

LFI

8/2011
NOVEMBER



LEICA FOTOGRAFIE INTERNATIONAL

CHRIS ANDERSON

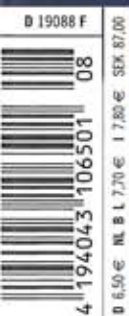
MAGNUM FEATURE.
NINE/ELEVEN: TEN YEARS
DOWN THE LINE

LEICA S SYSTEM

NEW HIGH SPEED WIDE
ANGLE LENS: ELMARIT-S
30 MM F/2.8 ASPH

DEPTH OF FIELD

THE MYTHS AND
TRUTHS BEHIND A
BASIC CONCEPT





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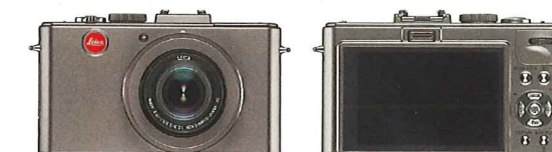
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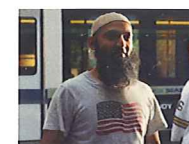
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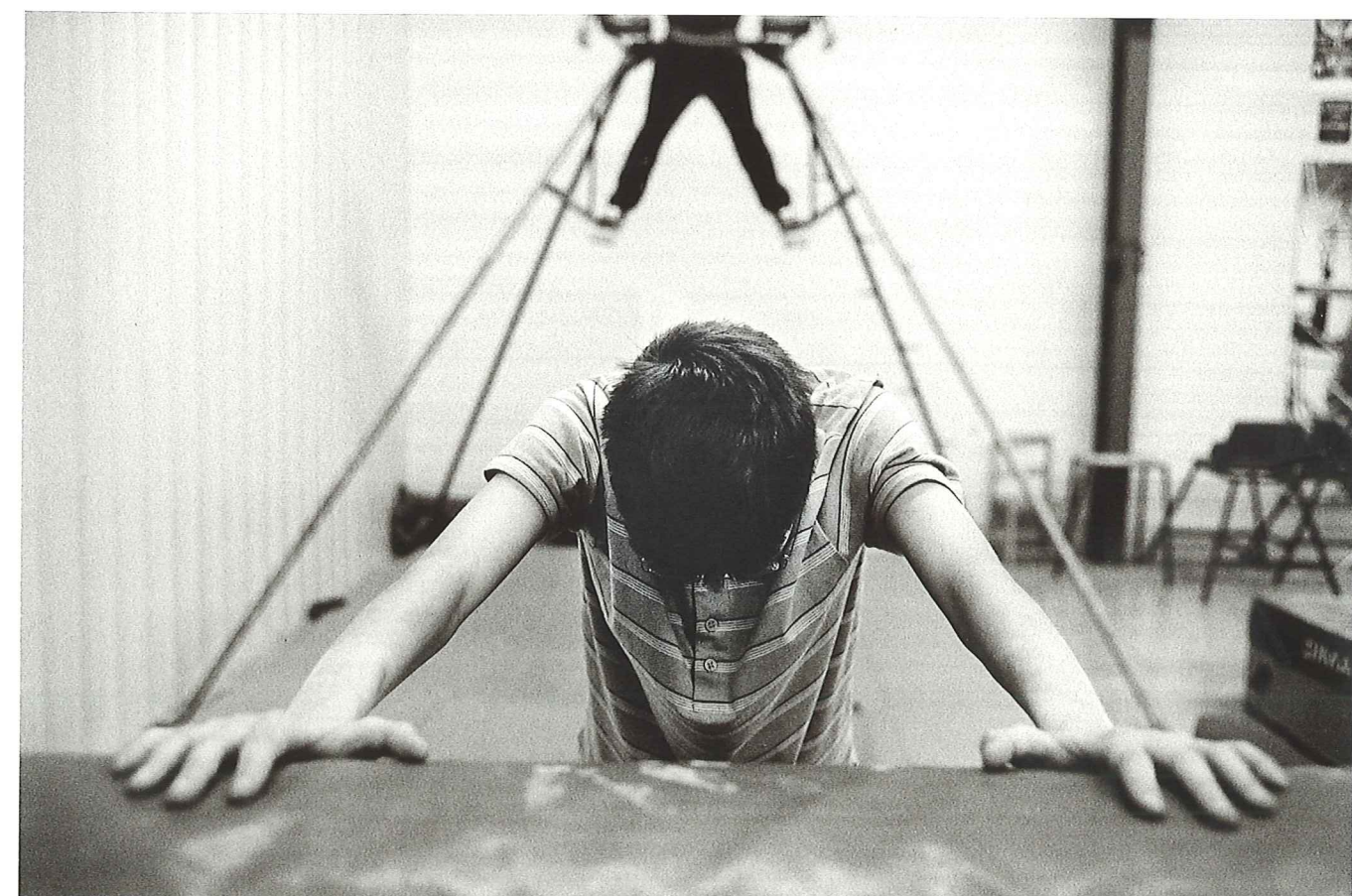
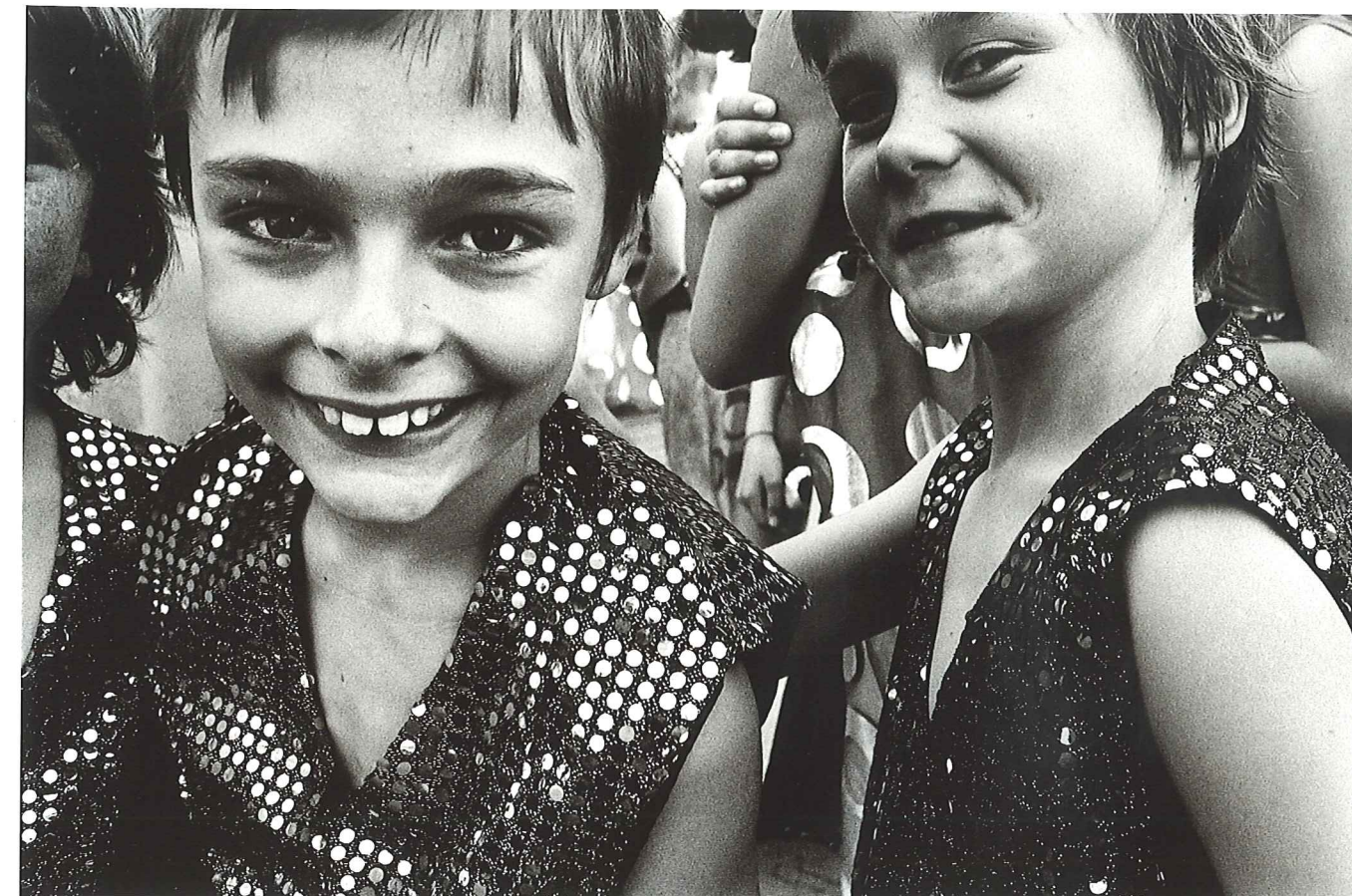
Chris Anderson: from the series taken for 'The New Yorker', 2011



