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Lotte Bronsgeest & Geert Broertjes Outside Room 8

Interview by Teun van der Heijden with Geert Broertjes and Lotte Bronsgeest

Introduction by Jelle Bouwhuis

Designed by Teun van der Heijden, Heijdens Karwei

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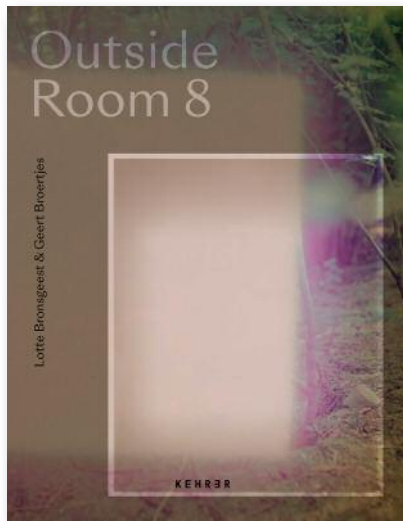
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A story about cancer and its treatments. But even more about hope, vulnerability, love and trust.

When Dutch photographer Geert Broertjes was diagnosed with cancer, his artist colleague Lotte Bronsgeest asked if she could make a portrait of him, »still pure, without the presence of poisonous medicine in his body.« That became the start of this project, in which Lotte and Geert chose analog photography to visualize the experiences of a patient undergoing the three most common cancer treatments: chemotherapy, radiotherapy, and surgery. They subjected film rolls and negatives to the same treatment a cancer patient's body is subjected to. After the chemo, Geert's urine was used to soak the film rolls. 4 x 5 inch film was radiated at the hospital. Burned negatives have become stand-ins for surgical procedures. *Outside Room 8* is about the brutal reality in which vulnerability and strength play the lead roles and in which hope is the only constant factor.

From the **interview** by **Teun van der Heijden** with Lotte Bronsgeest and Geert Broertjes :

[T] My next question has already been partially answered, but I'll read it out anyway. Can an aesthetic visual story help to remove a taboo? The taboo associated with a scary disease like cancer. Cancer is increasingly becoming a chronic disease. It's been eight years for me now and a lot has changed in that time. But the negative connotation of the word cancer is still very strong. Oops, don't say it out loud, the Big C. Your original title was Project C. Everyone's first thought is that cancer is by definition a portal to death. And as a healthy person, I don't want to stand in that portal together with Geert. Suppose Death is mistaken and takes me too. There's something mythical about that. Think of crossing the River Styx into the underworld. Lotte, on the other hand, seems to enjoy going back and forth with Geert in a boat.

[G] Yes, happily paddling back and forth.

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[L] Breaking the taboo is not the only goal for me. I also think it's important to show that life is full of uncertainty, although many people ignore it. It's about embracing the uncertainty. We entered into that uncertainty together and made something beautiful out of it. Trust your intuition when somebody close to you is experiencing trauma. Don't be afraid to give or to ask and keep on believing in the things that make life beautiful.

Background of the artists:

»Lotte explores the vulnerability of the body and the transience of life plays an important role in her work, in which she always searches for the point where beauty meets confrontation.« Lotte has always been interested in portraying awkward bodily conditions, and experiments with double exposure photography, among other things. Before she enrolled in this project she had been following a breast cancer patient whom she, on request, portrayed before and after her surgery.

»Geert's work is a poetic, melancholic and romantic version of reality. He encourages the viewer to use his or her own imagination. His work is personal and emotional.« He graduated with the project *One Year*, which was his visual representation of a year in his life in which three of his family members died and he was abandoned by his partner. The project gained much attention and has been published in book form as well.

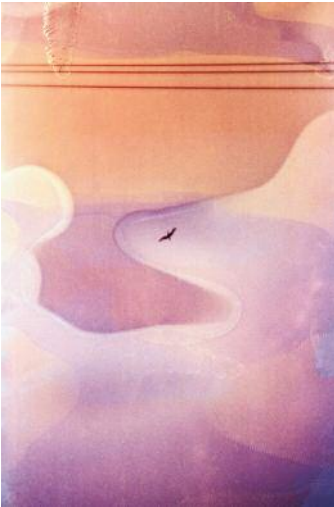
Lotte Bronsgeest and Geert Broertjes both graduated in 2013 from the Fotoacademie in Amsterdam, where they've met each other. They are active as freelance photographers who work on commission and create their own projects as well.
lottebronsgeest.com / geertbroertjes.com

For further details, press images, permissions and review copies, please contact the publisher's press office:

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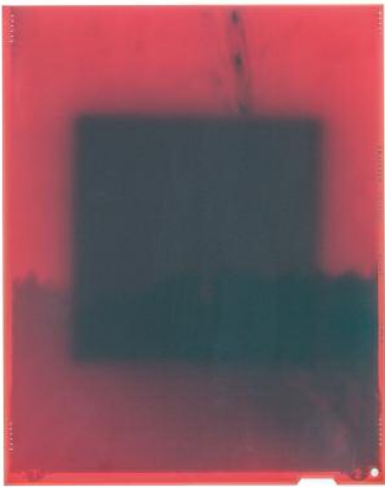
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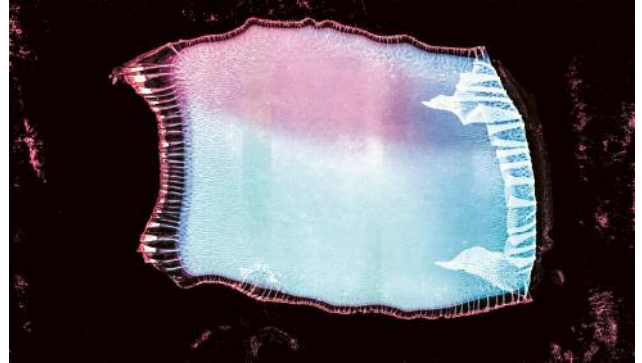
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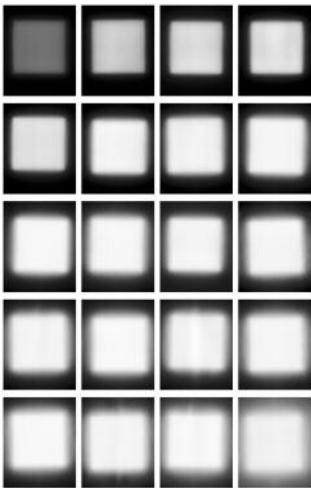
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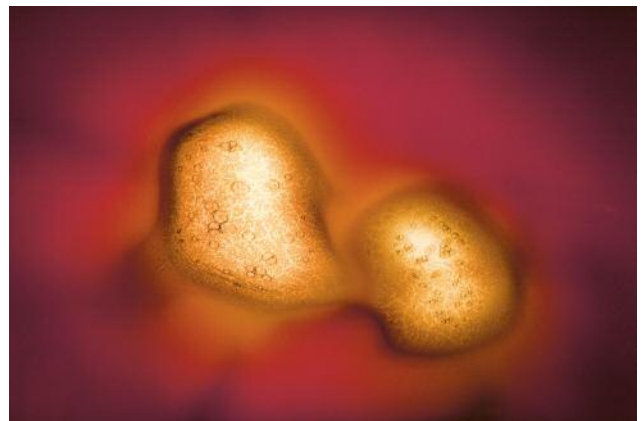
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