

EMPEL'S INNOCENT CHILDREN

*Raad Van Empel's fascinating portraits
from his renowned series *Mood*
demonstrate his unique narrative technique
and ways of capturing the vulnerability
of his subjects.
Here, the latest portraits
from the series are
presented for the first time.*



Dutch photographer Raad Van Empel's portraits are as close as images come to capturing the magic of childhood innocence. The ability to see beyond the striking realm the artist creates through his unique and strenuous process is almost equivalent to a glimpse of what lies beyond existence.

Behind the artist's concern for composition is his extensive experience in stage design. Empel got his degree in graphic design at The Academy of Art and Design (AKV) St. Joost in Breda, a time when he left that interest behind and began to focus on photography.

Empel's refined use of light adds a dreamy, non-dimensional perception to the images. This is undoubtedly the most distinctive characteristic of the photographic-collage technique the artist has developed over the years. Empel first photographs pre-prepared scenes before using various sections of those photographs to create collages. Thus, Empel's silent children look as if they might suddenly come alive and start talking. Much like his past photographic works over more than two decades, the focal point of his latest series *Mood* is also the innocence of children.

New portraits from his most recent series, ongoing for the past two years, are published for the first time in this issue. Empel questions burdensome issues like race, gender and innocence through the naivety of childhood, all within the scope of the artist's quest for revealing moral, ethical and aesthetic dilemmas. *Mood* is praise for childhood innocence disappearing in the face of impositions.