

MARK VAN DEN BRINK – The Minox Files - 10th September - 29th October 2022

'Exhibition Review: Mark van den Brink: The Minox Files' by Nina Rivera, on October 27th 2022  
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**OCT 27 EXHIBITION REVIEW: MARK VAN DEN BRINK: THE MINOX FILES**



© Mark van den Brink | Courtesy Gallery FIFTY ONE: 03380.98.nyc, 1998 Fine Art Inkjet Print 10 x 13,5 cm Edition of 6 Signed, titled and numbered in pencil on verso

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Gallery FIFTY ONE presents "The Minox Files," an exhibition that's an eclectic visual diary by Dutch photographer Mark van den Brink spanning from 1994 to 2005 and shot solely on a small spy camera. Each photograph displayed in the exhibition was captured on an analog Minox pocket camera measured at 80 x 27 x 16mm, with the smallest negative size of any analog camera at 8 x 11mm.



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Van den Brink made his first work with a camera in 1994 after watching Robert Altman's film "Prêt-à-Porter" in which the Minox camera is used by a photographer to secretly take photos and create a scandal amongst editors and journalists from differing magazines. According to the press release, the Minox was designed by German Walter Zapp who wanted to create a compact device that was easy to use and transport and could be affordable for everyone. This dream was inevitably cut short as the production costs skyrocketed and the Minox became more of a luxury item than an accessible one. This inaccessibility led the camera to be used for espionage – such as in the Cold War – instead of everyday life, and over time it evolved into the recognizable "spy camera".



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When van den Brink found the camera in a second-hand shop, he quickly replaced it as his main camera; his old large reflex camera was much heavier and more conspicuous to carry with him. The tiny design of the spy camera allowed him to explore his shooting style and “let things come to him” instead of having to seek them out himself. Since the necessary film cassettes were highly expensive, van den Brink began cutting large format film into strips that could fit inside the Minox. This entire process had to be done in complete darkness, meaning that film photographed on such a camera is often scratched and marred. Van den Brink completely welcomed these defects in his images, which makes every one of them unique.

For instance, “03156.98.tur, 1998” exhibits one such imperfect yet mesmerizing photograph. It is nighttime, and the Minox is aimed down at a vacant swimming pool and lawn. The photo’s grain and stillness give it an eerie and poetic feeling. The unrelenting blur and simple perspective of his photos create a liminal expression similar to the feeling of being in a dream.



©Mark van den Brink, © Mark van den Brink | Courtesy Gallery FIFTY ONE.: 03156.98.tur, 1998 Fine Art Inkjet Print 10 x 13,5 cm Edition of 6  
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Van den Brink shot wherever and whenever he wished. His images – both in color and black and white – span from locations such as parks, rivers, forests to urban landscapes and familiar cities across the globe. Through his photographs, viewers are privy to his menial wanderings, to the aspects of a stranger's daily life he wanted to freeze in time. And when van den Brink steps back from the public scope, he looks inwards into his own personal life, showcasing intimate photographs that color the gaps of his private moments.



© Mark van den Brink | Courtesy Gallery FIFTY ONE: 01369.97.bel, 1997 Gelatin Silver Print 13,5 x 10 cm Edition of 6 Signed, titled and numbered in pencil on verso

His photographs exist between detachedness and vulnerability. There's an authenticity to each unrefined image – not only because they reveal van den Brink's perspective on observed life, but because they capture an outsider's perspectives on living. Their snapshot quality demonstrates the temporary power of time and reminds viewers how easy it is to forget about the beauty of everyday life and all its small moments.

"The Minox Files" by Mark van den Brink will be exhibited by Gallery FIFTY ONE from

September 10th, 2022 to October 29th, 2022, at Zirkstraat 20, 2000 Antwerp, Belgium. To view more of this exhibition visit [here](#).