



→ the Book

Photography book with 51 colour images of Luxembourg made by **Nikos Zompolas** between 2015 and 2018.

Texts: Jean-Christophe Béchet, Ian De Toffoli, Paulo Lobo and Nikos Zompolas

Dimensions 210 x 280 mm

Hard cover

112 pages, 51 photographs and texts

Languages: French and English (two poems in Luxembourgish)

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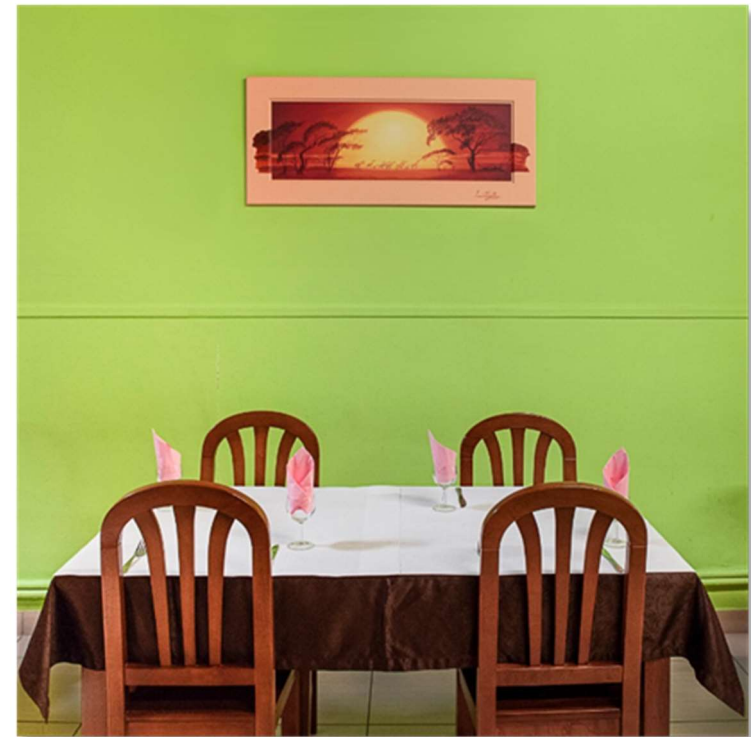
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→ the Concept

Located in the heart of Europe, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg - 600,000 inhabitants and 2,500 square kilometres - is best known for the attractive tax system, numerous bank establishments, Jean-Claude Juncker, the seat of the European institutions, etc. The book is part of a multidisciplinary artistic project that is composed by photographs of Luxembourg and small literary texts. The images in the book go beyond first impressions. The project concerns the society, life and the environment of Luxembourg; contradictions and paradoxes.

The French photographer **Jean-Christophe B  chet** introduces the project and talks about the photographic style of the artist. He has been also involved in the editing of the photographs. In the middle of the book, there are three short unpublished stories of the Luxembourg writer **Ian De Toffoli**. The stories were inspired by the photographs of the book.



→ the Author

Nikos Zompolas was born in Greece in 1964. Since 2006, he lives and works in Luxembourg. His involvement in photography includes research on the Steichen Collection and long-term photographic projects. He has presented his work at solo exhibitions in Luxembourg and in several group exhibitions and festivals in Europe, including *Festival du Regard* in Cergy-Pontoise, France and the *Biennale d'Art Contemporain* in Luxembourg. He has published his works in photography magazines and some of his photographs have won international awards, including the *Luxembourg Heritage Cup of FLPA*.



→ the Theatre of Shapes

... [Nikos Zompolas] takes photographs calmly and quietly, without rushing and without trying to impress the viewer. He takes pictures in his own good time, with a subtle blend of precision and nonchalance, humour and geometry. It is rare to come across a photographic style that is both severe and humorous, documentary and imaginary. Photography never actually shows reality, but merely represents it. Bad photography imposes a monolithic, monosemic vision: it engages in propaganda or easy seduction, the end result of which is the same, lulling us into passivity and laziness... Nikos' photos do quite the opposite: they astonish, intrigue, preoccupy and ask questions, as well as creating a haunting melody. ...

... Nikos Zompolas' Luxembourg is a theatre of shapes and surfaces that is full of surprises ...

... So, I am sure that Nikos Zompolas' photographs will create a far greater desire to wander around the mysterious geometrical territory that is Luxembourg than any of the leaflets available from the national tourist office.

Jean-Christophe Béchet

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→ the Snapshots

Everything is calm for the moment: the umbrellas are folded, the counters empty, the weather gloomy; but soon, on this small square of grass called the Gréin (perhaps this should be translated as “Greenery”) between the Moselle and the esplanade, on the outskirts of the town of Remich, where the customary dark orange or red benches and tables are lined up, the ones found at every town event, with their grooves and cracks (careful of splinters!), and their stains of beer and mustard and grease. In a few hours, the local tennis club will be holding a traditional party: behind a stand a little old lady will sell pizzas whose dough she will have made herself at four o'clock in the morning; further along, behind a barbecue, two stocky men will flip over sausages and pork chops again and again, so busy that it will be impossible to tell them apart, as both have the same build of slightly clumsy rugby players, the same imposing nose, the same big hands, the same flick of the wrist to flip over the meat that sizzles like a swarm of grasshoppers lurking in a bush. Behind a makeshift bar, women wearing T-shirts with the club's logo will serve glasses of crémant, white wine, and Coke for the children, but the main attraction will be a DJ known simply as Jocky Band...

Ian De Toffoli

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→ the Discussion

PL: I have the impression that the things you photograph are frozen in a sort of languid space-time, and have no desire to be – or dream of – anywhere else. They are sufficient in themselves to proclaim their presence to the world – or at least this is what they seem to be saying. Even if signs of change are clearly visible, there is no conflict or tension because everything is suffused with tacit acceptance.

NZ: I am very interested in the inertia that is inherent in any type of transformation. Over the last 20 years, Luxembourg has become one of the largest financial centres in Europe. Traditional rural life has given way to an unexpected surge in modern urban development, including a sizeable population increase, social transformation and major changes to the urban and rural environment. I wanted to produce images which reflect these changes and which combine traditional, modern and post-modern elements of life in Luxembourg.

A discussion between **Paulo Lobo** and **Nikos Zompolas**

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