

JOAKIM ESKILDSEN

Persons
Projects

Joakim Eskildsen is a Danish photographer educated in Finland at Aalto University and one of the most published and recognized photographers to emerge from the Helsinki School. He is most noted for his documentary photography that take a very personal view in depicting communities on the fringes of society. Despite seemingly melancholic undertones, Eskildsen achieves an overwhelming closeness in his work, often by living alongside his subjects for long periods of time. Throughout all his various publications, Eskildsen has demonstrated an innate sense for capturing an intimacy with his subjects much in the same manner as Diane Arbus. It's not one factor but a combination of many that establishes Eskildsen as one of the most notable documentary photographers of his generation. Whether it be the light or the temperament of any giv-

en moment, his ability to focus on the center of what he feels is the essential element in a given picture, lending it a life of its own.

Joakim Eskildsen (*1971 in Copenhagen, Denmark) is an internationally known documentary photographer with a particular interest in portrait photography within socio-political contexts. His work has been exhibited extensively around the world in both solo and group exhibitions, including the solo exhibitions *American Realities*, *Haus des Buches*, (Leipzig, 2018), *Nordic Signs* and *The Roma Journeys*, Purdy Hicks Gallery, (London, 2018). All of his main series have been published, including *Nordic Signs* (1995), *The Roma Journeys* (2007, Steidl), *American Realities* (2016, Steidl), *Cornwall* (2018, Mare), *Home Works* (2020), and *Cuban Studies* (2023, Steidl).



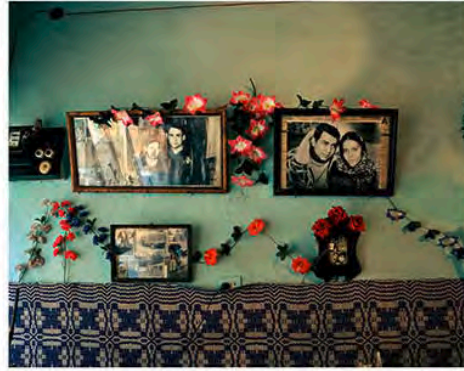
THE ROMA JOURNEYS

The Roma Journeys (2000-2007) is Joakim Eskildsen's most well-known series, earning multiple awards. For seven years, Eskildsen and his wife - writer Cia Rinne - visited Roma communities in seven different countries, to learn about their history, culture and living situation. Scattered across the globe, the Roma live in almost every part of the world, each group marked by a distinct language and culture of their own. *The Roma Journeys* develops a complex narrative that introduces a wide audience to the Romani people who have been facing marginalization for centuries and are still struggling with social acceptance. Eskildsen's photographs, paired with Rinne's essays, unfold very personal storylines from the Roma the couple visited in Hungary, India, Greece, Romania, France, Russia, and Finland. The works oscillate between lyrical-mel-

ancholic landscapes and very direct sensory impressions from everyday life in social hotspots. Highly topical and multi-layered, Eskildsen documents the consequences of great political upheavals, some of which still persist in these countries today. Eskildsen's pictures thus create access to spheres that would likely remain closed to many people. A selection of more than 100 photographs along with the texts and the sound collages have been touring through museums in Europe since 2007, offering the audience a rare insight into the life of the Roma. *The Roma Journeys* is not only a project of political force but also a poetic, intimate, and artistic work that sets a new standard in how we interpret a community that has been so culturally isolated by the Western world for centuries.

