



© Anonymous, Man wearing a woman's ring, photo booth picture colour treatment, United States, circa 1920. ur, États-Unis, circa 1920.

# MAUVAIS GENRE

## collection sébastien lifshitz

transvestites throughout a century of amateur photography

4 november → 17 décembre

opening thursday 3 november 6-9 pm

exhibition coproduced by the Rencontres d'Arles and the galerie du jour agnès b.

exhibition curator: sébastien lifshitz

*"I've always been interested in the speeches of the margins, those who write on the fringes of History, far from any moral, political or social power, far from any eye standards. This is the reason why I have been collecting amateur photographs for so long: they invent another perspective on society. Cross-dressing is a wonderful example of that.*

*It is often said that transvestites should stay in the limits of a shameful privacy or a burlesque cabaret but this phenomenon is actually far more complex. When dozens of women take pictures of themselves dressed as men, as part of a collective ritual that was strangely widespread in the late 19th century, it could be seen as political act, a way to appropriate men's clothes in order to claim the same rights as them. As of 1800 however, any woman wishing to dress up as a man had to report to the local prefecture and ask for authorization. The men and women who chose to defy authority could lose: their reputation, their friends and their job.*

*This is why many of these photographs are taken in private spaces – bedrooms, living rooms or gardens – out of sight. People certainly felt freer and less bound to respect the codes of conduct. The exhibition Mauvais genre is full of women and men who dare play with the notion of genre in front of the camera's lens, something they may not have dared to do in public. In isolation, these small groups experimented the mix of genres with a cheerful baldness. From these intimate bubbles emerged a spirit of rebellion that, decades later, will get out in the streets and come out in the open."*

Sébastien Lifshitz - In catalogue Arles 2016.

After studying art history at the Ecole du Louvre, Sébastien Lifshitz started working in 1990 in the contemporary art world as the assistant to Bernard Blistène at the Pompidou Centre as well as to the photographer and visual artist Suzanne Lafont. In 1994, he turned to filming and directed his first short-movie, *IL FAUT QUE JE L'AIME*. It was followed in 1995 by a documentary on the filmmaker Claire Denis, and in 1998, a medium-length film, *LES CORPS OUVERTS (Open Bodies)*. Critically acclaimed in many international festivals, including Cannes and Clermont-Ferrand, *LES CORPS OUVERTS* was awarded with the Jean Vigo prize. In 1999, he directed a television film for Arte, *LES TERRES FROIDES (Cold Lands)* for the Gauche-Droite (Left-Right) series, which was selected for the Venice Film Festival. In 2000, he directed his first feature-length film, *PRESTIGE RIEN*, then in 2001, *LA TRAVERSEE (Wild side)*, a documentary road-movie selected for the Quinzaine des Réalisateurs. The film was awarded with the Teddy Award at the Berlin film festival. In 2008, he worked on *PLEIN SUD (Going South)* that was presented at the Berlin Film festival in 2010. Then in 2012, he shot the documentary *LES INVISIBLES (The Invisibles)* shown in the official selection out-of-competition in Cannes. The film was awarded with the César of the best documentary film in 2013. In 2011, he followed Marie-Pierre Pruvot in *BAMBI*, an intimate portrait of one of the first French transsexual women. The film received the Teddy Award at the Berlin Film Festival. In 2016, he filmed the last days of the French feminist activist Thérèse Clerc in *LES VIES DE THERESE (The Lives of Thérèse)*. The film was selected for the Quinzaine des Réalisateurs of the Cannes film festival in 2016 and broadcast on Canal + on September 27th.

Publication : *Mauvais Genre*, éditions Textuel, 2016. <http://www.editionstextuel.com/> *textuel*



© Anonymous, Guilda, travesti, New York, circa 1950

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On this occasion, the galerie du Jour will publish a portfolio entitled «*Mauvais Genre, collection sébastien lifshitz* ». Presented in a canvas case, it includes 10 Digigraphie reproductions printed on Hahnemühle paper. Numbered edition of 25 copies + 5 HC.

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