

Photos and captions:

FROM SHADOW TO LIGHT

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Photography workshop – CSAPA Clemenceau
(Care and support centre for the prevention of addiction)
Gagny, France – 2011/2016

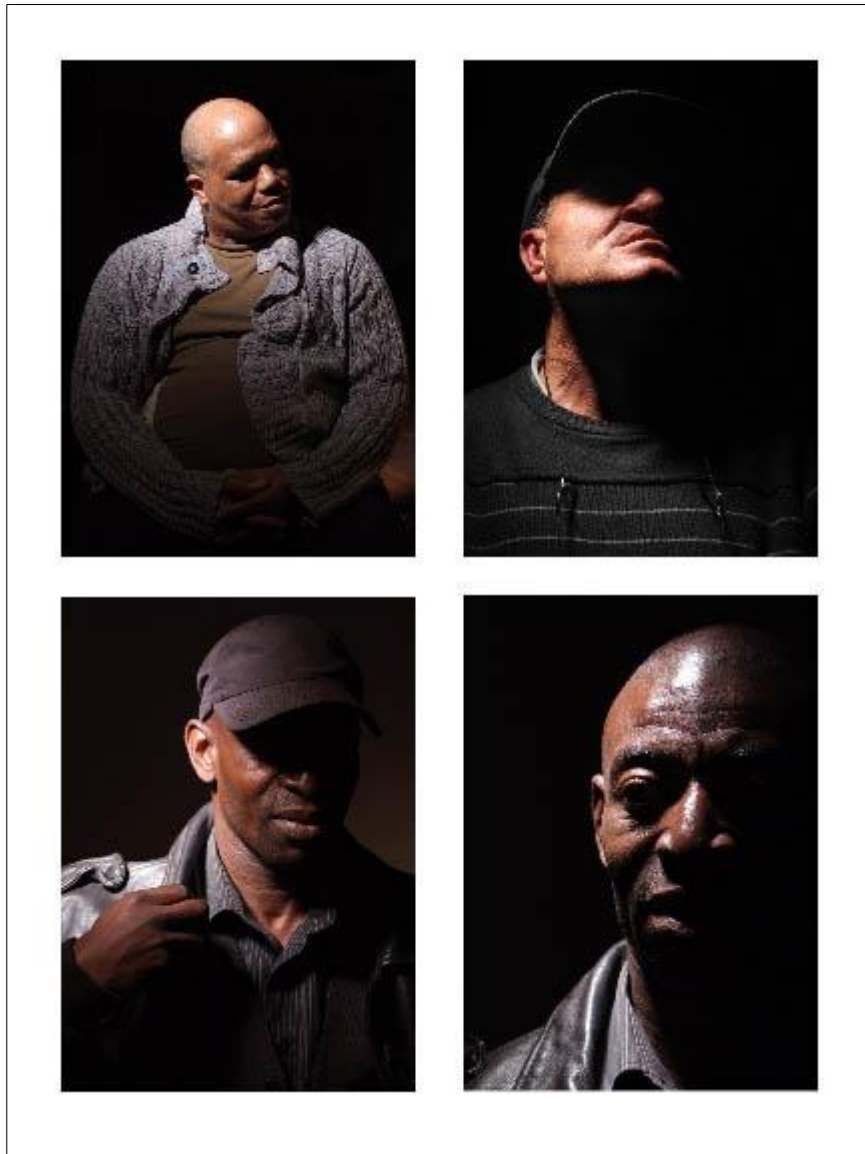


01 - The madness caused by straying and the feeling of being trapped by social exclusion leave deep scars.

