



Hugo David
Beautiful Disasters
17.06 - 31.07 :: 2021

"That summer, when I was 14, I got a skateboard from my dad as a gift and with my friend we started visiting Praca do Figuiera, where the skaters in Lisbon gather around the statue," Hugo David told me in May 2021. We discussed through Zoom about photography and skateboarding, that is the topic in his debut exhibition.

Elina Heikka: Your exhibition is about skate culture rather than about skateboarding itself. The perspective is really fresh for me. We don't see pictures of wild tricks but life of the large community of skaters of different age-groups you live in. The photos are from Lisbon and from the joint skating trips you have made to Vigo and elsewhere. Skaters have a geography of their own, you told me, spots in the cities that they are used to visit.

Hugo David: *About five years ago, I started taking pictures with a pretty bad cell phone just for myself, unnoticed. When the guys started to wonder I said that "I'm shooting for a project". That was enough to explain. Later they have seen photos and they have liked them.*

EH: Why a cell phone? You are a professional photographer and you have equipment of a professional.

HD: *I wanted to keep professional work separate from my project. The mobile phone is suitable to show the atmosphere of skateboarding, faces, dirt, broken clothes... Low resolution does not matter, but adds a sense of life to the pictures.*

EH: You said you keep framing pictures in your mind all the time, even if you don't have a camera in your hands.

HD: *That's what happens. In the project, I have used the square format familiar from Instagram. As a professional photographer, I frame images into a rectangle. Square is well suited for close-up portraits which you can see several in the exhibition.*

EH: When skating started, your studies at the National Ballet Ballet School ended. You are obviously visually and physically gifted.

HD: *I was a black sheep in ballet school. Skating became a passion, even though I wasn't good at it at first like my friend. I practiced hard, and I learned which was very important to my self-confidence and identity. I overcame my shyness and anxiety. Skating saved me.*

EH: I can see that you are very grateful for your community you have very strong emotional connection with. Your bloody hand is in the key picture of the show. I think the physicality of skateboarding is very evident in your pictures. The human body functions at its extremes. There is a x-ray image showing the screw on your wrist.

HD: *A big part of skating is injuries and even fear of death. My best friend crashed so I was afraid he would die. Two minutes later, however, when the huge shock was over, he smiled.*

EH: Purification through overcoming fear and pain? Your friend's smile in the picture taken after the accident is very special, all the face is shining. How did you learn to endure pain? Aren't you scared?

HD: *The skaters talk a lot about their fears. When you start practising a new trick, you are terribly scared, but no longer after once tried and crashed. The body gets used to the pain quickly. You can crash a hundred times in two days, but that doesn't really hurt. The most important thing when skating is a childish feeling of joy, it is fun in its purest form. There are no worries when skating. It is a kind of meditation for me.*

Beautiful Disasters is a very autobiographical documentary project and overall larger series than what we see in the exhibition. You are designing a photo book on the subject. I hope to hold your book soon in my hands. Thank you for giving an in-depth look at your work and skating!

Elina Heikka
Director of The Finnish Museum of Photography

Hugo David (Lisboa, 1995), grew up surrounded by photography. Son of photographers, he also decided to study and invest in photography. He studied at The National Conservatory Dance School (2005/2009), Photography at Escola Secundária Artística António Arroio (2010/2013) and he concluded a degree in Photography and Visual Culture, at IADE Creative University - Escola Superior de Design (2013/2016). By side to the studies and professional duties, the passion for skateboarding is always present. Works with photography, video and sound. Collaborate with National Ballet of Portugal, Lisbon Architecture triennale, Epal - Empresa Portuguesa Das Águas Livres, Imago Lisboa, The Seven Wonders of Portugal, Sapo 24, Municipal Theater Joaquim Benite, Lux Frágil, and others.

Collective exhibitions

Abstracções Destruídas, Jovens Criadores 2015 - 2017, CPAI - Clube Português de Artes e Ideias, Villa Gloria, Mangualde, 2017;
Horizonte, X'16 Exhibition Photography Finalists Degree in Photography and Visual Culture, Carpe Diem, Lisbon, 2017;
Horizonte, book integrated in the exhibition of the 7th edition of the Lisbon Photography Book Fair, Arquivo Municipal de Lisboa - Fotográfico, Lisboa, 2016;
1139 Anos de Histórias, in "Diferença e Semelhança", Ponto de Vista EAAA, Arquivo Municipal de Lisboa - Fotográfico, Lisboa, 2014

Colaboration



Support



Opening hours

Wednesday to Saturday 2,30 pm to 6,30 pm
Rua do Vale de Santo António, 50 C - 1170-381 Lisboa