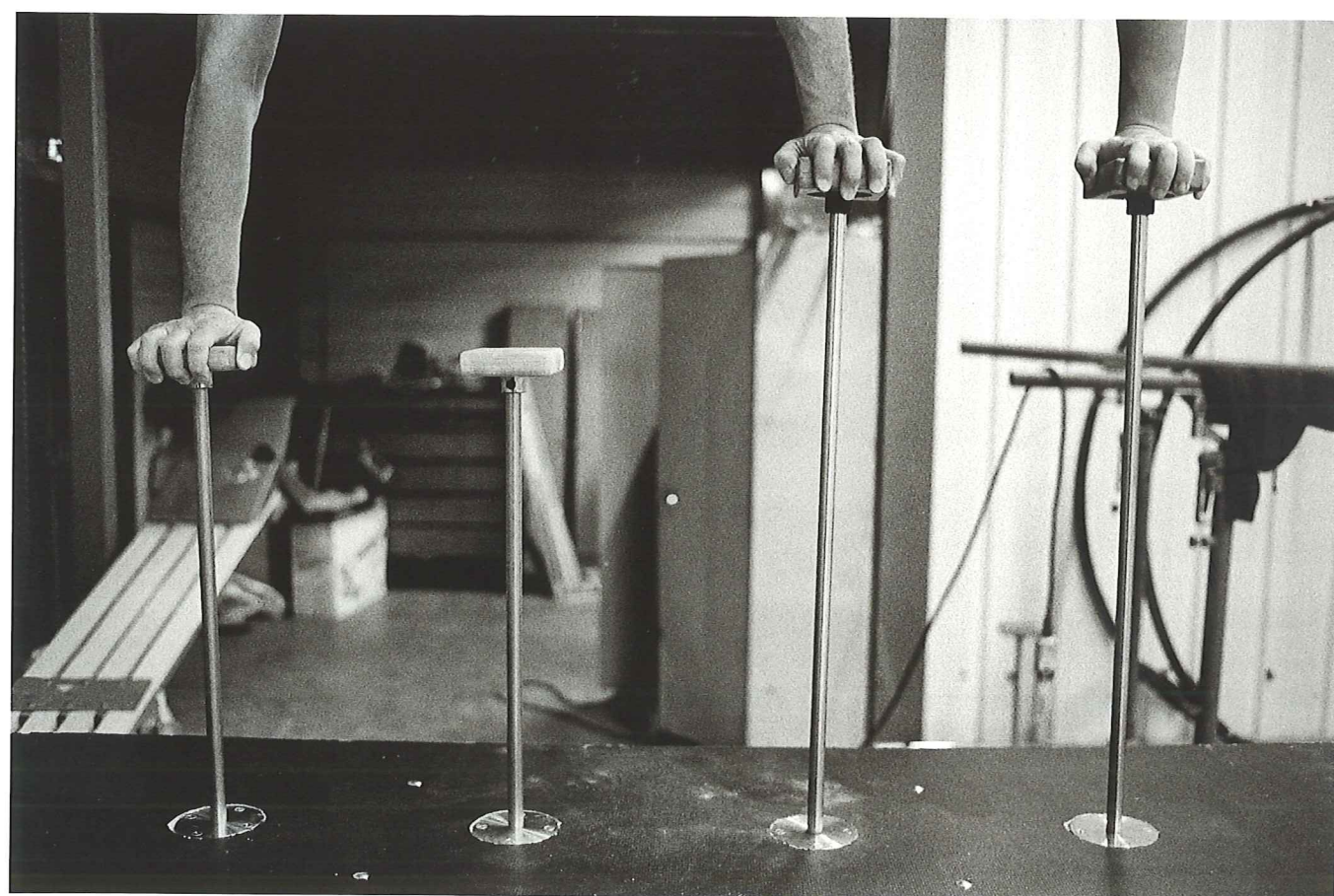
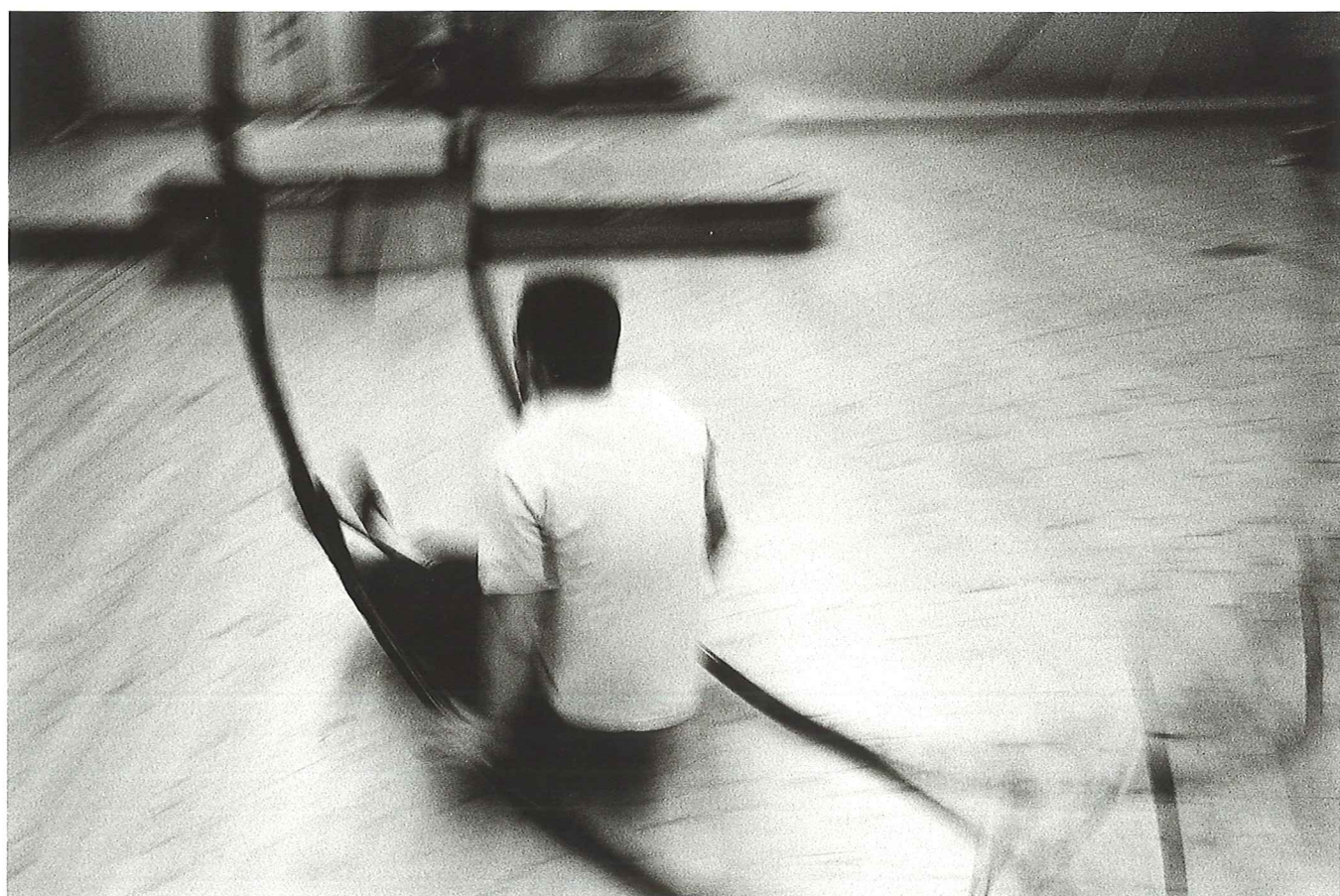
COME ONE COME ALL!