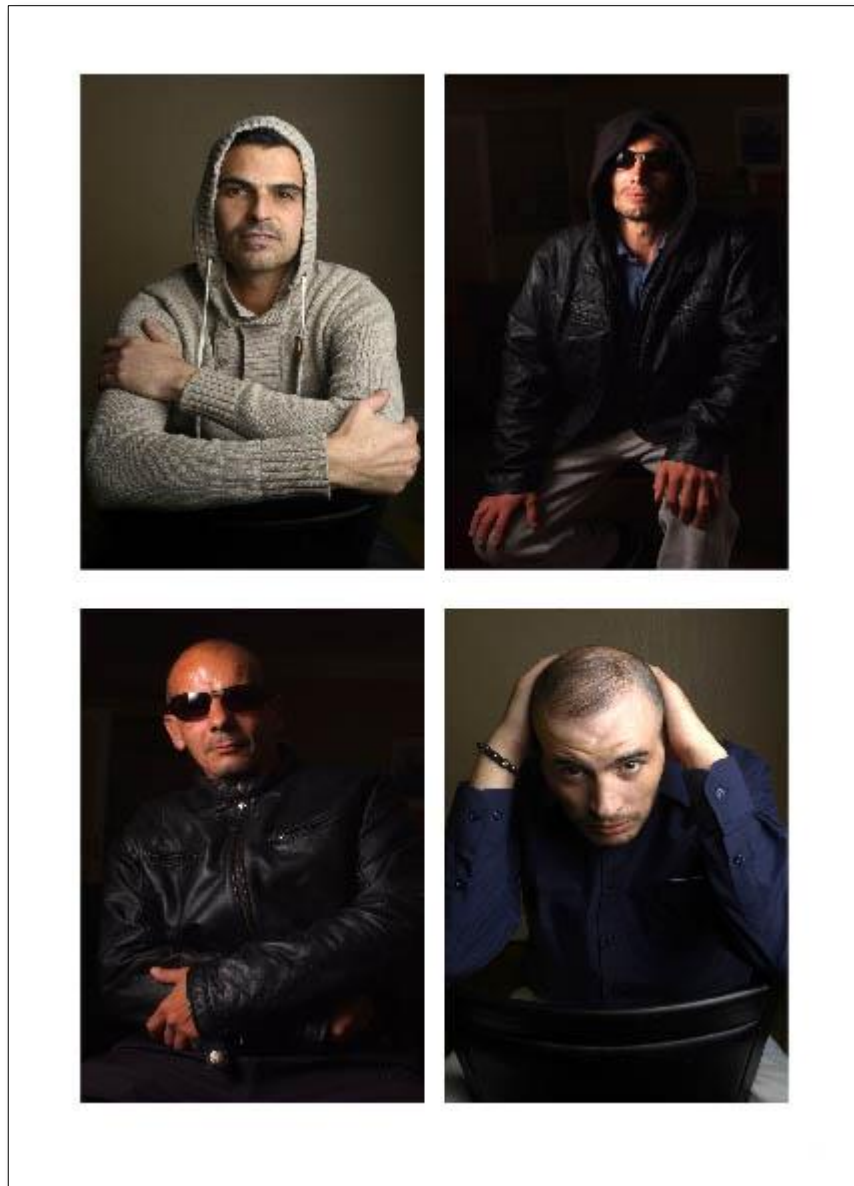
Not to be recognized in the first photos as a sign of refusal to participate.

To show oneself as harmless: "empty hands, head downcast, and a position of submission, with no connection to the surrounding environment".

Closing oneself off, looking down, curling up on the prop (a chair), and limiting the space for any contact with the outside world.



02 - The most common initial poses are those of gangsters acting rough: caps or hoodies on, making hand gestures with a scowl. This first pose is considered an initial test phase where the individual faces the judgment of their peers.



03 - When they first look at their portraits, the participants linger on them and a grin lights up their faces. The comments made by the group are indications of the risks they have taken by presenting themselves to others in such a way and by accepting to be judged by their peers.



04 - From shadow to light, exposing one's dependency in order to work on their own approach to their treatment. An omnipresent shadow in the photograph evokes self-esteem.



05 - The intermediary sessions. The poses become different. It is no longer about playing a part but instead about showing one's true self. Making the most of the photography workshop to have a break from the chaos of their lives; to relax and smile.



06 - The intermediary sessions. No constraint, presenting oneself through the camera lens, no frills and no pressure.



07 - The following sessions are about each person expressing their creativity. I'm only asking you for some compassion and some understanding of my path, not for the moon.



08 – Over the course of the workshop the light techniques evolve, modifying the aspect of the photos. Each individual discovers and appreciates themselves. They are proud to show their portraits. They regain self-esteem. They will be able to experience a new attitude: to take care of themselves.



09 - With the restoration of self-esteem the gangsters' masks are gradually removed. The portraits can be close-ups, without décor and makeup, faces relaxed.



10 - The photo shoot dedicated to messages: photography allows for an element of autobiographical expression and for the communication of personal messages to loved ones. This session brings together creativity and the skills acquired over the course of the workshop: confidence, posture and an understanding of photography...



11 - The sessions revolve around themes related to the restoration of confidence:

- Shadow and light, an evocative theme for those who are marginalized
- Direct light
- Outdoors
- Group pictures
- Close-ups and wide shots.



12 - Dinner conversation before the session:

Patient 1: Roman Catholic or Protestant, it comes to the same thing, all Catholics are protestant, aren't they?

Educator: Not exactly, Catholics and Protestants are Christians with different religious

view 13 - The message of the picture can be a text written by the participants about their life
Pati

Patient 1: Yes...Well, no, I'm a Muslim.

Patient 2: Yes, a Protestant Muslim.

Everyone laughed.

During the session after this exchange, following the patient's own initiative: a mystical consensual icon.