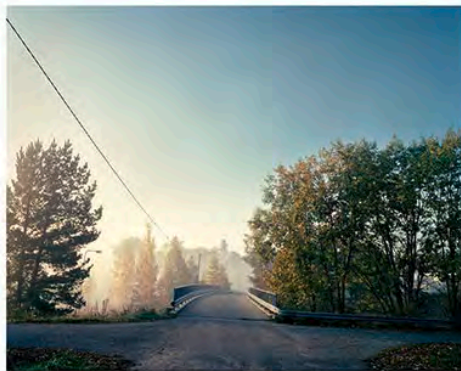
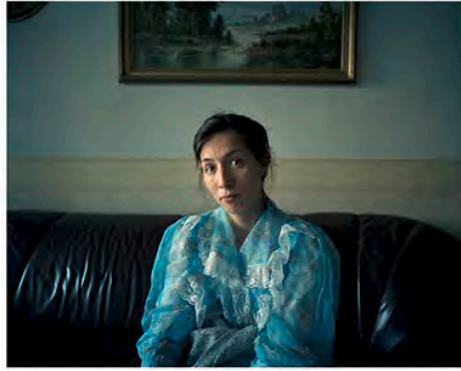
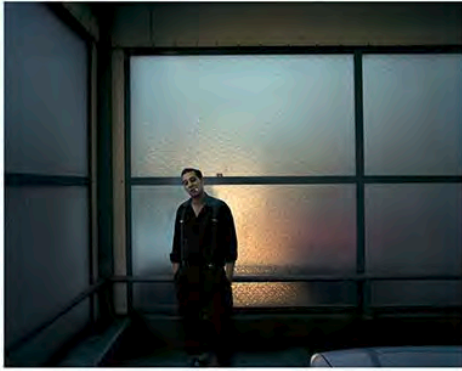


The Roma Journeys, 2016, Talk Persons (now Persons Projects), Berlin

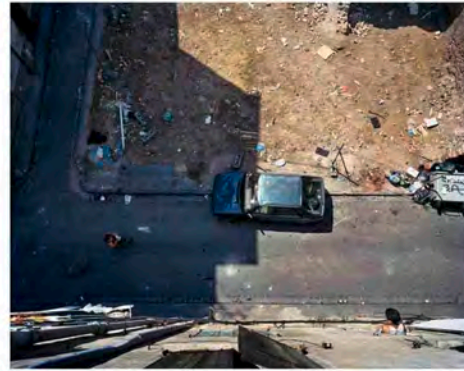
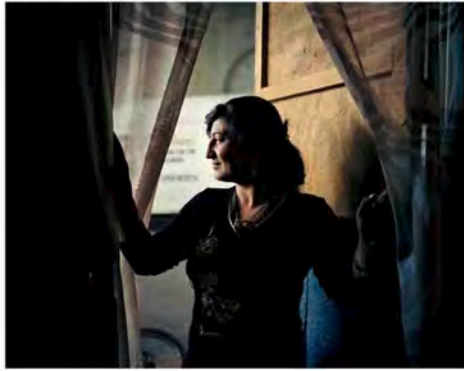


The Roma Journeys: Romania





The Roma Journeys: Finland



The Roma Journeys: France



Joakim Eskildsen, 2016, Black Diamond, Copenhagen

AMERICAN REALITIES

One in every six Americans lived below the official U.S. poverty line when Kira Pollack, Director of Photography at TIME Magazine, commissioned Joakim Eskildsen to capture the growing crisis. During thirty-six days spread over seven months in 2011, Eskildsen, accompanied mainly by reporter Natasha del Toro, traveled through New York, California, Louisiana, South Dakota, and Georgia, visiting places that, according to census data, had the highest poverty rate.

The outcome is *American Realities*, a stunning body of work in which Eskildsen has managed to make personal portraits of people living below the poverty line, to many of whom the myth of the American Dream had lost its *raison d'être*. The people Eskildsen has portrayed — those who struggle to make ends meet, who have lost their jobs or

homes, and often live in unhealthy conditions—usually remain invisible in a society where the myth of the American Dream remains strong. Eskildsen created a counter-image to the illusionistic ideas of the dream. Many of Eskildsen's subjects are disenchanting with the fact that it is so difficult to get by today — merely the American Reality.

The entire series of photographs culminated in a book by the German publishing house Steidl in 2013.



