

Synopsis:

Unaccompanied Foreign Minors in Paris

Photographic documentary by

Aurélie LECARPENTIER

Paris 2014 / 2015

This documentary is a selection of photographs telling the story of the M.I.E. (*Mineurs Isolés Étrangers*, or Unaccompanied Foreign Minors) who arrived in Paris during the winter of 2014/2015. The harshness of the weather made their presence all the more visible and an informal association was established including these adolescents left to fend for themselves, some of them even sleeping rough.

I met them in winter. The cold underscored the suffering of these youngsters. They would wait all night for the PAOMIE - *Permanence d'Accueil et d'Orientation des Mineurs Isolés Étrangers*, or Centre for Reception and Triage of Unaccompanied Foreign Minors – to open, where they could find daytime accommodation until their assessment. I decided to cover their journeys through France, as well as their administrative and judicial journeys, marked by hope and disappointment.

By inviting the spectator to take an active role and to identify with the subject, I wanted this series of photographs to highlight the different hurdles that a foreign minor, with no money, no shelter, nor anything else other than the belief that “it must be better here”, needs to overcome in order to get a decent education and to blend in to society. Put differently, just to live like any other French youngster.

Since January 2016, *France Terre d'Asile*, which was until then in charge of running the PAOMIE close to the Jaurès metro station in Paris, has passed on the responsibility to the Red Cross to manage the DEMIE (*Dispositif d'Évaluation des Mineurs Isolés Étrangers*, Unit for the Assessment of Unaccompanied Foreign Minors) whose address is now 5 rue du Moulin Joly, near the Couronnes metro station.

The ADJIE - *Accompagnement et Défense des Jeunes Isolés Étrangers*, and association for the Accompaniment and Defense of Unaccompanied Foreign Minors – is still running at 49ter avenue de Flandre (Paris). The *Jeunes Flandre* premises which houses it is now called *l'Espace Paris Jeunes Flandre* (open from Monday to Friday from 10am to 7pm). The ADJIE is now open every Monday from 6pm to 10pm and every Saturday from 9am to 2pm.

Another acronym for the MIE is « MENA » for *Mineurs Étrangers Non Accompagnés*.