81 message au soir le 2-11-15
 une enfance difficile un père abusif
 qui devient grand et qui est un peu
 des choses et prendre le mauvais chemin.
 Mon état de santé est toujours plus mauvais
 plus fort
 Et maintenant, un acte de complaisance
 en soi
 Malgré des difficultés, la complexité, la peur
 et l'anxiété
 Toujours envie de donner le meilleur
 de soi et de se faire pour prouver aux autres
 que je suis capable.
 Je suppose que c'est un message au soir
 de l'adolescence et la consommation de
 produits.
 Nous ne sommes pas de ceux qui perdent tout
 l'argent et on se console à l'instant même
 avec un peu de drogue et on se console
 d'un instant à l'autre
 Et puis on se console avec un peu de
 consommation de produits et on se console
 d'un instant à l'autre
 Mais pour autant je ne suis pas un
 être qui se console avec un peu de
 produits et on se console d'un instant
 à l'autre
 Juste pour voir



13 - The message of the picture can be a text written by the participants about their life.

Self-image
A difficult childhood, a painful past that make you fragile and leads you to make mistakes and take the wrong path.
And yet, some moments of happiness that make you feel stronger.
And one day, you decide to pull yourself together.
In spite of the hardships, the complexities, the fear and anxiety.
Always wanting to give it your best in order to prove to the others that you are capable.
Seeing your image being degraded by excess; addiction and drug consumption.
We take photos of ourselves over a period of time (one year) and we can see the improvement or degradation of our own image - that's why the photography workshop is important.
I am here because I don't like the image of myself that I see when I look in the mirror, the image that consumption has created.
We can all read suffering on the features of a face, like a film roll being developed over the course of your life
Just to see.

Lionel



14 – Anecdote from a session: that day, we were working on close-up portraits with direct lighting.

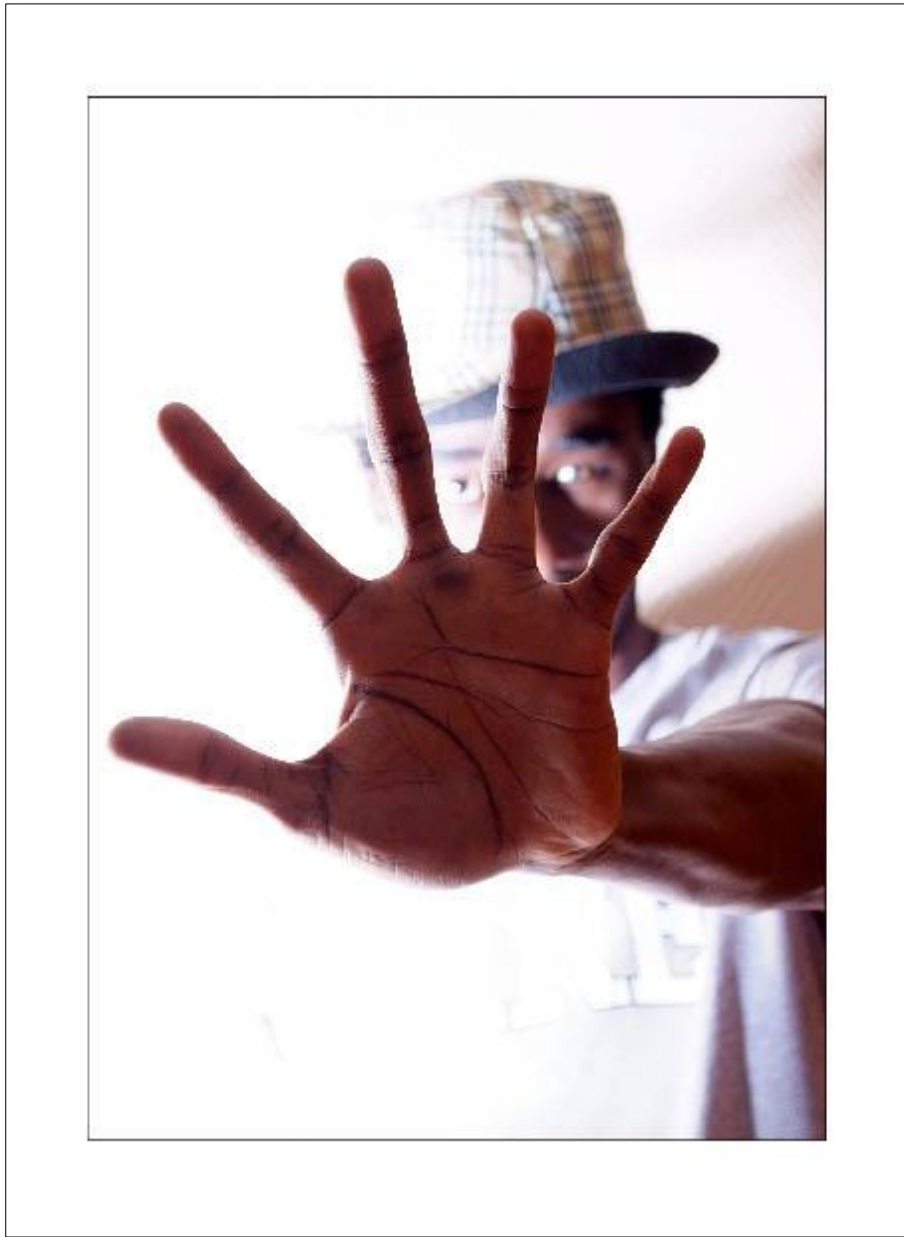
"No pictures for me, anyway."

