

## ***Mirrors, Circles and Sunshine*** **Annemie Augustijns**

The 1969 cover image of a parabolic mirror in the magazine *Science & Vie* was the starting point of a tour through the Pyrenees and Belgium, during which Annemie Augustijns engaged in a dialogue with the sun, with the power of solar energy and with the magic of mirrors. The result of this conversation can be seen from November 4th onwards at the exhibition 'Mirrors, Circles and Sunshine' at valerie\_traan Gallery in Antwerp.

What do we seek at the focal point of nine thousand mirrors facing the sun? It is a rhetorical question with which Annemie Augustijns appropriates a playing field in order to put the heaviness of science in a different light. She does this in a rather quirky way; her photographs are not simply the documentation of a few scientific solar ovens. Annemie Augustijns conducts her own experiments, working with parabolic mirrors she cobbled together herself. Full of wonder about the optical workings of the solar furnace, she investigates the impact of captured solar rays on the material world by capturing the fleeting images that emerge from the interplay of light and matter. Annemie Augustijns explores the limits of what the mirror shows: the mirror is not merely a reflection of the world; by using a different visual language, it is both concretely and metaphorically an instrument to distort and (re)shape the world.

Capturing the 'spirit of things' - and at this exhibition this happens through mirrors, circles and sunshine - is what is at stake in Annemie Augustijns' oeuvre. An oeuvre she does not photograph as a search for truth, but rather as the creation of her own little world that emerges as a shadow side of a reality driven by science and progress. A shadow side that brings light to the darkness and shows us - as Maurice Merleau-Ponty once wrote - 'how the naive image of the world is included in the reflected image and how it is transcended in it.'

David Peleman (lecturer in architecture & urban planning, University of Luxembourg)  
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<sup>1</sup> A parabolic mirror is a circular mirror that, in cross-section, has the shape of a parabola. This parabolic shape has the ability to reflect waves and radiation that fall on the mirror toward a single focal point. A parabolic mirror allows for the generation of a significant amount of heat energy in an ecological way. They are used in scientific experiments, and in a smaller form, they provide a sustainable alternative to the traditional cooking stove.