, Andrew i Matthew, Banyoles, 1996.
32 Karim Didri i Ken Loach, Manchester, 1996.
33 Nens, Brussel·les, 1986.
34 Raphaëlle, Christian i Màrius, Marsella, 1996.
35 El músic, Cornellà del Terri, 1993.

36 Dansa, Cornellà del Terri, 1993.
37 Adú, Cornellà del Terri, 1994.
38 David, Banyoles, 1992.
39 El ballarí, Nimes, 1996.
40 Irene, Centenys, 1995.
41 Platja dels Catalans, Marsella, 1997.
42 Sunsplash Bakers, Londres, 1996.
43 Pas de zebra, Saragossa, 1996.
44 Senyores, Saragossa, 1996.
45 Mamounet, Marsella, 1995.
46 Christian, Copenhaguen, 1996.
47 City of London, Londres, 1996.
48 Cyril i Audrey, Marsella, 1989.
49 Nadia i les seves germanes, Brussel·les, 1988.
50 María José i Andrew, Barcelona, 1995.
51 Ambrosini, Londres, 1996.
52 Jeanne, París, 1995.
53 Adú i les seves filles, Cornellà del Terri, 1994.
54 John Mathieson i Karim Dridi, París, 1995.
55 Ken Loach i el periodista, Liverpool, 1996.
56 Ken Loach, Liverpool, 1996.
57 Tomàs Mallol i Sefa Ponsatí, Girona, 1995.
58 Ambrosini a l'Eurostar, 1996.
59 Ken Loach i Paul Laverty, Managua, 1996.
60 Mélanie, Clichy, 1990.
61 Cyril, Marsella, 1990.
62 Vilatans d'Estelí, Nicaragua, 1996.
63 Jamillah i el seu marit, Marsella, 1995.
64 Els fills de Jamillah, Marsella, 1995.
65 Mikael, Banyoles, 1993.
66 Hamadi, Banyoles, 1994.
67 Juan, Managua, 1996.
68 Frederike, Londres, 1996.
69 Ken Loach sobrevolant l'Atlàntic, 1996.
70 Àngels, Mamounet i Joseph, Marsella, 1997.
71 Àngela, S'Agaró, 2000.
72 Laurence i Luc, Lió, 1990.
73 Autobús 1, Londres, 1996.
74 Autobús 2, Londres, 1996.
75 Tom, Montreal, 1991.
76 Autoretrat, Aeroport de Miami, 1996.

SLIDESHOW

1 Nuria, Barcelona, 1996.
2 Jeremy, Barcelona, 1996.
3 Laurence, Lió, 1990.
4 Fanny Cotençon, Cannes, 1986.
5 Karine, Marsella, 1994.
6 Luc, Marsella, 1994.
7 Marie, Cannes, 1995.
8 Christian, Provença, 1994.
9 Karim Dridi, Crest, 1995.
10 Leïla, Marsella, 1994.
11 Bob Passion, París, 1989.
12 Christian Philibert, La Seyne-sur-mer, 1991.
13 Mar Targarona, Barcelona, 1995.
14 Marcos, París, 1995.
15 Christian, Copenhaguen, 1996.
16 Sylvie, París, 1995.
17 Laurence, Lió, 1995.

18 Ambrosini, París, 1996.
19 Andrew, París, 1990.
20 Àngels, Marsella, 1997.
21 Marc, Pla de l'Estany, 1993.
22 Anne, Le Kremlin-Bicêtre, 1989.
23 Laurent, Brussel·les, 1987.
24 Audrey, Brussel·les, 1987.
25 Gérard Farnarier, Marsella, 1994.
26 Àngels, Premià de dalt, 1999.
27 Josephine, Banyoles, 1992.
28 Baktha, Marsella, 1994.
29 Audrey, Brussel·les, 1987.
30 Isabelle, Marsella, 1996.
31 N'Joe, Clichy, 1991.
32 Lola, Marsella, 1994.
33 Luc, Marsella, 1994.
34 Jean-Pierre Galland, Montpellier, 1990.
35 Baktha, Aix-en-Provence, 1994.
36 Fatima, Aix-en-Provence, 1994.
37 Karima, Aix-en-Provence, 1994.
38 Sami Bouajila, Cannes, 1995.
39 John Mathieson, Marsella, 1994.
40 Marie, París, 1995.
41 Benjamin Baltimore i Jim Jarmusch, Cannes, 1986.
42 Jim Jarmusch, Cannes, 1986.
43 Cathy, París, 1990.
44 Luc i Renaud, París, 1989.
45 Isabelle, Brussel·les, 1991.
46 Gérard i Gilberte Farnarier, Aix-en-Provence, 1994.
47 Jérôme i Germaine Farnarier, Marsella, 1990.
48 Germans, Saintes Maries de la Mer, 1996.
49 Isabelle i José, Cannes, 1986.
50 Liz i Eduardo, Saragosa, 1995.
51 Sèverine i Delphine, Dignes-les-Bains, 1988.
52 Jack i Paul, Montreal, 1991.
53 Isabelle i Audrey, Marsella, 1986.
54 Andrew i Màrius, Banyoles, 1993.
55 Parella, Cadaquès, 1998.
56 Mamounet, Marsella, 1995.
57 Karima i Leïla, Marsella, 1994.
58 Leïla i Karima, Marsella, 1994.
59 Jean-François Stevenin i Viviane Candas, Marsella, 1990.
60 Andrew i Maria José, Saragosa, 1995.
61 Màrius i Marc, Barcelona, 1994.
62 Miki Espuma i Manel Gausachs, L'Hospitalet, 1995.
63 Manel i Montse, Barcelona, 1994.
64 Karim Dridi i John Mathieson, Marsella, 1994.
65 Leïla, Baktha i Karima, Marsella, 1994.
66 Cathou, Paul i Aurelia, Aix-en-Provence, 1996.
67 Laurence, Boni i Luc, Marsella, 1994.
68 Emmanuelle i les seves germanes, Luberon, 1995.
69 Audrey, Isabelle i Andrew, Marsella, 1990.
70 Karima, Jamilla i Leïla, Marsella, 1994.
71 Nens, Banyoles, 1993.
72 Jamilla, Leïla, Fatima i Karima, Marsella, 1994.
73 Montse i les seves germanes, 1996.

74 Ambrosini, Rozanès, Bouajila i Maaskri, Cannes, 1995.
75 Nenes, Brussel·les, 1986.
76 Nens, Serinya, 1993.
77 Jamilla, Baktah, Karima, Fatima i Leïla, Marsella, 1994.
78 Miss Hawaïan Tropic, Cannes, 1986.
79 Músics, Cornellà del Terri, 1993.
80 Cinéma Opéra, Lió, 1990.

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