The American Realities, 2013, Persons Projects (former Talk Persons), Berlin



Eric Ramirez, Firebaugh, California, 2011, Pigment print on archival paper, framed, 45 x 53 cm



Kelly Mitchell, New Orleans, Louisiana, 2011, Pigment print on archival paper, framed, 45 x 53 cm, 89 x 107 cm, edition of 7 + 2 AP



Jasmine and Derrick Amoateng, South Bronx, New York, 2011, Pigment print on archival paper, framed, 45 x 53 cm, 89 x 107 cm, edition of 7 + 2 AP



Eli Stockstill, Buras, Louisiana, 2011, Pigment print on archival paper, framed, 45 x 53 cm



Mendota, California, 2011, Pigment print on archival paper, framed, 45 x 53 cm, 35x45 cm



Mandai Nunez and Santamaria Brissa, Fresno, California, 2011, Pigment print on archival paper, framed, 45 x 53 cm, 35x45 cm

CUBAN STUDIES

After *American Realities* and *Cornwall*, Cuban Studies completes Joakim Eskildsen's photographic trilogy on dysfunctional political systems. Accompanied by Cuban journalist Abel Gonzalez, the project is the result of Eskildsen's journeys between 2013 and 2016 when he travelled throughout the country during a period of major socio-political transition. Depicting the living situation of Cuban's population after extensive economic reforms, the photographer found himself in a situation in which he had to entirely rely on his photographic instincts: "Traveling with writer Abel González, whose ability to tell stories taken from a huge source of knowledge, was a never-ending force. I soon found myself being a student and so Cuba put a magical spell on me from the very first trip. The more I learned about Cuba, the more difficult it became to understand. It

was like learning to see the world from a fundamentally different angle, so different from what I knew. I decided to keep an open mind and take the position of a listener, to follow my instincts rather than anything else."

Eskildsen's *Cuba* series not only adds to his list of political works, exposing the economic hardships in our global society, but presents a new approach on how Cuba is perceived by others. Eskildsen's documentary-like access gives Cuban People a new voice, evoking compassion rather than pity or exaggerated sympathy. Photographs like *Fisherman* (2013) or *Charcoal Studies* (2013) are representations of living standards and realities that are very much part of Cubans' everyday life – realities that have long been ignored through the predominating American perception of the country.



Joakim Eskildsen, 2016, Black Diamond, Copenhagen



Ear Muffs, 2013, Pigment print on archival paper, framed, 109 x 130 cm, 50 x 58 cm, edition of 21 + 2 AP



Haircut, 2013, Pigment print on archival paper, framed, 109 x 130 cm, 50 x 58 cm, edition of 21 + 2 AP



Fisherman, 2013, Pigment print on archival paper, framed, 45 x 53 cm



Charcoal Studies, 2013, Pigment print on archival paper, framed, 45 x 53 cm



Malecon, 2013, Pigment print on archival paper, framed, 109 x 130 cm

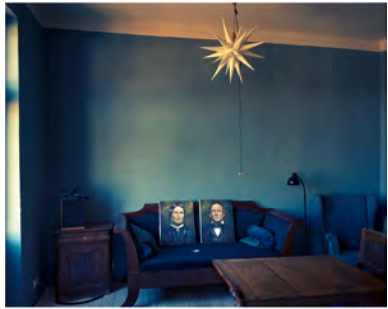
HOME WORKS

This series stands in direct contrast to his previous projects such as *Cornwall*, *Cuban Studies* or *American Realities*. Instead of travelling to foreign countries, Eskildsen pointed his camera towards his own home and surroundings. With this series, that has been ongoing since 2005, the photographer documents his family's journey in their pursuit to find a home of their own, taking them to six different homes in Finland, Denmark, and Germany. Eskildsen's photographs seem to capture this concept of finding one's place through his children's eyes. The photographic collage of portraits, landscapes and still lifes provide an intimate look into the nature of innocence that is filled with the wonder of curiosity, exploration, and the lightness of being part of a new beginning. Eskildsen reflects on the catalyst for his series *Home Works*: "I started photographing when I

was 14 years old, now I am 41. During the first years, I photographed around the house, in the fields, and in the forest. My interest started turning back to the beginnings, and to the things that had so much inspired me at first. I felt it was a relief to photograph in the immediate surroundings, rediscovering what had made me so interested in photography – an artistic homecoming as it were."



