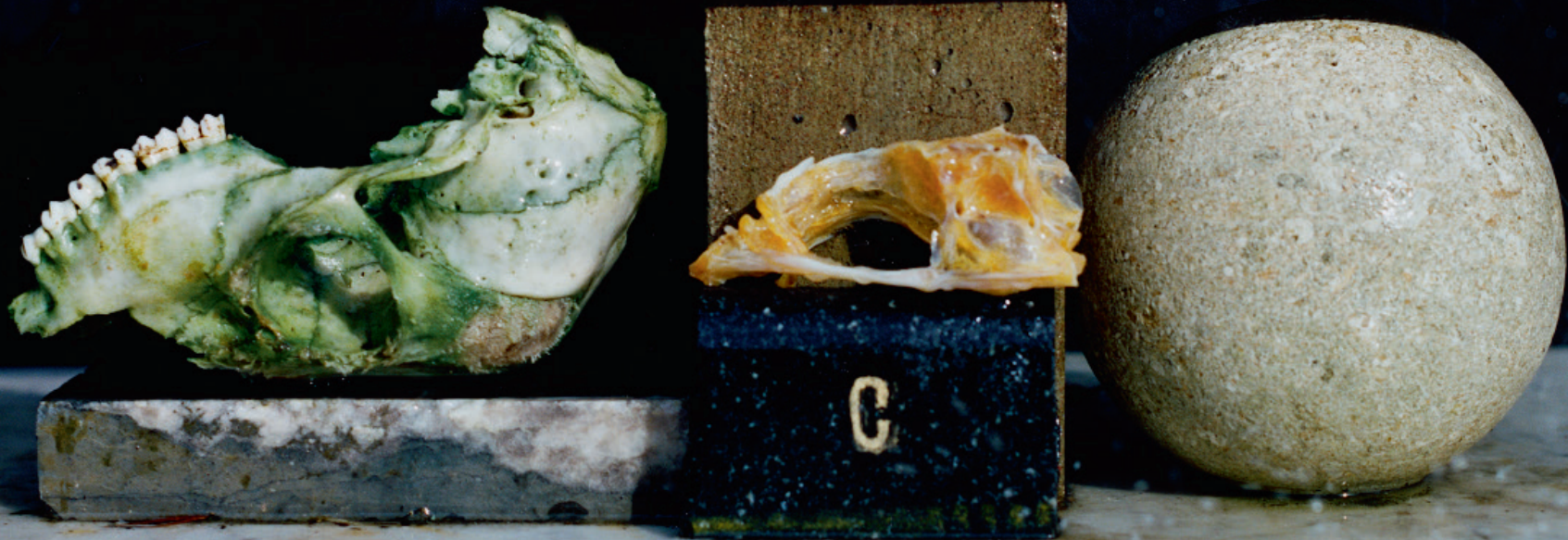


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H A N S G E D D A
— D E A D P L A T E S
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HANS GEDDA — DEAD PLATES (L — B . 0 0 1)

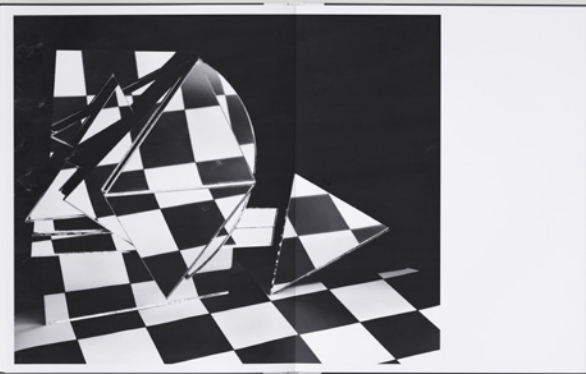
Hans Gedda is best known as a portrait photographer. Showing uncommon sensibility for people's character, he captures their faces at the very moment when the internal and external become one. They are always expressive and personal. Something special must have taken place between model and photographer right there and then. It could be described as a disarming combination of trust and concentration.

Another and less recognised side of Hans Gedda's work is his long-term interest in objects – or more precisely, still life. This well-established genre had one of its golden ages in Dutch painting of the Renaissance and Baroque. The motifs are at once strikingly sensual and saturated with symbolism that is more or less hidden. With a dazzling wealth of detail, they display the physical world's visible and tactile surface. They awaken desire, but also open an abyss. The pictures bear witness to the fragility of life and remind the observer of the transient nature of all things.

The genre has been particularly important to photography. For reasons both practical and aesthetical, the very first photographs ever made show objects arranged to please the eye. The lengthy exposure times made static subjects a necessity, but it was also about finding an association to an established art form. Ever since, still life has been a lively photographic tradition. There is in Hans Gedda's case, strong affinity, not least, to surrealism's imagery and use of objects. In his works, things are combined and charged with meanings and expressions that they don't have individually. Common objects

are transformed when they perform on the stage where the still life takes place. For example, the scissors in Hans Gedda's pictures are something completely different from those in the kitchen drawer. Frequently, the objects are characterised by an enigmatic charm and this is underlined further by unexpected encounters. Frequently, there is an interplay established between nature and culture. You could call his book a bestiary, but it is also reminiscent of a cabinet of curiosities. A collection of things, living and dead, that fascinate with their strangeness and beauty. These captivating characteristics may also be of the repulsive kind, which is often the case in these still lifes.

Hans Gedda is a photographer, however in this case the creative process begins with the arrangement of the objects. He literally constructs the pictures first and photographs them afterwards. Yet the objects aren't everything. Nor the combinations. An absolutely crucial aspect is the light. Hans Gedda reads and utilises its possibilities to conjure up structures and surfaces, create density and space. Recognisable from the portraits is his skill in making use of the format and creating a picture that, regardless of motif, captures and holds the interest of the viewer.



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