PHOTOGRAPHY: SYLVAIN DEMANGE

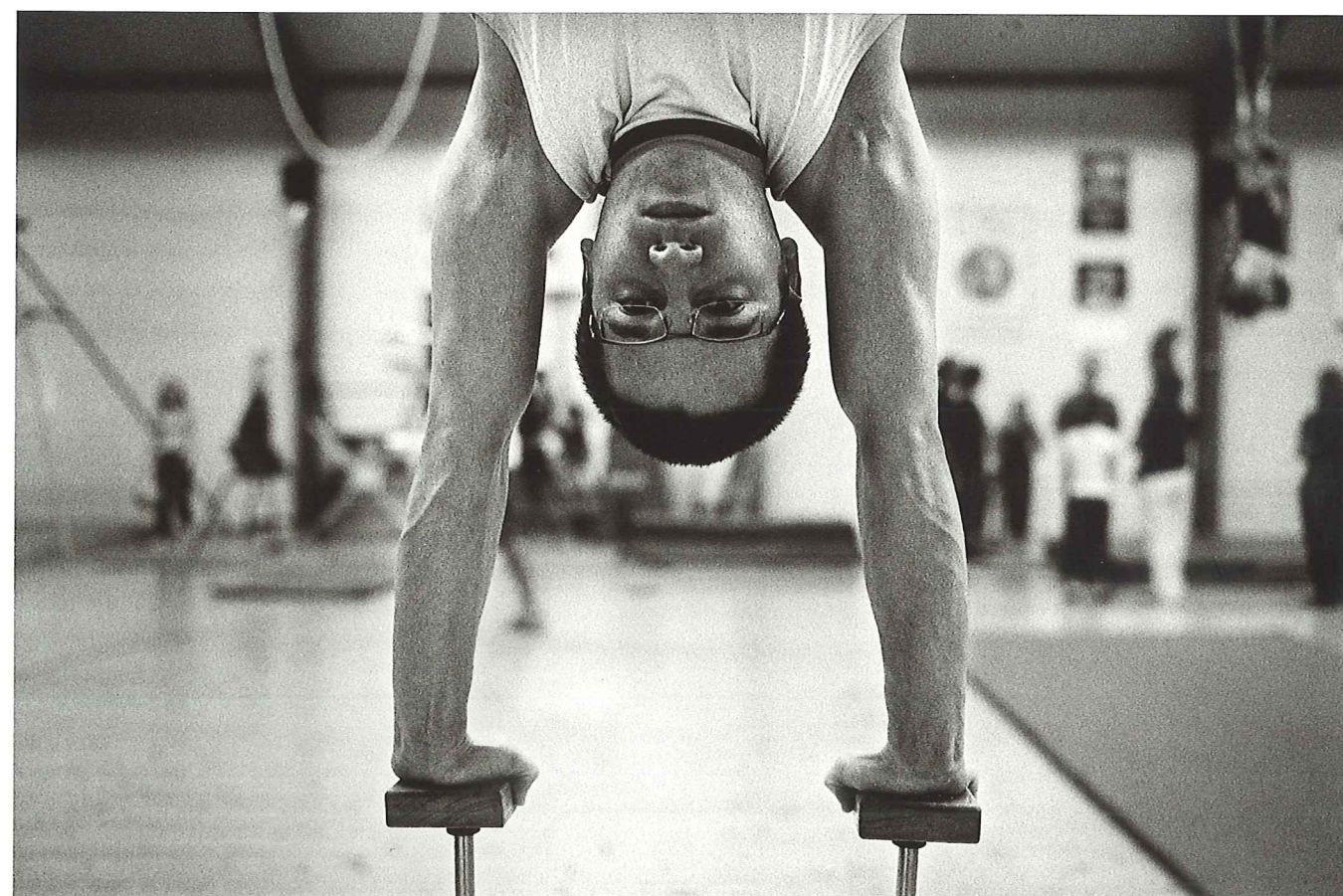
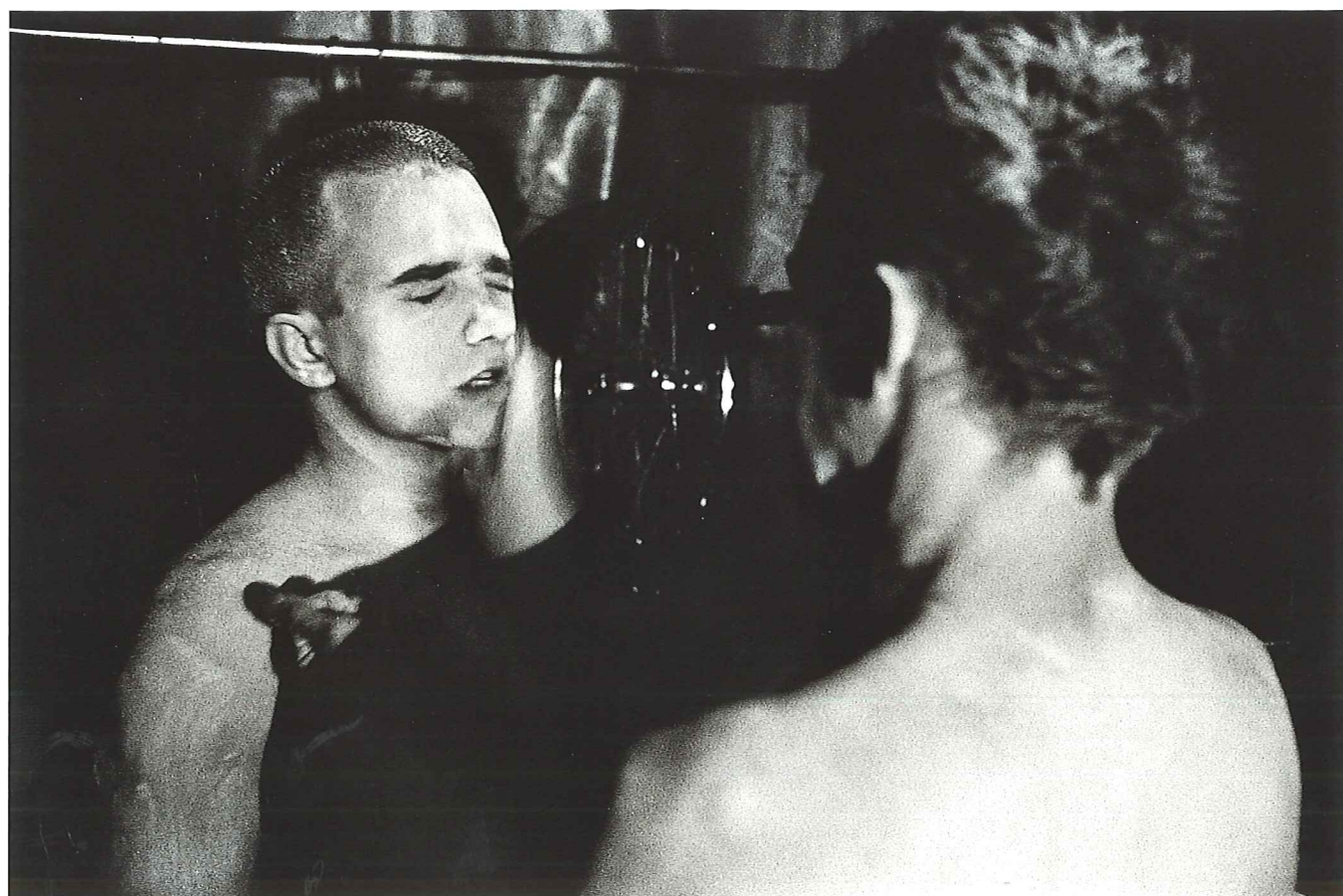
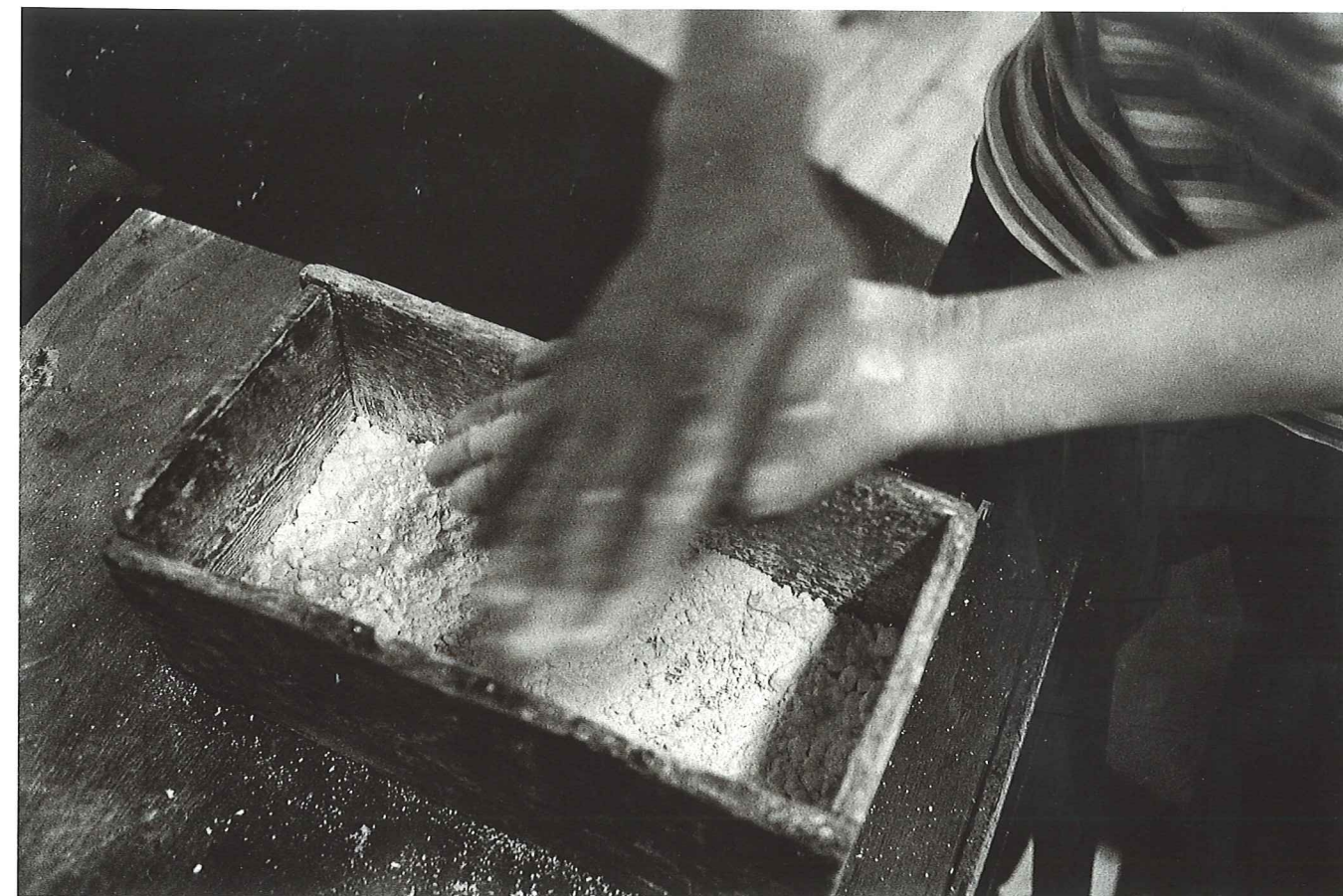
