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Francois-Marie Banier

Battlefields

Main description

Battlefields is François-Marie Banier's celebration of gay culture at its most flamboyant and proud. Comprised of photos taken at Gay Prides in Brussels, London, New York, Paris and Rome between 1994 and 2018, Banier captures the full glamorous spectrum of those parading, all the feathers, sequins and leather; but, more importantly, also the characters beneath the make-up and wigs—"I photograph the poetry, the humor, the confrontation with blinkered convention." Having lost close friends to AIDS, he remembers the tragedy of "this elusive, diabolical virus," but also the compassion of those who nursed and supported its victims: "More than angels. Such delicate devotion, full of invention. Loyalty, so touching, overwhelming." For Banier, light inevitably conquers darkness: "I follow and paint as usual with my camera, almost always in black and white. The wild ones, the choir boys, those crowned with Valda throat drops, the notaries in their fancy dress, the babes of Gala and Salvador Dalí—storytellers from every country, a whole world that knows how to laugh and to pray."

Biography

François-Marie Banier was born in 1947 in Paris. A novelist and playwright, Banier has also been taking photographs of public figures and anonymous people in the street since the 1970s. In 1991 the Centre Pompidou in Paris displayed his photography for the first time; exhibitions followed in Europe, Asia and America. The Maison Européenne de la Photographie in Paris presented a retrospective in 2003, exhibiting Banier's "written" and "painted" photographs for the first time. His books published by Steidl include *Perdre la tête* (2006), *Beckett* (2009), *Never stop dancing* (2016) and *Dreamers* (2019).

Bibliography

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