

# PRESS PACK



**Gérard FRANCOIS**  
Globetrotter - Photographer

## Who he is

G rard FRANCOIS was born in Paris. He studied at the Ecole Boule and then the Ecole Nationale Sup rieure des Arts D coratifs in Paris where his second last year of artistic studies were completed in a slightly turbulent, revolutionary atmosphere, during the student riots of 1968. Prior to that, he ventured out with his 20-year old vintage Citro n Deux-Chevaux, which he calls his 'deudeuche', on the roads to Turkey, and then on to Lapland (...or at least almost, since his car gave up the ghost before seeing the midnight sun) or more simply visited abandoned villages in the most remote areas of France. In 1972 he decided to settle down, get into the working world and set up his own architect's business of interior designers with ten other collaborators, which he ran for over 35 years.

## Why he travels

At the crossroads of important events of his life, he found it necessary to stop and ask himself basic questions like 'what are we all doing here?' and 'what are we to expect of our existence?'. In 2007, at a turning point in his professional life, which was already very complete, G rard FRANCOIS took a piece of blank paper, drew two columns, one entitled "what I no longer want" and the other one, "what I want". It did not take long for those old desires to surface thus completing his list. Inspired by globetrotters, he decided to tour around the world with his four-wheel-drive vehicle, but this time fully equipped, making it easier to bond unique relations with far-away people. During his long timeless travels, he photographed and filmed as a way of preserving the emotions that he was after, even if, all too often, he left his camera or camcorder in his bag so it wouldn't be too visible, for fear of ruining the most intense moments of an encounter. The picture that he will always keep in his traveller's head will certainly be the best one of all those he exhibits. That is what the existence of a globetrotter-photographer is all about, telling an exceptional story.

## How he preserves emotion in his shots

G rard FRANCOIS moves from photos to videos without seeking THE beautiful picture at all cost. If we can acknowledge a certain talent, he seeks to portray, in this new life as a globetrotter-photographer, the same feelings that he once did in his projects as an architect or even in his passion as a chef, a profession he gladly would have loved to have done. He often compares his travel research to that of an architect or of an occasional chef which he is at times and says 'it's the same creative action, it's only the material that changes'. This is how he captures and preserves exceptional moments, with the simple desire today of sharing them with others.

## The Vehicle

Gerard FRANCOIS's vehicle will never be seen in any of his photos, nor on the DVDs that he has made. The aim of these pictures is not to flatter trail-blazers who are 'four-wheel-drive' equipment fans. In any case it would be a legitimate question to ask how Gérard travels. Having already prepared a Land Rover Defender 110 for his first trip, he has just equipped a new travel vehicle for his next expedition. This time, remaining faithful to the same legendary make, it too is a LandRover Defender but the 130 version, which is more spacious and a lot bigger, with a built-in living space in the box. It is made of aluminum for the lightness of this metal and designed by himself of course - "either we are architect-designers or not !" he says. It is functional for eating, sleeping, working, washing, cooking and dreaming ...

This tiny passenger compartment provides as well a place to touch up his clichés and to edit his films so he can immediately show them to people he meets. This important possibility allows him to bond privileged relationships with people he mixes with to such an extent that they in turn ask to be photographed. While showing them his photos on a PC, he realized that the children and adults were all pushing and shoving to get a glimpse of the screen. With this means of transport, he had to work out a way of making a real projection room. He only has this set up left, to test in real life.

The vehicle is equipped with two extra fuel tanks, another one for 100 liters of water, a shower, a chemical toilet, heavy duty shocks and suspension, a solar panel, a generator, an antenna to pick up the Internet via satellite and all the electrical equipment for editing and video projection. The vehicle allows four people to travel safely. Even if Gérard FRANCOIS travels mostly alone, he can also welcome friends or members of his family to share a part of the journey with him.



Travel vehicle 4x4 Land Rover type Defender 130 with living space and video projection equipment

# His Expeditions

The world tour has only just begun ...

In 2007/2008 Gérard FRANCOIS made his first trip to West Africa, and redid it again in 2009/2010 because the African continent and its culture had left such a lasting impression in his deepest thoughts.

The countries were visited completely independently with improvised bivouacs in the wilderness. He mostly drives on laterite dirt roads or in very remote areas far from large tourist zones.

Countries covered: Marocco, Mauritania, Mali, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Benin and Togo.

Duration of trip: 3 to 4 months - Distance covered on each trip from 20 to 22,000 km from France and back.

Next trips :

Roumania and Lapland, for short quick journeys. Latin America for a future long-term journey with vehicle shipment by cargo from France to Argentina, going up through South America to Mexico and leaving Canada via the USA. (Planned duration: 12 months)

# Photographic Work

## PHOTOGRAPHY

3 photo exhibitions are available:

*Sacré Mali* - 30 photos A3+ format numbered from 1 to 30 printed on cotton paper Epson HOT PRESS NATURAL with 53 cm x 43 cm frames, glass and matting. 1 DVD including 280 photos divided up into 6 small videos, about one hour long.

