

ARTIST STATEMENT

This is the doorway through which to enter the world of Jean-Michel Landon. A world where power dynamics are reversed, where those whom society strives to render invisible become visible, where the stories of France's forgotten are transformed into history and collective memory, and where those deemed undesirable embody a poetry of rare dignity.

A social documentary photographer from Créteil and a former specialist youth and social care worker, Jean-Michel Landon, also known as Linstable Photographie, has spent more than twelve years developing a long-term documentary practice in working-class neighbourhoods, shaped by encounters, patience and trust. Through an immersive approach, he bears witness to an era in transition, a fractured world and stories that need to be reclaimed. Each series emerges from a keen eye and a profound commitment; each image is the culmination of a human connection. His gaze portrays a world that is often predominantly masculine, where toughness and tenderness intertwine in an almost schizophrenic way.

From Créteil to Morocco, from large housing estates to journeys into exile, his work unfolds across several documentary cycles: working-class neighbourhoods, with *La Vie des Blocs* (*Life in the Blocks*) as its cornerstone; lives lived on the margins — single mothers, women subjected to domestic violence, children and teenagers in state care, and refugees; and *La Rue et ses parfums* (*The Street and Its Scents*), a sensitive series exploring the urban atmosphere, improbable details and the gestures that make up everyday life.

His black-and-white photographs strip each scene back to its essentials, bringing gazes, gestures and human connections to the forefront. They capture a raw energy, sometimes tinged with melancholy, reminding us that what no longer exists once did.

Exhibited in France and internationally, published in the press and brought together in three self-published books, his photographs form a coherent body of work that stands equally as an archive and a visual poem.

Far removed from a poverty-driven or purely victim-centred narrative, Jean-Michel Landon offers us his vision of those who are the victors of our collective history.

“As early as 2012, when I learned that the Sablières housing estate in Créteil was to be demolished, I set out to create a photographic record of our collective memory by documenting our everyday lives. We were one big family; people left their doors open. There was an incredible spirit of mutual support and solidarity. The urban renewal, necessary as it may have been, could not be allowed to erase an entire chapter of the residents’ lives.”

Jean-Michel Landon

« LA VIE DES BLOCS »

For the past 13 years, Jean-Michel Landon (Linstable Photographie) has been documenting everyday life in working-class neighborhoods across the Paris region through photography. Ethnic and social segregation, inadequate housing, but also moments of joy shaped by deep solidarity—these are among the social realities his work brings to light.

His long-term project, "The Life of the Blocks," began in the Les Sablières housing estate in Créteil, where he lived and worked in close immersion with residents for seven years.

"Down Below the Blocks," "A Summer in the Estate," and "In the Shadow of the Towers" are the titles of the three photographic series that emerged from this experience.

His lens immerses us in complex and multifaceted worlds, where tenderness and hardship intertwine in almost surreal ways. As both witness and storyteller, he captures raw, unfiltered emotions that reveal the lives of a generation too often overlooked. His approach is intimate, yet always w w. , , , by sensitivity, respect, and compassion. It is this instinctive balance that gives rise to powerful photographic series in which people—especially children and young adults—occupy a central place.

Aware that the suburbs are undergoing profound transformation with the development of the Grand Paris Express and the new economic challenges it brings, "The Life of the Blocks" stands as a tribute to the residents of France's working-class neighborhoods, ensuring that they are remembered rather than forgotten.







“What I loved was the sense of community. We were like a village. The children played together at the foot of the apartment blocks, looked after by the older kids. People helped one another, doors were always open, and we shared meals with our neighbours. Sometimes, we would eat out on the grass between the housing blocks. We’d lower the food basket from our windows using ropes.”

Ali



“There was so much respect in this housing estate. It was like a family. People listened to one another, regardless of age, skin colour or background’.

Dialla





















"On the hill above the housing estate, there was a park. We used to play tag. We built our own dens out of anything we could find, and we shared all sorts of secrets with one another."

Mamadou







“A woman can endure more than a man. Women are strong.”

Abdul