New Wave Finland, 2013, Scandinavia House, New York





Fridge, 2009, Pigment print on archival paper, framed, 65 x 54 cm



Furesoe, 2010, Pigment print on archival paper, framed, 65 x 54 cm, 109 x 130 cm, 6500€



The Tooth, Potsdam, 2012, Pigment print on archival paper, framed, 65 x 54 cm, 109 x 130 cm, Ed. 7 + 2 AP, Price: 6500€



After the Snow Storm, 2008, Pigment print on archival paper, , 65 x 54 cm, 109 x 130 cm, 6500€ + VAT



Willow Tree, Potsdam, 2012, Pigment print on archival paper, framed, 65 x 54 cm



Home Works

Home Works is a series of photographs by the artist, exploring the concept of home and the relationship between the individual and their environment. The series consists of several images, each capturing a different scene from the artist's life. The photographs are presented in a gallery setting, allowing viewers to appreciate the artist's work in a professional and curated environment.

The artist's work is characterized by its focus on everyday life and the spaces we inhabit. Through their photography, they invite us to see the world from a new perspective, highlighting the beauty and complexity of the places we call home.



Home Works, 2023, Fotografiska, Copenhagen

SKAGEN

Joakim Eskildsen visited Skagen and the surrounding area in 1988, when among other places he photographed one of the very classical motifs, i.e. Råbjerg Mile sand dune. In his photo series from Skagen, he is one of only a few photographers who has chosen to depict people. His series, which has been photographed at night, also contains photos of deserted buildings, but it is bound together by means of the same bluish, almost surreal light that characterises all five photos. The bluish light in Eskildsen's photos is also found in some of the Skagen painters' pictures, the most famous of which are P. S. Krøyer's blue lyrical pictures from the 1890s, and the shining light in the lamppost in one of the photos almost takes on the character of an electrical moon. During his stay in Skagen, Eskildsen was preoccupied by the fact that the Skagen paint-

ers did not paint themselves in company with the people of Skagen. In fact, it was not until 1892 that Krøyer had the idea of and made the first sketches for the Midsummer's Eve Bonfire at Skagen Beach, which was completed in 1906, that one of the Skagen Painters painted a picture in which both artists and locals were included. Eskildsen searched for the real Skagen and the real people of Skagen in 2008. In his search, he came across a 9th grade school class celebrating graduation and a woman out walking her dog. Eskildsen's photos are sort of dreamlike, and even in the photo where the young woman looks directly at the spectator, she appears to be absent-minded and day-dreaming.



SKAGEN, 2023, Polka Galerie, Paris



Skagen I, 2008, Archival pigment print, 130 x 109 cm



Skagen IX, 2008, Archival pigment print, 130 x 109 cm



Skagen X, 2008, Archival pigment print, 130 x 109 cm



Skagen V, 2008, Archival pigment print, 130 x 109 cm



Skagen XI, 2008, Archival pigment print, 130 x 109 cm



Skagen XII, 2008, Archival pigment print, 130 x 109 cm

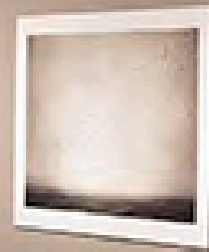
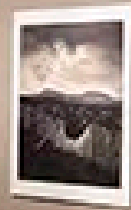
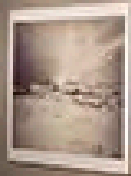
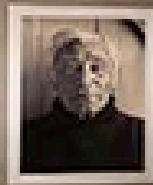


Skagen XVI, 2008, Archival pigment print, 130 x 109 cm

NORDIC SIGNS

Joakim Eskildsen's series *Nordic Signs* is a photographic work on Northern Europe, a hymn to nature and the people who live in it. It is a poetic reflection on the inherent qualities of lands ruled by the elements. The photographs were made in Norway, Scotland, Denmark, Sweden, Iceland, and the Faroe Islands from 1989–1994 in an attempt to put forward nature's strength and the relationship it builds with those who inhabit it. Eskildsen's masterful and dynamic use of lighting lends itself to a Renaissance-like quality, adding to a mystic and ethereal atmosphere; these contemplative images are filled with mysterious codes. Eskildsen states "I think that I managed to capture here the meaning of the Nordic Signs, something that is at the same time wild yet liveable, and profoundly shaped by the climate, the wind, and destiny."

