

# Introduction

Born in 1970 in Paris, Jean-Claude Berens lived since his earliest days in Luxembourg. He is a nonprofessional photographer documenting the decay of urban and industrial structures across Luxembourg, France and Germany. There is an undercurrent of haunting, solemn nostalgia in his photographs, with his often formal compositions and almost painterly rendition of light perfectly conveying the mood he finds in his subjects. His work is reminiscent of Simon Marsden's series on supposedly haunted sites in England, and like Marsden, he uses a special technique of photography that has proven an uncanny match for his theme. He has developed a love for decay because he realized there is actually tremendous beauty in decay. And indeed, Jean-Claude has a lot of beauty in decline to show, with a variety of picturesque subjects.

His explorations have taken him into old, disused burial crypts, abandoned farmhouses, medieval castles and a multitude of mothballed industrial sites. He has got into this type of photography while privately researching the history and culture of Luxembourg and of his ancestors. Though born in Paris, Jean-Claude grew up and still resides in the tiny but once heavily industrialized country of Luxembourg. Rich in iron, Luxembourg had a profusion of mines and smelters from the latter nineteenth century to the end of the twentieth. Many of these sites have now been closed down and abandoned.

He is an artistic photographer since the age of 13, when he shot black and white and had his own darkroom. Jean-Claude considers himself entirely self-taught, easily coming to understand digital photography thanks to his background in analogue photography and his professional role as an IT network and security specialist. He considers Ansel Adams and Buddhist philosopher Shantideva his visual and spiritual mentors, and indeed there is a very Buddhist sensitivity to impermanence in his photographs. He became known for his photographs through his website, UrbanVisions and after several exhibits on the theme, published a book.

Photography is a challenge and adventure for Jean-Claude, who notes that his most memorable photographs are those where he entered a site and was able to take only one shot. Jean-Claude has come to prefer a subtle, realistic style of HDR imaging, just enough to bring out the richness of detail in the scene. His photography has attracted a strong following over the Internet, and a series of them have been used as covers for crime thrillers. The images have an extraordinary quality to them, eerie yet not morbid, depicting very static subjects yet inviting dynamic exploration of the frame, demonstrating how a photographer can adopt a technique and find his 'voice' in it. Most of all, they are very evidently the products of a deep passion. "I think now that my two passions, decay and photography, are deeply interdependent," says Jean-Claude. "I could continue one without the other, but this burning passion, this deep love for those places, abandoned by the crowds, so full of serenity, would not be the same if I could not bring back some glimpses of decay and impermanence in a life where we all grasp for a permanence we could never reach."

# Curriculum Vitae

## Exhibitions

- Erinnerungen** Date: 23 September – 16 October 2016  
Place: Tuchfabrik (Trier, D)  
Organizers: Fotografische Gesellschaft Trier
- Konscht am Minett 10** Date: 30 June – 10 July 2016  
Place: Hall Paul Wurth (Fond-de-Gras, L)  
Organizers: Ville de Differdange
- Il était une fois le fer,  
Il y a encore les hommes** Date: 22 June – 13 July 2014  
Place: Galerie du Théâtre (Esch-sur-Alzette, L)  
Organizers: Ville d'Esch-sur-Alzette & Théâtre
- Tempus Fugit** Date: 9 January – 9 February 2014  
Place: Espace H2O (Differdange, L)  
Organizers: Service Culturel Differdange
- Exposition  
Collectif Image** Date: 6 April – 7 April 2013  
Place: Salle Polyvalente (Villers-la-Montagne, F)  
Organizers: Collectif Image
- The Beauty of Decay** Date: 29 June – 8 July 2012  
Place: Centre Culturel Kulturfabrik (Esch/Alzette, L)  
Organizers: Centre Culturel Kulturfabrik
- Konscht am Minett 5** Date: 9 July – 17 July 2011  
Place: Hall Paul Wurth (Fond-de-Gras, L)  
Organizers: Ville de Differdange
- Salon de la Photo  
Villers-la-Montagne** Date: 02 April – 03 April 2011  
Place: Salle Polyvalente Villers-la-Montagne  
Organizers: Collectif Image  
Partner: Commission Culturelle de Villers la Montagne  
Extras: Lecture about the philosophy of Photography
- Konscht um Bau 2** Date: 16 October – 17 October 2010  
Place: Am Huelegärtchen – Clemency (L)  
Organizers: Community of Artists
- Vernissage  
Saint-Petersbourg 2010** Date: 10 September – 2 October 2010  
Place: Central Exhibition Hall "MANEGE" (RU)  
Organizers: CEH "MANEGE", EC "REAL"  
Partner: Russian Union of Photoartists  
Extras: Masterclass in Photography

