

# « OBJECTIF VIEILLESSE »

## 9 views of the elderly in France

Photographs by:

**Sophie Bachelier - Hervé Baudat - Amélie Benoist  
Didier Carluccio - Pierre Faure - Franck Ferville - Philippe Truquin  
Valérie Villieu - Laurence Von Der Weid**

Nine photographers, nine views of the elderly in very different contexts: at home, in an institution, in hospital, in emergency accommodation, in town, or in the countryside. Subjects suffering from Alzheimer, people no longer able to live alone, people still in form who want to stay on in their own homes, and those with nowhere to live. Nine different visions but the same old age accompanied most often by loneliness and an absence of social contact.

This selection of photographs produced for the 70th anniversary of the association "les petites frères des Pauvres" is the best way to relate what it is like to be old, to put the words of the elderly into pictures, provoking thought and highlighting their place in society.

The way old people are portrayed in photographs has changed a lot over the past three decades. Traditionally they followed old stereotypes, some inspired by nineteenth-century literature (Hugo, Daudet...) while others sought to create an immediate emotional reaction (pity or sympathy).

It was only very rarely that the real subjects of old age caught the attention of photographers. Giacomelli, and his work on the Senigallia hospice, or Martine Franck were exceptions. Taking interest in the elderly was considered as being counterproductive for a young photographer seeking to make a name.

Today hundreds of quality documentaries on this subject exist in France alone, and it has become a recognized photographic theme in its own right. Photography now presents a complex and varied panorama view of old age, just as reality itself has become varied and complex. Styles and approaches vary.

One can only rejoice at the contribution that photography has made to highlighting the problems of the elderly, which is an important subject in contemporary society. The role played by the association "les petites frères des Pauvres" along with many friends from the world of photography (including Jean-Louis Courtinat, Luc Delahaye, Martine Franck, Milomir Kovacevic, Sarah Moon, Sebastião Salgado, Jean-Marc Vantournhout...), in the development of the interest for the elderly amongst photographers, is also a source of delight.