

Lucciole, a duo show with works by Edith Bories (F, °1984, lives and works in Brussels) and Liesbet Gruppings (B, °1984, lives and works in Antwerp), presents a poetic investigation into the unpredictable nature and precarious visibility of photographic images. Focusing on the ephemeral or accidental traces that are inscribed upon light-sensitive materials, both artists engage with the vicissitudes of photochemical processes to reveal phenomena that otherwise remain obscured. Working against the apparatus or embracing the technical disruptions it engenders, Bories and Gruppings elaborate an aesthetic of the incident that proves photography is a dynamic force of nature which can never be fully controlled. Through experiments with after-images, intermediate images and accidental images, Bories and Gruppings explore the actions and procedures inherent to photography from new angles. Marked by abstract streaks, colour shifts, light specks and optical defects, their subtle works are characterized by an ethereal, almost otherworldly radiance, yet also show the unmistakable imprints of their tangible origins. The material conditions of the film, the emulsion and the (photographic) paper – texture, gloss, density, ... - intermingle with the diaphanous qualities of the motives depicted (water vapour, colour field, sunspot). The recording process itself permeates the image to such an extent that it becomes unclear whether what we see reflects a natural phenomenon or has been created by the technology of the apparatus. The more photography folds back on its own conditions, the less the medium conforms to the human gaze. And the harder it becomes to determine where the representation ends and the technical noise begins. Appearance and disappearance are therefore dialectically linked in Bories' and Gruppings' practice. Working on the fringes of photography, both artists seek out the conditions and methods that simultaneously promote and prevent the coming-into-being of images.

Accidental or experimental light recordings often expose what normally remains latent in the apparent transparency of the photographic medium. Looking at an unimpaired representational image, we tend to forget about the existence of its substance and mediation (film base, sensitive layer, paper); we look through them and see only what is depicted. However, when something goes wrong (a water-damaged film, a tear in the (photographic) paper, dust particles on the emulsion), the basic components disrupt the legibility of the image. 'The accident highlights a quality in a thing that had been masked by another of its more prominent qualities when functioning properly,'¹ Paul Valéry writes. Even when the photographic apparatus works as it should, the possibility of a fault in the system can never be completely ruled out. This potential to fail, which is always and implicitly present in its materials and processes, is therefore an essential property of photography. Paul Virilio terms this the "original accident"² that accompanies every technology from its inception. Each technical process causes specific accidents through its own workings. The invention of the car, Virilio argues, implies the creation of the car collision. The development of the aeroplane entails the emergence of the plane crash. The discovery of photography leads to the tumbling into the sea of Bories' camera (*Film Accidents*), the printing glitches in Gruppings' *Sun (error)* and the flaring of a sheet film due to overexposure (*Blanca*). Such accidents are not merely inflicted upon photography by external factors, they are originally embedded in the medium. Virilio therefore proposes to consider both the progress of a technique and the corresponding history of its failures, malfunctions and breakdowns; to sketch an alternative story of photography from the perspective of its disruptions. And that is exactly what Bories and Gruppings tend to do. Perhaps they also favour certain forms of photographic incidents because they are on the verge of disappearing altogether. Working with analogue film has nearly become media-archaeology in this digital day and age. Obsolete and outdated, as are the typical mishaps associated with it. Novel photographic techniques provoke failures that manifest themselves in different ways. In this sense, too, both artists are developing a very personal catalogue of the photographic image.