<b>Konscht an der Kapell</b>	Date: 16 October – 18 October 2009 Place: Old Church Roodt/Syre (L) Organizers: Municipality of Betzdorf
<b>Visions Paralleles</b>	Date: 11 September – 29 November 2009 Place: CHEM (Esch-sur-Alzette – L) Organizers: Administrative Board and Management of CHEM
<b>Konscht um Bau</b>	Date: 22 November – 23 November 2008 Place: Rue de l'Eglise – Garnich (L) Organizers: Community of Artists
<b>Mediatheque de Taverny</b>	Date: August 2008 Place: Taverny (F) Organizers: Municipality of Taverny

## Publications and Interviews

<b>Echo (2014 / 01)</b>	Type: National Magazine from Luxembourg Feature: 1 page including pictures and an introduction
<b>Glanzvoll Magazin</b>	Type: Seasonal Magazine about cultural highlights Feature: 4 pages including pictures and an interview
<b>Kellerman - Vina</b>	Feature: Bookcover for Jonathan Kellerman
<b>El viaje americano</b>	Feature: Bookcover for Ignacio Martínez de Pisón
<b>Fotoritim Almanac 2012</b>	Type: Turkish Online Photo Magazine Feature: 14 pages with several double trucks
<b>RTL Television</b>	Type: Interview about photography on 20vir Kultur Feature: Interview as a photo artist
<b>Revue N° 43 (22/10/12)</b>	Type: Weekly magazine in Luxembourg Feature: Feature about my photography (8 pages)
<b>Luc Deflo: Ademloos</b>	Feature: Bookcover for Luc Deflo
<b>This Dark Endeavour</b>	Feature: Bookcover for Kenneth Oppel
<b>Revue N° 19 (09/05/12)</b>	Type: Weekly magazine in Luxembourg Feature: Industrial Photography
<b>Quarantine: The Loners</b>	Feature: Bookcover for Lex Thomas
<b>Bloed op het palet</b>	Feature: Bookcover for Leistra

<b>Revue Technique 03/10</b>	Type: Magazine Feature: Double truck and mention as best architecture photographer of the month
<b>Captured</b>	Feature: Bookcover for Neil Cross
<b>Beauty in Decay</b>	Type: Book from Jeremy Gibbs Feature: Several Pictures
<b>RTL Television</b>	Type: Interview about photography Feature: Several Pictures
<b>The Complete Photographer</b>	Type: Book about photography by Tom Ang Feature: Interview and Portfolio as one of the best architecture photographers
<b>A Rush of Blood</b>	Type: Bookcover for Quintin Jardine
<b>Skinner's Ordeal</b>	Type: Bookcover for Quintin Jardine
<b>PhotoXplorers</b>	Type: TV report on Discovery Channel Feature: Interview and Pictures
<b>Control</b>	Type: Bookcover for John Maken
<b>Digital Photographer</b>	Type: Photography Magazine Feature: Interview, Cover and Portfolio
<b>The Snowman</b>	Type: Bookcover for Jo Nesbo
<b>Blue Canvas Magazine</b>	Type: Art Magazine Feature: Several Pictures
<b>Nemesis</b>	Type: Bookcover for Jo Nesbo
<b>The Devil's Star</b>	Type: Bookcover for Jo Nesbo
<b>Redbreast</b>	Type: Bookcover for Jo Nesbo
<b>The Redeemer</b>	Type: Bookcover for Jo Nesbo
<b>SR Kulturspiegel</b>	Type: Cultural TV Show Feature: Interview about photography, Pictures