"You don't have to."

The patient sits down on a sofa at the back of the room and watches the shoot. 15 minutes later, he stands up and plants himself in front of the camera lens. Luigi takes his portrait. When looking at the photo, he initially remained silent before suddenly exclaiming: *"Other than at the police station no one has taken a picture of me for ten years. Thank you."*



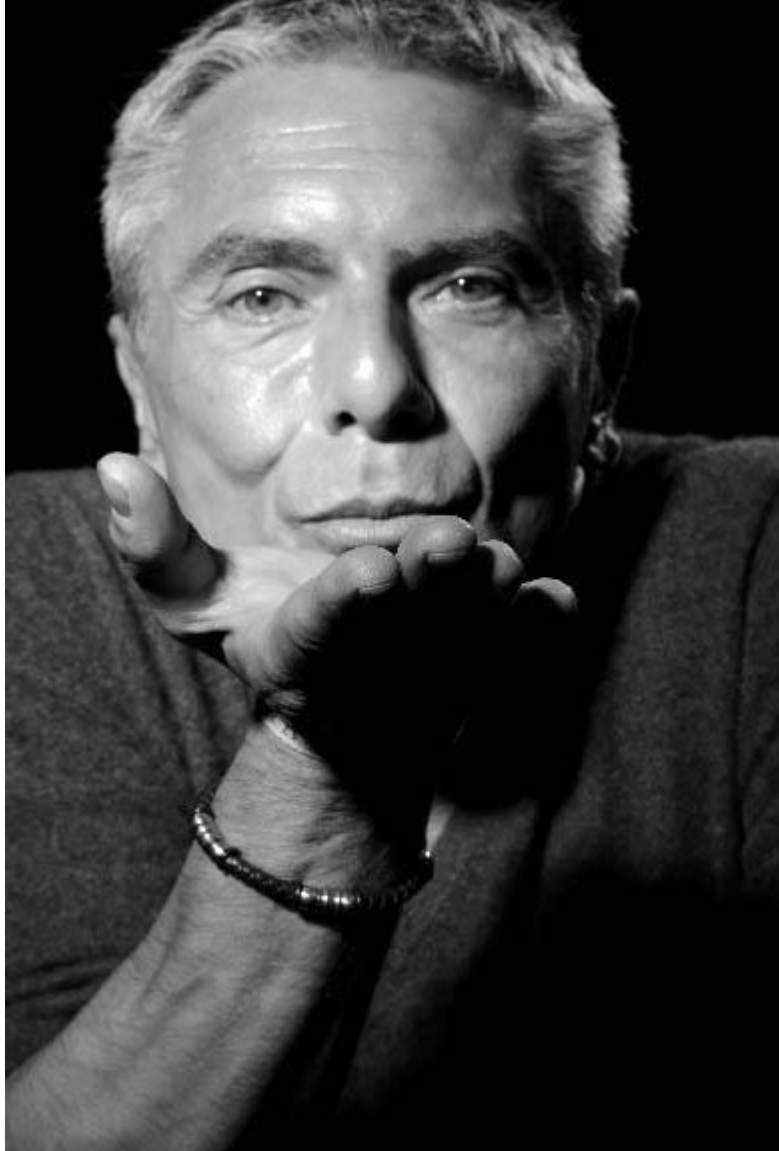
15 - With difficult life paths behind them, the objective of the patients will be to bounce back and demonstrate their will to integrate into society once they are out of the medico-social establishment.



16 - A photographic work on depth of field in relation to the ambivalences regarding the approach to their healthcare, their doubts, their importance, their pleasure and their unease. A session for asking questions and discovering the unknown.



17 - When a photograph helps reconstruct the path of someone's life, from the negative to the positive, from the drug-taking to the clean breakthrough. From a woman going astray to a happy, socially-integrated mother, full of projects for herself and her 5 year-old daughter.



18 - *"Forgiveness cannot erase the past, but it can broaden the future"*.
Luis, words addressed to his family before entering the care centre.
A photo of the promise he insists on keeping.



19 - A panoramic view of the social establishment on a sunny day. The building dates back to 1820. Weather permitting, the workshop is held outdoors to make the most of the architectural and cinematographic setting.



20 - A group picture is taken at the end of each workshop session. It presents a reflection of the patients' states of mind and their evolution.

