

Edition Patrick Frey

Press Release

Nicolas Faure

The Order of Things



The Order of Things presents about a hundred analog photographs of landscaped gardens around houses and estates in the Swiss Canton of Valais and in Romandy, the western, French-speaking part of Switzerland. Nicolas Faure (b. Geneva, 1949) explores the “order of things” in his shots of lush ornamental plants and hedges as well as boundary walls and fences that bespeak a desire for privacy within the confines of a verdant semi-secluded idyll. You can often spot them from afar: these ornamental plants, slightly concealed, usually behind delicate latticework and fences, and every now and then striving to break away from the changes in the built environment, reaching out over and around the fences, sometimes almost menacingly, sometimes holding out a silent promise that behind all that back-to-back terraced housing might still lie some unspoiled wilderness, maybe even the great wide world. Then again, maybe not: maybe there’s nothing behind it but more Swiss suburbia. Faure renders this “order of things” in painstakingly composed visual hierarchies reflecting the homeowners’ will to assert their proprietary power, to shape their grounds, their personal turf, as they see fit. Everything has its place. These precisely placed plants, scrupulously “trained” to grow just the right way and smoothly woven into the suburban fabric, epitomize the Swiss mentality, as well as the technological and cultural changes which, since the late 1950s, have transformed Switzerland into a vast suburban patchwork.

Nicolas Faure (b. 1949) apprenticed as a goldsmith in Geneva from 1968–1971 before traveling for several years to the Middle and Far East where he took his first photographs. Between 1975 and 1980 he lived in New York as a goldsmith and photographer. Faure was a teacher of photography at the University of Geneva, 1981–1983, and since 2001 at the Ecole Cantonale d’Art Lausanne ECAL. His work includes extensive photo series on Swiss highways 1994–1998, a collaboration with Time Life Books, and he publishes in magazines such as GEO, Actuel, and L’Illustré. Faure’s fields of work include street photography, development of the Alpine landscape, design of public space, transportation infrastructure. He received federal grants in 1980, 1986, 1988; and the Kodak Prize in 1992.

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N° 357

Design: NORM

Hardcover

176 pages

80 images

24.5 × 16 cm

With a text by Patrick Frey

in English

ISBN 978-3-907236-57-4

EUR 65 / CHF 65



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