Nothing is



Joakim Eskildsen, 2016, Black Diamond, Copenhagen



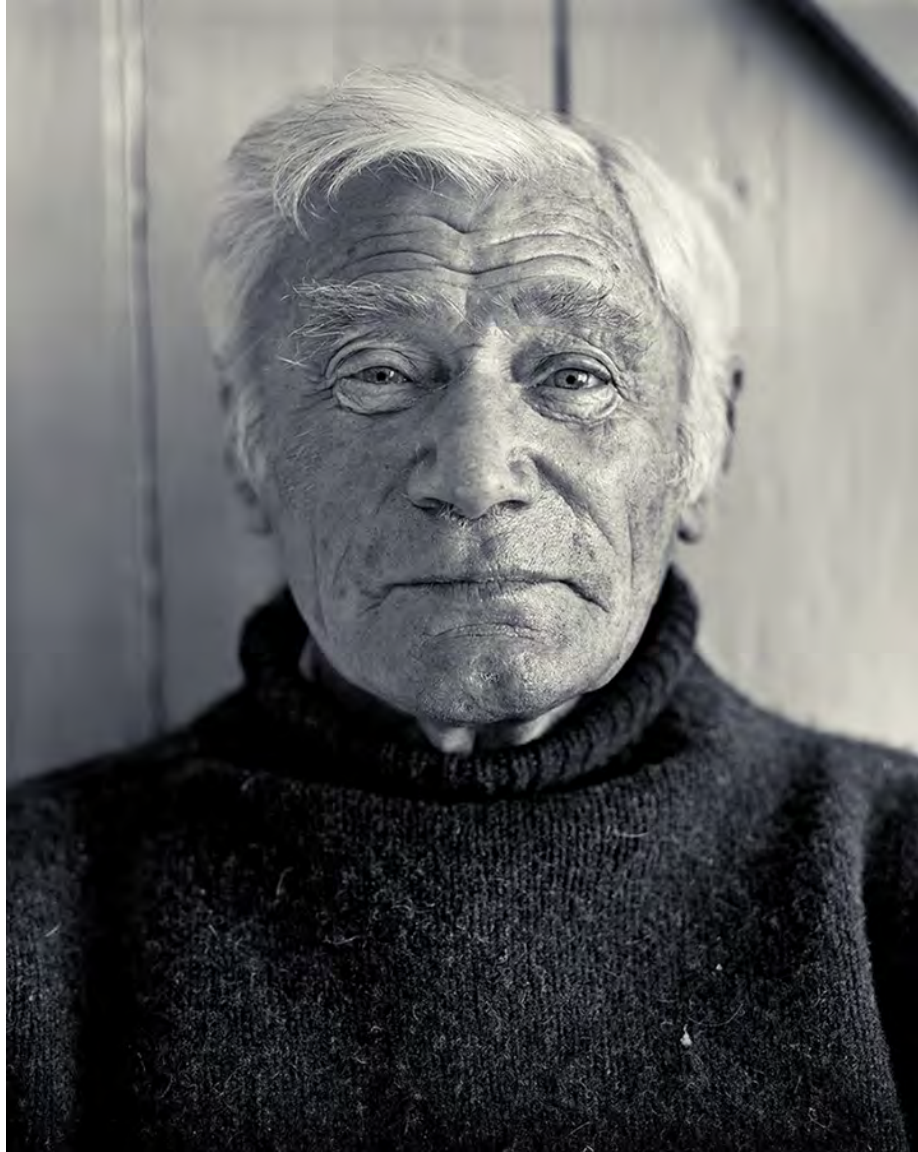
Fireworks, 1991, Pigment print on archival paper, framed, 54 x 65,5 cm



Ice II, 1992, Pigment print on archival paper, framed, 131 x 108 cm



Mountain III, 1992, Pigment print on archival paper, framed, 102 x 144 cm



The Fisherman, 1993, Pigment print on archival paper, framed, 131 x 108 cm



The Puffins, 1993, Pigment print on archival paper, framed, 102 x 144 cm



The Sky, 1993, Pigment print on archival paper, framed, 117 x 200 cm



The Spider, 1992, Pigment print on archival paper, framed, 54 x 65 cm

Persons Projects

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