



KATHRIN LINKERSDORFF: FAIRIES

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Kathrin Linkersdorff first photographed a series of blossoms for scientific documentation around ten years ago. Following this, she gradually began to expand the endeavour, until it evolved into her current art form. The wabi-sabi aesthetic is an approach to art that honours the imperfect. Using her Leica S3, she translated this philosophy into her poetic series, titled *Fairies I-V*. Linkersdorff spoke to us about the complex procedures she follows to complete her thoughtful arrangements, and how she captures the ideal moment, between being and passing away.

LFI: What lies behind the highly artistic level of your images?

Kathrin Linkersdorff: I create my own micro-cosmos with micro photography. As far as I'm concerned, it's not actually about the tulips, but about the structures that lie beneath the surface and the essence of an organism. My images are the result of very elaborate processes: from the preparation to the quality of the blossoms and the vegetable dyes, which I manufacture myself, to the arrangement of the photographic settings, and the final print.



Can you explain something about your techniques?

To protect the blossoms from UV light, I hang them in the darkest situation possible, or store them in boxes. Then I observe, turn, and dust them during the drying process, which can take from days to a number of weeks. Each blossom is different and unique; each has its own character, even if they belong to the same species. The flowers are precious and the choice of appropriate blossoms is very limited. Furthermore, nearly 80 percent of the flowers are destroyed by the surface tension of the liquid, when they are immersed. There is always only one perfect moment in which to take the picture. Once the motif is complete, a similar complex process is needed for the printing. The viewer can recognise the great effort involved.



What needs to be considered, while photographing?

Air bubbles absolutely need to be avoided, as they influence the camera's focus, producing blurriness in certain places that I don't want. The depth of field is very low, anyway. In the last two *Fairies* series, I added vegetable dyes I extracted from the flowers, and sometimes these pigments create shapes that are barely distinguishable from the petals. That's a process that I can't control. I work with daylight, which I guide in specific ways, using reflectors. For some motifs, I also use a black background, which gives the motifs a very different look.

To what degree does the Leica S3 support your work?

The Leica S3 is my preferred tool, because of the incredible amount of detail it provides; and the sharpness, down to the tiniest cell. It's like you can almost dive into my pictures. Many people don't stand at a distance from the 153x153cm prints; they prefer to get very close, so as to discover the cosmos within the pictures, millimetre by millimetre. (Interview: Carla Susanne Erdmann)



All images on this page: © Kathrin Linkersdorff

Equipment: Leica S3 with Apo-Macro-Summarit-S 120 f/2.5

You can find more about her *Fairies I-V* series in [LFI 07/2021](#).