



PICTO Benelux

<http://www.picto.info/>

OPERATING CHARTER

PICTO Benelux brings together photographers from the Benelux and neighbouring areas, interested in historic photographic techniques corresponding to their artistic sensitivity, and wishing to share research, successes as well as failures, and to involve themselves in joint projects.

The “PICTO Meetings” provide the practical environment for these activities.

The life and correct working of the group implies a clear definition of its objectives, their communication to all members, and their acceptance by them. The current charter therefore defines the group's philosophy and fundamental principles, and describes the way it functions.

I - GLOBAL OBJECTIVE

The “PICTO Meetings” are a group of people considering photography as a means of artistic expression, having a specific interest in old photographic processes, their language and codes.

It is a collective, i.e. a platform grouping participants with their own sensitivity, personality and know-how, which aims at organizing everyone's input into an initiative where individual purposes are interconnected under a shared one, firmly believing that an identity can emanate from the participants' individual visions and respective interests.

The ambition of this movement is to provide an environment for training and exchange, solidarity and mutual aid, for true creation rather than simple execution of techniques – herein inspired by the philosophy of “Compagnonnage”, the ancient and well known French association of travelling companions.

II- GROUP DYNAMICS

The essence of a collective is participation in a joint working, a constructed and shared aggregate. This requires without any doubt confidence – in oneself and in the other. Equally important is respect for each one's opinions and differences. This implies that each participant drops his prejudices about the other as well as about himself.

The projects' development process is collegial.

It parts from a static knowledge distribution/acquisition relationship between organizers and “students” for reciprocal emulation dynamics where everybody is on equal footing. All participants have some specific know-how and qualities which they put at the disposal of the community.

In order to stay as near as possible to this “community”, concept, there will not be any “honorary” functions or titles, the only existing function being the necessary coordination and administrative management. There will not be any hierarchically structured members' categories either.

All decisions affecting the life and organization of the group will be made after consultation, striving for a majority agreement in such matters as member fees, budget, activities... Such consultation will be taken care of by the administrative coordination, which will also keep the group's accounts available on first request.

The collective's budget is for working expenses and ordinary projects. The financing and execution of bigger projects will be submitted to prior discussion; their cost will be covered by contributions from the participants, which might be completed by a participation taken from the group's resources.

III – SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

A – Technical

The aim is to allow the participants to improve their skills in their favoured processes, and to initiate them to other little known – or unknown – processes.

This doesn't imply by any means that specific processes could be imposed, or an hierarchy defined amongst them. The participant stays entirely free in his choices, in function of his personal approach to photography.

To achieve this:

- The “technical” parts of the meetings will focus on one given process (or family of processes)
- These meetings will be run as much as possible by volunteers demonstrating different aspects of a specific process.
- Interested people will be given the opportunity to briefly handle themselves the tools of the demonstrators; these meetings cannot be considered however as real workshops, where each participant would be able to experiment all phases of the process. There wouldn't be enough time nor equipment available for this.
- Specific workshops could be organized, but only if there is sufficient demand. It would also be necessary to find a suitable venue, the necessary funding (e.g. by opening them up to external participants who pay a registration fee) and volunteers to organise and run them.
- Members interested in contacts with other members outside the “plenary” meetings in order to put into practice the received information and advice, to help each other or to share costs, can inform the administrative manager who will circulate this information, and encourage such meetings. It has to be understood however that the most experimented members of the collective will be unable to attend in person all those meetings. They deserve to have also a private life..

B – Artistical

Photography is not only a matter of technique. Its aim is not only to create an image, but mainly to transmit an emotion. The photographer is above all a visual artist for whom technique is the tool to translate his initial seeing and to give a personality to his works.

The collective will strive to give sufficient attention to the artistic dimension, amongst other by:

- Encouraging members to present their concept of photography or other art-related considerations through personal portfolios, a lecture on a photographer they like or on historical or aesthetic aspects (pictorialism ..), which could lead to an exchange of views during the meeting.
- Encouraging the members to interpret individually one same image, using the technique of their choice in function of their personal sensitivity and explaining the reasons of their choice. The results could then be commented during a meeting.
- Circulating articles or books devoted to photography, its currents, its aesthetics..
This could be done by digitizing these works and making .pdf files available.
- Organizing group visits to museums, to a show featuring an artist, member or not of the collective, to a gallery... All members having information about such exhibits are kindly invited to transmit it to the administrative manager, who will circulate it to all members.

C – Practice

The technical and artistic training referred to under points A and B encourage of course the practice of the mentioned processes. Quite a lot of obstacles remain however: lack of experience, lack of space, lack of money...

The collective wants to encourage its members by:

- Centralizing information on product and equipment resources
- Organizing joint purchases in order to get the lowest prices possible
- Encouraging the sharing of costs such as those for possible hire of equipments or rooms and connecting people interested in this kind of cooperation.

D – Communication

Grouping artist having a joint project allows to highlight a common identity, to enhance visibility and credibility, not only of the group and the artistic options it advocates , but also of its individual members. It has to be pointed out however that the group is not intended for managing the professional or commercial interests of its members.

In this respect, the collective proposes:

- The organization of exhibitions and the participation to various events (local artists presentations). While exhibits are not the main objective of the collective, they remain an interesting part of its activities, a.o. for the visibility it provides. Attention has to be given to the fact that, while the participation to an artists collective can be particularly formative, it leads also quite easily and dangerously to fantasized ambitions. It therefore would be counterproductive to subordinate decisions related to practical arrangements to unanimous agreements. When necessary, an exhibit committee will therefore be formed, which will strive to the best possible communication wjth the group and to take into account as much as possible the feedback from the group, but whose decisions will be final. As these shows will be exhibits presenting a group, and not a juxtaposition of individual exhibitors, the works will be selected in function of their integration in the project, and not in function of their authors.
- Information at individual exhibitions. Members having a personal show will be kindly invited to display their belonging to the collective. Folders presenting the collective can be made available in the exhibitor's language of choice.
- Individual galleries on the Picto website for those interested.
- Participation in international events
- Cooperation with similar groups abroad. There are similar groups, devoted to to historical photographic processes in several neighbour countries. Picto will get in touch with them in order to introduce itself, to inform them about its activities and to propose a cooperation in joint projects whenever possible.

IV – APPROVAL

It is important for the success of the initiative to make sure that the members know the contents of this document, and that they confirm their agreement with it. Before acceptance of his application, each candidate will therefore kindly be requested to confirm that he is acquainted with it, and that he agrees to conform to it.

To confirm that you read and approved the above, please include the following code in your membership request: [PIBE026-en-OK]