

# Mireille Kools

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## Biography:

I was born in The Netherlands but have lived in several different countries; The Netherlands, USA (Texas, Louisiana, California and Washington), Canada, Belgium, France, Germany and Switzerland. Each of these places have changed me and made me who I am. I take bits and pieces of each country, place and culture and add them together.

I received my first camera at age 7 and have been shooting ever since, first under the tutelage of my uncle, the photographer Hans Biezen, later with other photographers. I did seminars with Michael Gnade, Olga Kaloussi and Thomas Frösch in Düsseldorf, Germany. Here, in Washington, I've taken seminars with Ray Pfortner.

I received my education in different countries around the world and finished my International Baccalaureate in Brussels, Belgium. After high school I went on to study History at the University of Leiden, The Netherlands. During my studies I did an internship at the Novib publishing house and worked on the Vermeer exhibition in Delft. In my spare time I took video and film classes at Open Studio in Amsterdam. In 1995 I worked for the Dutch documentary filmmaker Willy Lindwer on the film The Fatal Dilemma. After moving to Germany, I started working at the International School of Düsseldorf, as the Art and Graphics and as a substitute teacher. All the Visual Arts have played a large role in my life until now but photography has really been my fascination, it is my way of discovering each new place.

I like to photograph subjects in such a way that they contain a sense of estrangement for the beholder. "I was born in The Netherlands but have spent my life living in different places. Being a newcomer often, I always want to get a feeling for the peculiarity of the area, some which may have gone unnoticed by locals. Photography forces me to become acquainted with my new location on an intimate level; it is my way of 'owning' a new place. Seeing a new location through my lens is exciting, enervating and surprising."