*Terre d'Afrique* - 15 photos of African soil in A3+ format numbered from 1 to 30 printed on cotton paper Epson HOT PRESS NATURAL with 53 cm x 43 cm frames, glass and matting.

*Les bidons de Bamako* - 18 photos taken in a recycling zone of old oil drums. A3+ format numbered from 1 to 30 printed on cotton paper Epson HOT PRESS NATURAL with 53 cm x 43 cm frames, glass and matting, 2 lead photos of A2 format numbered from 1 to 30 printed on Fujifilm photo paper framed with 53 cm x 73 cm transparent plastic. 1 slide show with sound track about 3 minutes long.

In preparation :

*La Villa Majorelle* - Shots of mythical Marrakech flora. Preparation of 50 photos A3+ format approximately, numbered from 1 to 30 or A4 printed on cotton paper Epson HOT PRESS NATURAL or thick FUJI paper framed under glass and matting. 1 slide show about a few minutes long.

## THE VIDEO FILMS

6 videos are available :

*Le Diaka* - Video with sequences from the trip along the water on a floodway of the Niger River. Approximately 1 hour long.

*Sogo Bo* - Land and water traditional dances of people dressed as puppets from the Somono, Bozo and Bambara tribes, to transmit their cultural values. Approximately 1 hour long.

*Bruits de Femmes* - Various views of Mali with an interview of actress-singer Fatoumata DIAWARA who talks about her life as a teenager in Mali, about the mysteries of the river and the condition of women in her country. 1 hour 15 min long.

*Sacré Mali* - Slide show editing of 280 photos taken in Mali with; portraits of men, women and children. Street scenes and clichés of architecture made of clay. Slide show cut up into small video films. 1h long.

## FREE VIDEO RECORDING

*TERAKAFT* - Group of musicians from the north of Mali in concert at the "Abattoirs" in Bourgoin-Jallieu, France. 1h long.

*QUI ETES VOUS SINALY ?* - Interview with an exceptional man met in Bamako in 2011. He expresses himself freely about the peculiarities of his country and answers various questions. 1 hour long.

*Fatoumata DIAWARA* - Concert on 28 May 2011 in Geneva (Switzerland). Discovery of an artist, singer-actress whose talent continues to evolve day after day. She has recently made a brief but noticeable appearance in the film TIMBUKTU with numerous awards, directed by Abderrahmane Sissako, released in 2014. 1 hour long.

## VIDEOS IN THE MAKING :

### COULEURS ET SAVEURS du Maroc

During the preparation of a couscous, the colors of each ingredient explode onto the screen and lead us into all the shimmering hues of this magnificent country. A very personal film of pictures, often abstract, where only the aroma is missing to make us hungry as wolves ... but then again, maybe the aroma will even be there !

## EXHIBITIONS AND POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES

- 3 exhibitions are available for sale. (See below), with the presence of Gérard FRANCOIS at the opening or during the whole exhibition, depending on requests.

- Projection of video films of trips and debates with Gérard FRANCOIS.

