

IN THE SHADOW (OF STEPS) LOST

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Photo 01

*In a dungeon: toilet flush, cigar lighter and intercom. High Security quarter*¹

In one of the twelve prison cells in the High Security quarter. No personal object is allowed. With cigarette ash and left-overs, the prisoners try to draw and write short messages which will never be read - except by other prisoners sent to the dungeon.

The toilet flush is no more than a button embedded into the wall. The cigar lighter can also be used as an intercom to communicate with a warder.



Photo 02

*"Dawn's promise" - Maison d'Arrêt*²

For the prisoners waiting for their sentence to be passed, this short moment "at the hairdresser's" is a moment for speaking, a soothing moment. The prisoner can speak freely with another prisoner, outside the small courtyard where it is always difficult to isolate oneself.

¹ **"The High Security quarter is a prison within the prison"**. In a dungeon, nothing from "the outside" is allowed. A bed, a foam sheet for sole mattress, a concrete cylinder for sole seat, a small table sometimes, an aluminium toilet, a cigar lighter and intercom. To go out: a safety vestibule framed with thick bars – a cell within the cell, then the heavy metal door, the narrow corridor, bars again, another safety vestibule... and two other safety gates that lead to a transitional area itself leading to various areas of the prison: Disciplinary Cells, Long Term detention, day hospital, and psychiatric unit.

² **Maison d'Arrêt**: for the prisoners who have not stood trial yet. In theory, detention cannot last longer than two years.



Photo 03

The first walk

Some prisoners who have stood trial join other prisoners during a short walk under high surveillance.



Photo 04

Just before nightfall, in April: "Move!"

Checking on each cell of the prison before nightfall.

'Move!'...the usual order given to all the prisoners (both in the evening and at 7:00 in the morning)



Photo 05

Non-rest, true torment - Centre de Détention³

His sentence has been passed and the prisoner is completely alone in a separated cell. He has to organize his life around almost complete isolation from the outside. Prisoners often fall ill.



Photo 06

Play alone!

'Play alone!'

'OK... Look! I've got FAIRIES, which goes with HEADS, BEASTS, and with BRAVE too.'

'OK...'

'SOFT and OBEY go together as well...'

'Yeap...'

³ Centre de détention: area in which are kept the prisoners who have stood trial - also known as a **Detention Center for Long Term prisoners**



Photo 07

My family - Detention Center for Long-Term prisoners

This photograph marked a turning point in my work in prison. To understand that this father could see his children grow only through photographs he was given furtively in the visiting room... To understand that these pictures were his only link with the outside world, that on the photo I was taking were his children – nothing less. The tiger is printed on a towel which is hanging there.



Photo 08

Disciplinary cell - High Security quarter

A wall in a dungeon – "the blackboard of school truants" (Brassai's "*tableau noir de l'école buissonnière*")

The prisoner is allowed to take a shower. The inside of the cell is very dark, the walls are covered with signs, short messages that are regularly painted out.

The towel hanging on the bars is both a sign of absence and protest.



Photo 09

A makeshift kitchen - Detention Center for Long-Term prisoners

In fact, these are three cardboard boxes that have been piled up, a mere towel used as a tablecloth, and the hotplate, an item which is difficult to get.

This hotplate allows the prisoners to cook some bread, a cake, or some frozen food. It is a priceless object for them.



Photo 10

"I see... men. They look like trees"



Photo 11

Detention Center for Long Term prisoners

This prisoner suffers from a serious illness. He is allowed to sit down outside his cell for a few minutes everyday. His cigarette has burnt out, he must get back to his cell. In the background, another prisoner goes back to his cell too.



Photo 12

Graffiti written down on this dungeon's wall

"Life is a vicious circle. But don't get worried. And all those who tell you otherwise, they're the ones who find themselves lying on the ground"

(approximate translation for one of the graffiti written down on this dungeon's wall).



Photo 13

The 12 keys - High Security quarter



Photo 14

Night rounds - High security quarter



Photo 15

A warder from behind - High Security quarter

In a dungeon again: a warder in charge of me has a very brief break. "In a way, [the photographer] is the eye of a prisoner [...] but also that of a warder who himself lives his life in prison." (extract from Marylise Lebranchu's opening text)



Photo 16

Cyclops and Photographer

Disciplinary Cell - Long Term prisoners (sentenced to life and long term imprisonment)

"What can you see from inside?"

"An eye, not really a look... A mere prosthesis... Nothing."

For a second, the prisoner had become my supervisor. I had become the prisoner. Lost in my thoughts.



Photo 17

The double set of metal bars - High security quarter-Disciplinary cell

We can notice a double set of metal bars. The prisoners usually try to throw plastic dishes in between. Nobody will be able to take these food scraps away.

This situation had not been envisaged by the persons in charge of the security devices. It is therefore a way to express, in these dark moments of confinement, what remains of hope, freedom and uprising.



Photo 18

Man Ray - Detention Center for Long Term prisoners

This prisoner is sitting in the sunshine of November for a few minutes. A moment later, I came back to take another photo... He had gone.



Photo 19

A step towards freedom - Detention Center

The frame is made of thousands of matchsticks patiently stuck. These creations are real pieces of craftsmanship, using matches or tiny bits of paper folded by prisoners

This prisoner waits for his release.



Photo 20

Outside calls - Detention Center for Long Term prisoners

Telephones are available in the new prisons so that the prisoners can more easily receive outside calls from relatives.

Most of the time, the prisoner who takes the call is not the right one -"absent are always in the wrong".



Photo 21

A view of a prisoner in the exercise yard. Maison d'Arrêt



Photo 22

Right to vote

(Campaign to encourage the prisoners to vote – Department of Justice, 2007).



Photo 23

The man who walks in his mind



Photo 24

"Whirl" - Detention Center

This area, where are thrown all kinds of food scraps, turns to be impossible to clean: the ultramodern barbed wires prevent the cleaning operatives from taking these scraps away.

A way for the prisoners to express that, nonetheless, there is still hope for freedom.