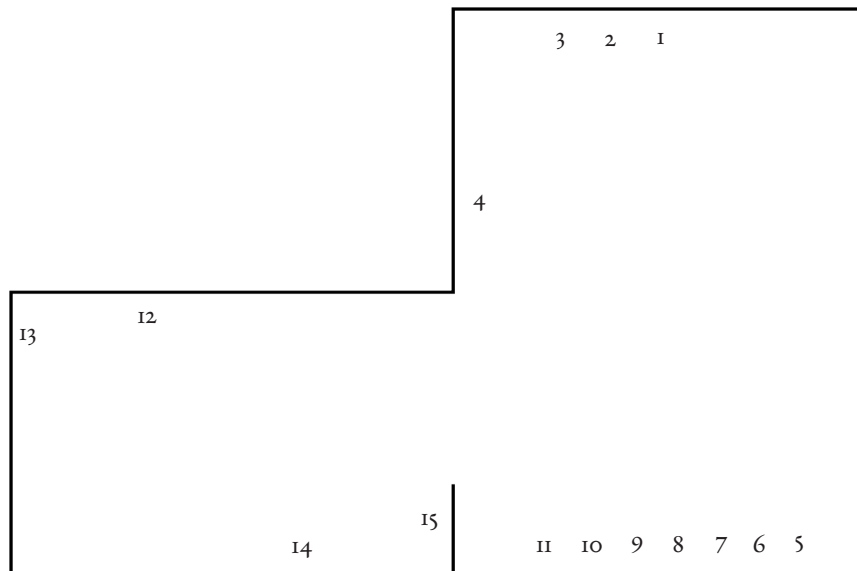
The title *Lucciole* is derived from Georges Didi-Huberman's essay *The Survival of the Fireflies*³, in which he turns to the image of the firefly as a metaphor for signs of resistance. In a poetic appeal, the author presses the unwavering importance of images that resist the pressure of the consumerist society and offer an alternative to commodified infotainment. Not the blinding spotlights of flashy spectacles but the wandering, nocturnal glimmer of fireflies, the *lucciole*, deserves our attention. For Didi-Huberman, an image is fleeting, fragile, erratic and uncertain by nature. Like the elusive, flickery lights of the *lucciole*, it can quietly live on and flare back up, in a new configuration, at a later point. Such firefly-images, as Didi-Huberman coins them, provide a much-needed antidote by appealing to our senses and thought processes in unexpected ways. Bories and Gruppings create firefly-images that are rooted in their own fragility and impermanence. Stemming from an unruly sense of wonder, these resistant apparitions of light encourage us to question our own ideas about what photography may mean and entail. This way, new trains of thought unfold to reflect with and on images.

Dominique Somers, April 2025.

1 Paul Valéry, *Cahiers*, ed. Judith Robinson, vol. 2, Parijs: Gallimard, 1973, p. 229.

2 Paul Virilio, *The Original Accident*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007.

3 Georges Didi-Huberman, *The Survival of the Fireflies*, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2018



- 1 *Blanca (4)*, 2024
Liesbet Gruppung
4 x 5 inch fujichrome, cardboard, maple-frame, art glass
43 x 33 x 2,8 cm
unique
- 2 *Blanca (3)*, 2024
Liesbet Gruppung
4 x 5 inch fujichrome, cardboard, maple-frame, art glass
43 x 33 x 2,8 cm
unique
- 3 *Blanca (2)*, 2024
Liesbet Gruppung
4 x 5 inch fujichrome, cardboard, maple-frame, art glass
43 x 33 x 2,8 cm
unique
- 4 *Sun (error)*, 2012, 2025
Liesbet Gruppung
pigment print, photo rag baryta, dibond, wood
147 x 110 x 20 cm
unique
- 5 *Film Accident*, 2025
Edith Bories
soft pastel on paper
50 x 36 cm
unique
- 6 *Film Accident*, 2025
Edith Bories
soft pastel on paper
50 x 36 cm
unique
- 7 *Film Accident*, 2025
Edith Bories
soft pastel on paper
50 x 36 cm
unique
- 8 *Film Accident*, 2025
Edith Bories
soft pastel on paper
50 x 36 cm
unique
- 9 *Film Accident*, 2025
Edith Bories
soft pastel on paper
50 x 36 cm
unique
- 10 *Film Accident*, 2025
Edith Bories
soft pastel on paper
50 x 36 cm
unique
- 11 *Film Accident*, 2025
Edith Bories
soft pastel on paper
50 x 36 cm
unique
- 12 *Film Accident*, 2025
Edith Bories
soft pastel on paper
50 x 36 cm
unique
- 13 *Blanca Mirador*, 2024
Liesbet Gruppung
pigment print, baryta prestige, dibond, meranti
18,5 x 14,5 x 6 cm
unique
- 14 *Untitled (Puy-de-Dôme)*, 2017, 2025
Liesbet Gruppung
pigment print, arches mounted on aluminium
100 x 80 x 2 cm
1 + 1 A.P.
- 15 *Luciole*, 2025
Edith Bories
pigment on paper mounted on dibond, metal frame
29 x 40 x 2 cm
unique