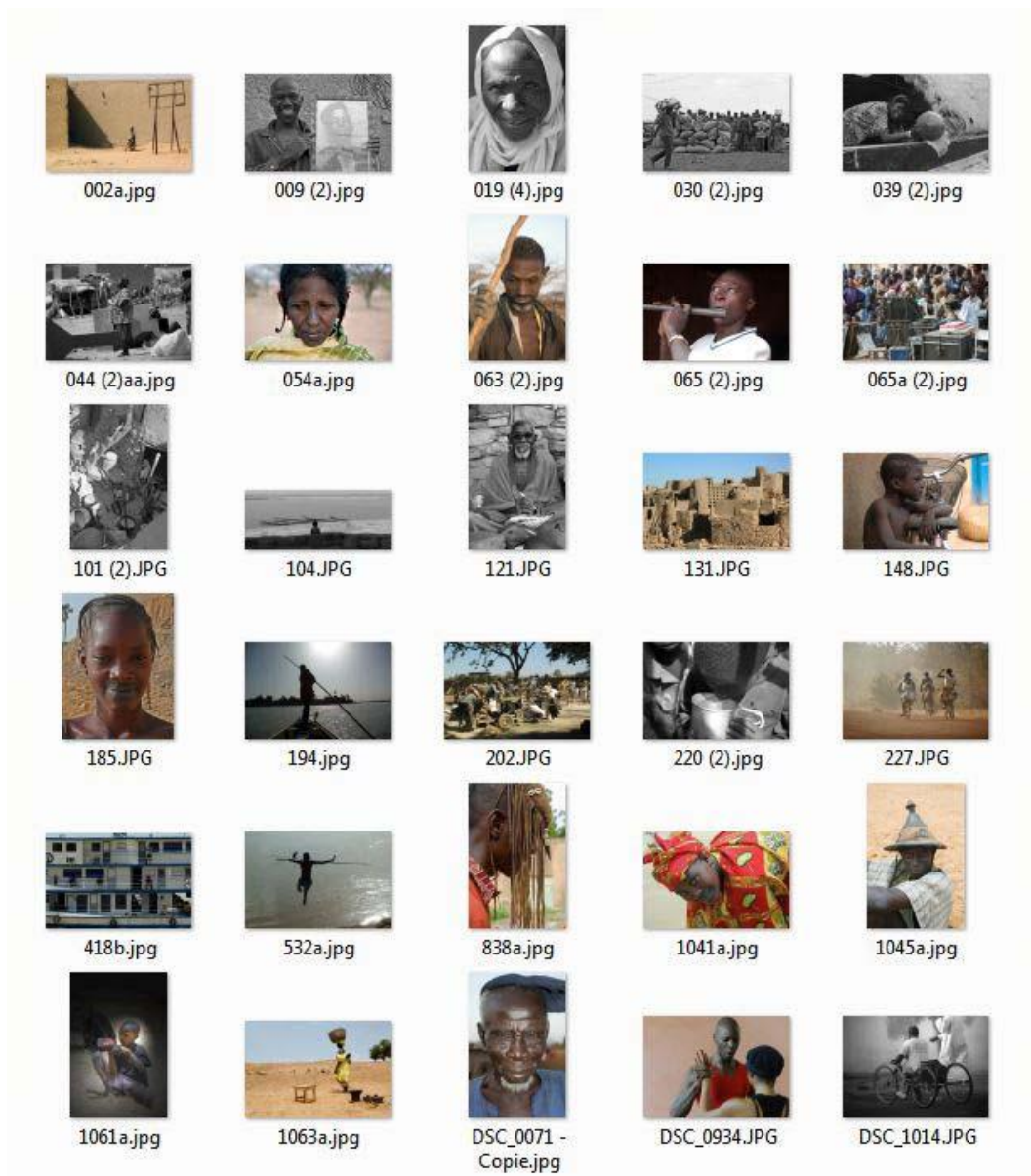
- Film making.

Please consult us.

## Sacré Mali Exhibition

The *Sacré Mali* exhibition includes 30 photographs of A3+ format, numbered from 1 to 30 printed on cotton paper Epson HOT PRESS NATURAL with 53 cm x 43 cm frames, glass and matting. These photos have been selected out of the 280 images presented in the DVD from the exhibition. For this exhibition, other derived products are also available; an exhibition video and a "carnet de voyage" video numbered from 1 to 25 with its booklet and its 13 cm x 18 cm photo, a 20 cm x 20 cm book numbered from 1 to 15, A4 photos under glass and signed. The lead photo is the shepherd, *Berger de Hombori - Mali (n°063(2).jpg)* and *Sur le fleuve (n°194.jpg)* for the cover of the derived products.

Presentation of 30 photos (others can be substituted for suggested photos below):



Legend of photographs from the *Sacré Mali* exhibition

Ref	N°photo	Title of work
1	002a.jpg	Une femme à Gao
2	009(2).jpg	C'est mon père
3	019(4).jpg	Le vieux à la barbe blanche
4	030(2).jpg	En attente de la pinasse à Gao
5	039(2).jpg	La femme Bozzo à l'écope - Mopti
6	044(2)aa.jpg	Maitresse femme au port de Ténenkou
7	054a.jpg	La femme du berger d'Hombori
8	063(2).jpg	Le berger de Hombori
9	065(2).jpg	Le joueur de flute
10	065a(2).jpg	L'ingénieur du son de Markala
11	101(2).JPG	La femme dans la cour au pays Dogon
12	104.JPG	L'enfant seul à Gao
13	121.JPG	Le chef du village aveugle
14	131.JPG	Village du plateau Dogon
15	148.JPG	L'enfant à la bicyclette
16	185.JPG	La jeune fille Peul
17	194.jpg	Sur le fleuve
18	202.JPG	Ecorçage du riz
19	220(2).jpg	La quart et l'enfant
20	227.JPG	Les femmes à bicyclette
21	418b.jpg	Transport sur le fleuve Niger
22	532a.jpg	L'enfant berger saute à l'eau
23	838.jpg	Le griot de Markala
24	1041a.jpg	La femme malienne en rouge
25	1045a.jpg	L'homme Peul au chapeau
26	1061a.jpg	L'enfant au Coca
27	1063a.jpg	La femme penchée au bébé
28	DSC_0071-Copie.jpg	Le Vieux au boubou bleu
29	DSC_0934.JPG	La fille aux ongles rouge
30	DSC_1014.JPG	Il faut ensemble,,,

The photographs are available upon request for press articles. Please consult us.

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