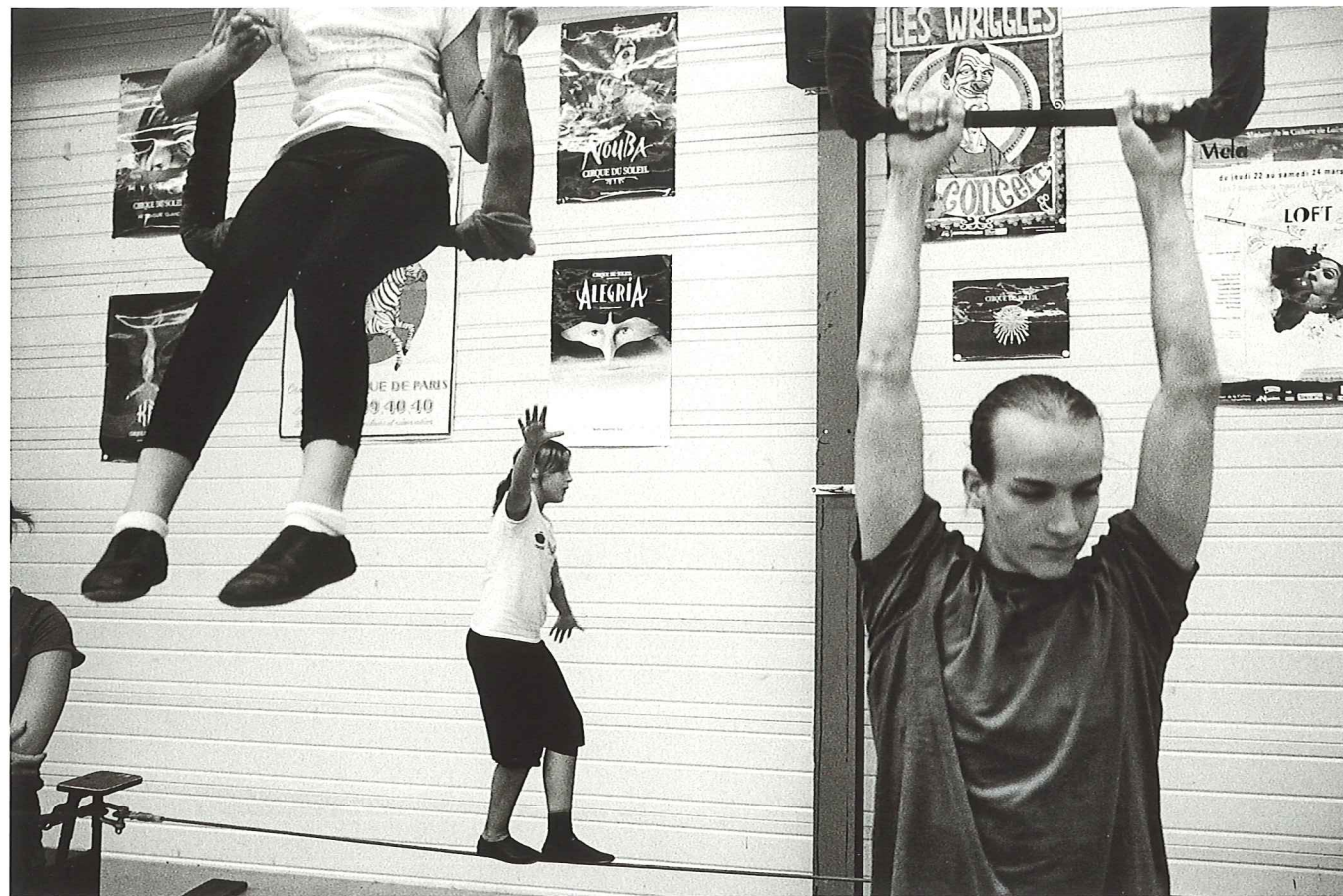
A story of solidarity, commitment and excitement before the performance: French photographer Sylvain Demange captured the fascinating energy on stage and backstage at the Cadets' Circus, using an R 8 and an MP 3.



