

## TAAROF, IMAGES OF IRANIAN HOSPITALITY

PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION BY CORNELIS VAN VOORTHUIZEN

VERNISSAGE : MAY 22<sup>ND</sup>, 2009 @ 6 P.M.

Exhibition until June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2009

Where: Mekic  
4438, rue de la Roche

Free admission



At Galerie Mekic, Festival Accès Asie is presenting the very prolific photographer Cornelis Van Voorthuizen, who will exhibit images from Iran. While traveling through the Iranian cities of Teheran, Isfahan, Shiraz and Yazid, Cornelis Van Voorthuizen was touched by the kindness of the people he met along the way, each inviting him to share a meal or to join them for tea. The title of the exposition, Taarof, refers to this Iranian art of hospitality, which is engrained in each individual.

The luminous photographs of Van Voorthuizen evoke this complex dance between the host and guest in the pleasant glance, the peaceful smile or in the body position of these men and women captured in daily life. In homage to this deeply anchored social characteristic, the photographer proposes a series of stereotypes of an effective beauty, abrasively alluring the viewer with his black and white images. The portraits reveal a little thing that is fundamentally cultural but universally humane.

### CORNELIS VAN VOORTHUIZEN

Cornelis van Voorthuizen's passion for photography started at the age of twelve in Kenya where he lived. Since then he has traveled throughout the continents documenting a variety of countries and cultures. Whether he is in Brazil, Georgia, India, Russia, Morocco, Ukraine, Algeria, England, Mexico, Argentina, Finland or elsewhere, his approach remains the same: documenting and understanding local culture and everyday life.

An example he likes to elaborate on is the preparation of tea: It is a universal ceremony although each culture has a distinct way of setting and preparing the custom. What he is looking for is blending himself as much as possible in a community, help with the everyday chores and only after a while will he pull out the camera. The photo session, spontaneous or prepared is a dialog between subject and photographer. The use of a medium format

camera facilitates this dialog because the photographers face is not hidden behind a big bulky metal object. In this digital age, Cornelis van Voorthuizen remains faithful to Black and White film and loves to go in the darkroom to develop and print out his images.

Born in the Netherlands, he grew up in Rwanda, Kenya and the USA and now is based in Paris. After Kenya he continued to pursue the passion of photography taking photo seminars at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington DC, eventually graduating from Brooks Institute of photography in Santa Barbara CA. He has been invited to show his photographs in galleries and Museums in Washington DC, Santa-Barbara, Paris Nantes and Villeneuve-Sur-Lot in France, Bruges in Belgium, Tamanrasset in Algeria, Elche in Spain and Helsinki in Finland. He teaches photography at Parsons School of Art and Design in Paris.