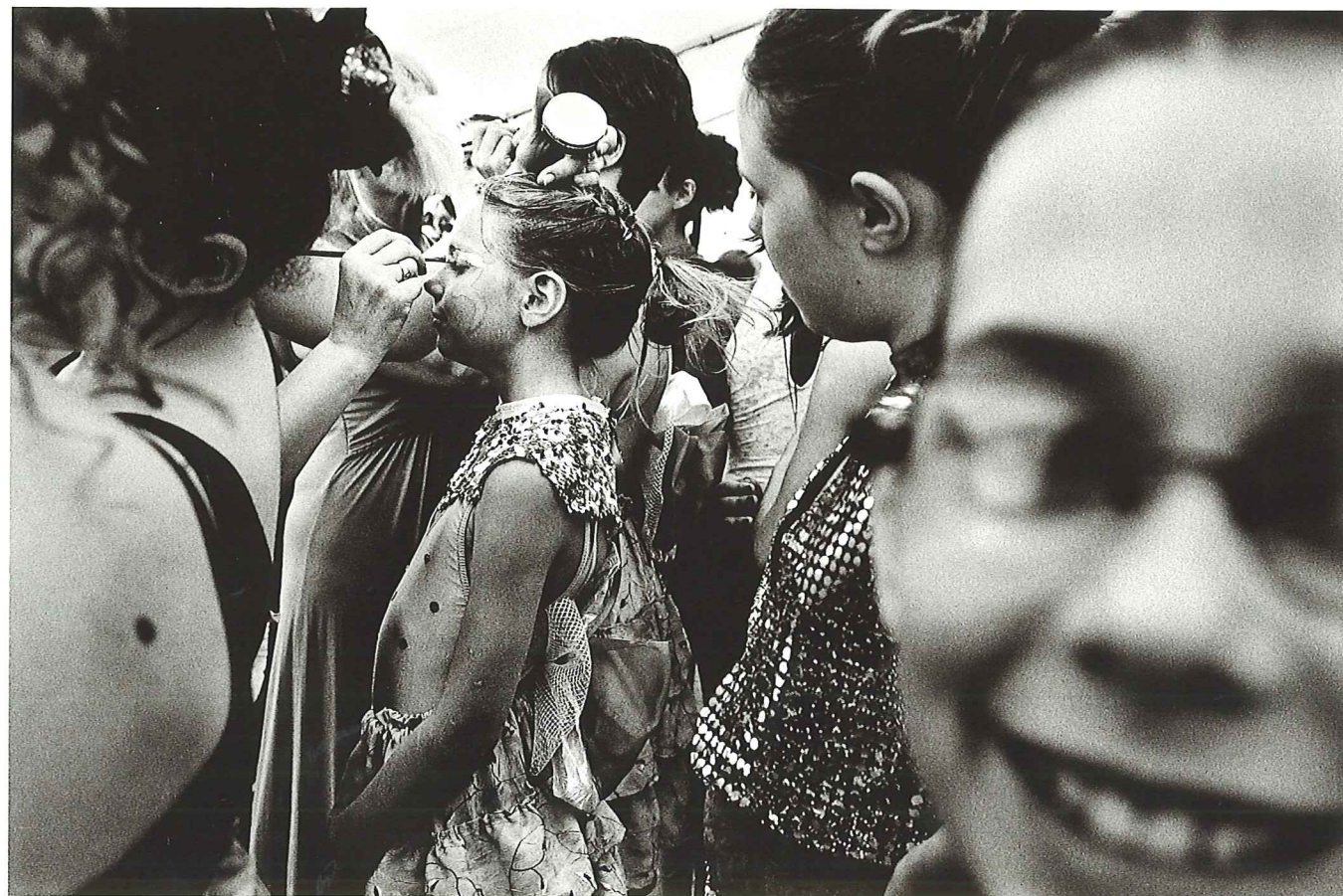
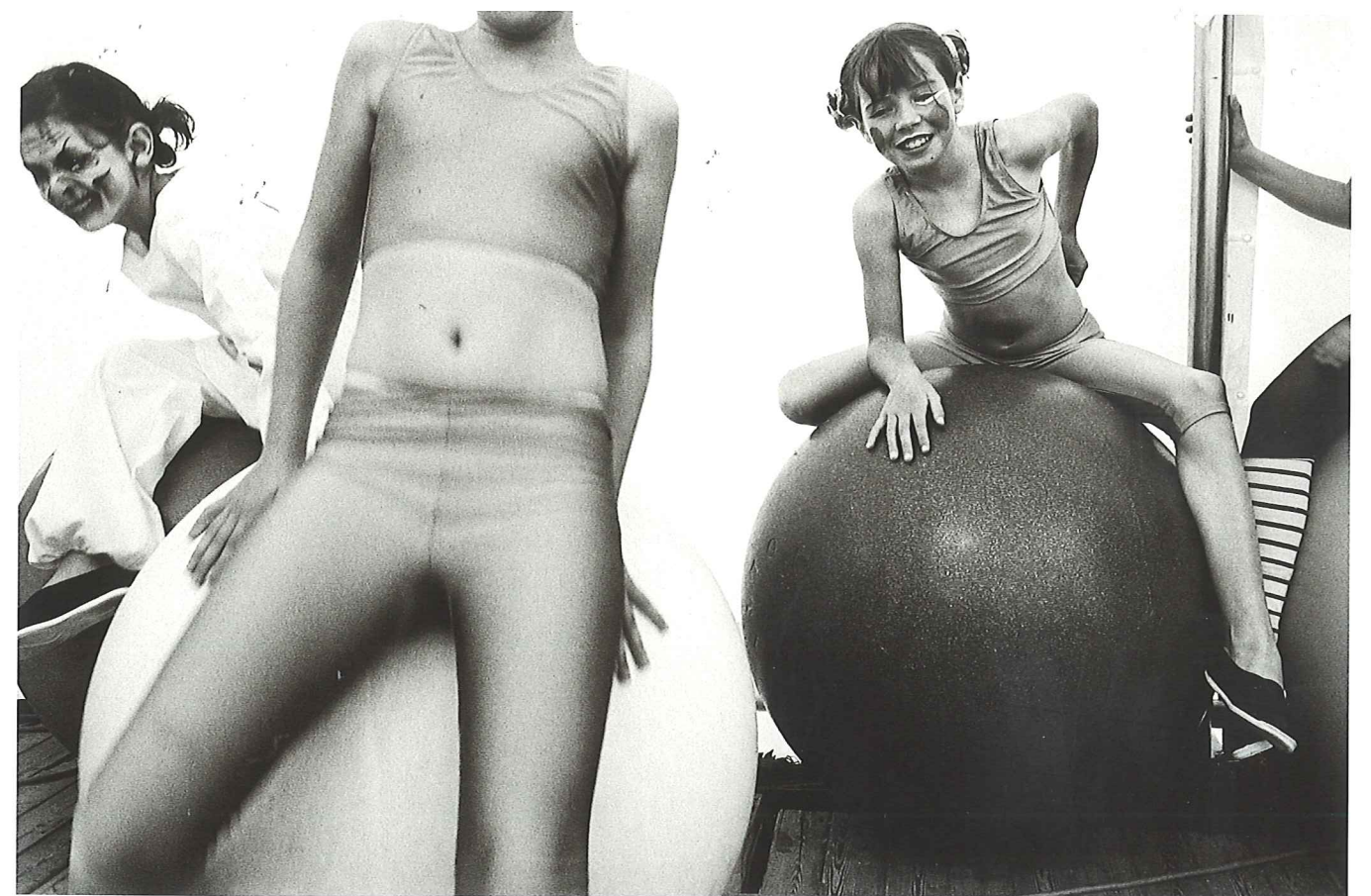
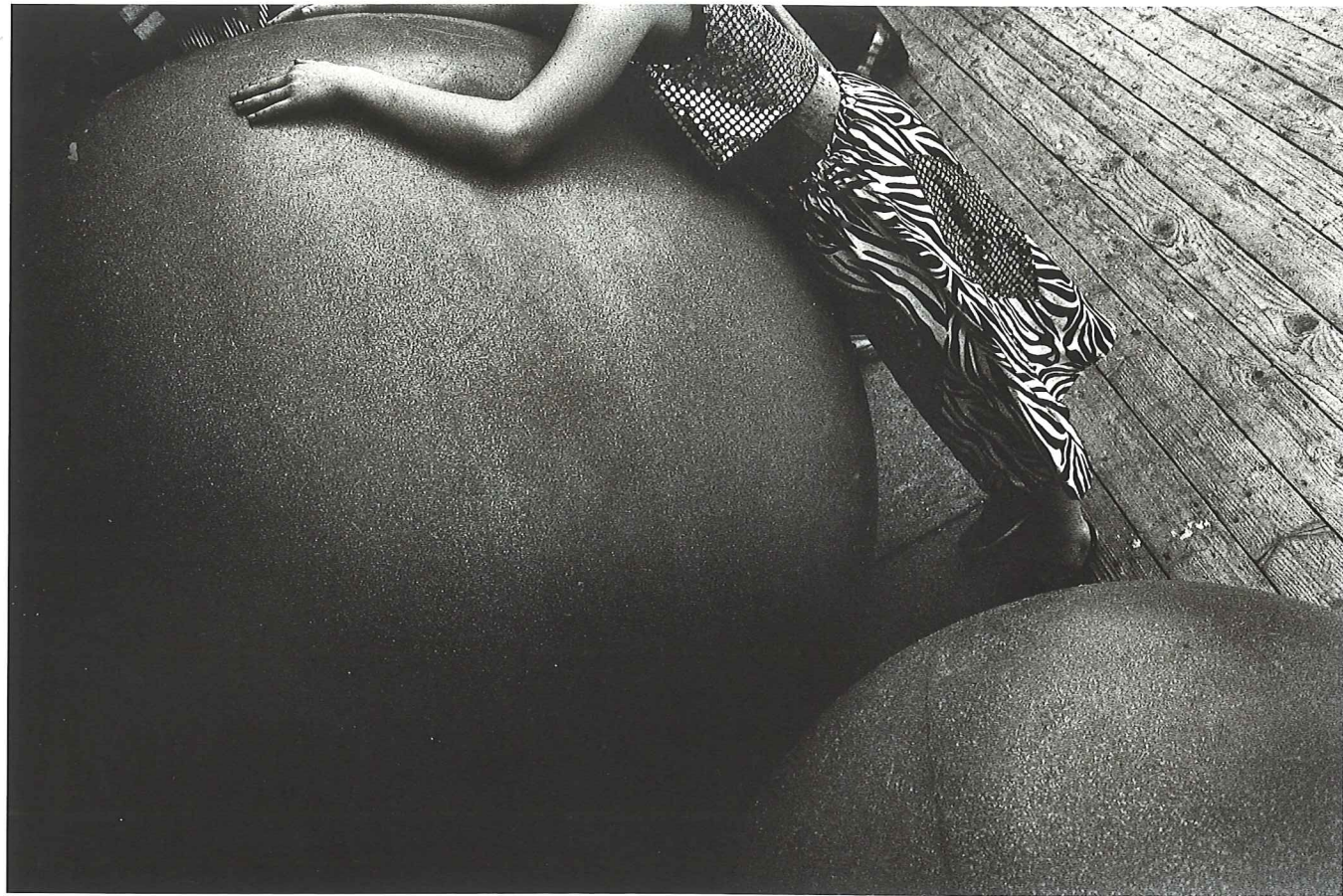
The tent for the Cadets' Circus in France is set up every year at the beginning of June. After that, the last preparations are made inside the big top



Practice, practice, and more practice: juggling, balancing and jumping are the basic disciplines of circus life, and are taught to all the youngsters at Cadets' Circus



Training, preparing and balancing – artists dust their hands with magnesium carbonate to improve their grip



Make-up, costume fittings and the last moments before the performance – the mood backstage is a mixture of concentration and excitement

Elephants, tigers, and sensational thrills. Nowadays, few circuses seem to get by without a variety of trained animals – the more exotic, the better. The French Cadets' Circus has nothing to do with wild tigers and performing elephants, hoops of fire and hair-raising thrills. France's first ever amateur circus was founded by André Regnault in Etréchy in 1927, and even today, with over 200 voluntary members aged between 7 and 79, it puts on two shows every year. French photographer, Sylvain Demange, was fascinated by the collaboration between young and old, the enjoyment in being part of circus life, and the high quality of the performances. The Cadets' Circus is inspired by the original idea of what a circus is supposed to be; it tells the story of a community, of artistic families and groups, and of physical dexterity.

Demange originally started taking pictures of Cadets' Circus back in 2009. While a few images were taken on stage, most of them reveal the hidden action backstage. Using a Leica R8 with Summicron-R 35mm f/2, as well as a Leica MP3 with Summilux-M 35 mm f/1.4 Asph, he captured lively instances of a rather displaced world, of life behind the scenes, rather than in the spotlight. At a first glance, they appear as unspectacular as the circus itself. At a second glance, however, they are testimony of a comfortably close-knit community, as well as the fruits of an intense collaboration. The photographer works amid magnesium powder and balancing acts, changing rooms and juggling tricks. He cleverly captures the small gestures and moments of intense concentration just before the artists enter the arena. "Right from the very beginning, it was my idea to cover life backstage. I preferred to focus on what the public can't see, what's going on behind the curtain."

Despite the colourful setting, Demange chose the simplicity of black & white photography. "I was afraid to get lost in all these colours, and I wanted the focus to be on the people themselves, the expressions of their bodies, their concentration and their feelings. Colour would have been a distraction," he explains. The 31 year-old Demange is an autodidact; yet his images reveal great passion, a keen sense for the perfect moment and a calm hand. Using Fujifilm Neopan 1.600 ASA, he takes all his pictures without a tripod, at times setting the exposure at 1/8 of a second (1.4 aperture). While some pictures express a certain melancholy, the whole series reveals an isolated community, showing a unique form of solidarity and common experience: it tells a story of child-like joy and happy excitement. "It's about childhood, about work, about willpower, and about time given voluntarily. It's all about a circus." KATRIN ULLMANN

Sylvain Demange: 'Cadets Coulisses'. December 1–31, Leica Galerie Solms, Germany; www.leica-camera.com, www.sylvaindemange.com

Intense concentration under the spotlight:
a trapeze artist just before her performance

