MARCO MALJAARS

In previous editions of LEMAG we had the pleasure of presenting some of Marco Maljaars' outstanding work. Today we are privileged to present to you his 'Dutch Polder' series which won first place 5th Fine Art Photography Awards (FAPA)

Marco Maljaars lives in a small place called Velsen Noord in The Netherlands. He is a self-taught photographer. Since his teenage years he was addicted to photography and experimented with long exposure times with an analogue camera. Today he works with a digital camera. His main interests are seascapes and landscapes with a minimalistic approach.

2017 and 2018 third place winner of the Monochrome Awards. Second and third place winner with the ND Awards 2018. 2019 first place 5th Fine Art Photography Awards (FAPA) with my 'Dutch Polder' series.

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/marco_maljaars/
Flickr: https://www.flickr.com/photos/148104733@N06/
1x: https://1x.com/member/marco75

Marco Maljaars

Dutch Polder ^{series}

How the series started

Straight lines, emptiness, dikes and mills. That's the typical Dutch polder layout. A nice subject to create a series. So I started thinking on what I wanted to photograph but not going straight to the typical Dutch windmills. There is more and therefore I started to read some historical facts about how these polders were made.

During this process of scouting, reading I noticed the existence of a very typical polder. Inspired by google street view photos and the history of this particular area I decided to create the series about this polder called 'De Beemster'.

Dutch Polder: De Beemster

De Beemster is a polder and municipality in the Dutch province of Noord-Holland. The municipality has 9702 inhabitants and has an area of 72 km² (of which 2.8 km² of water). Typically for the Beemster are its trees on the ring dikes as can been seen in the series. Since 1999 this Polder is on the UNESCO World Heritage Site list.

The trees are the main subject, at the same time I wanted to express its emptiness, mood and beautiful landscape architecture you can find there. With post processing a surrealistic view was created with a peaceful mood by adjusting the lights and shadows in the images. The mood you can feel when you are standing there; in the wind and looking around you.

Marco Maljaars

The Farmhouse

The first photo created in this area was the farm house. Actually I found this spot for another reason. The road I was standing had a very nice repetitive pattern of trees on each side. Creating a tunnel effect. Standing on the intersection I noticed this farm house with the trees on the dike. Because of its white color it got my attention especially in combination with the trees on the dike.
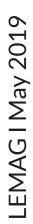
Marco Maljaars

The Sheep

After the farmhouse I noticed these sheep standing there in the landscape. Their white skin would be a good contrast in my black and white processing. They were a bit far away. However as these animals are so curious they came towards me. All were eating grass again but one was vigilant creating a nice effect in the photo.

Marco Maljaars

Behind the dike

As mentioned earlier I scout a lot on the computer, by using street view and Google Earth. This created the image called 'The Beemster' I found a spot were the ditch was perpendicular to the dike and trees. However I noticed also on the other side of the road a house behind the dike. I managed to photograph it with some risk, as this was a very busy road without a sidewalk. Big trucks passing me with 50 mile/hour.

Marco Maljaars

The cyclist

At this point I had four photos which were processed and ready for publication. However I wanted to create a fifth one and decided that it should be a cyclist or a stroller. I went back to the place where the 'The Sheep' was taken. It was windy, cold and this area is also very remote. It took 20 minutes before the cyclist appeared.

Technical details

In all cases a Lee soft medium ND0.6 was used to have balance between the sky and landscape. For those where a long shutter time was required a Lee Super Stopper (ND15) was used. My camera is a Canon 70D and use it a lot in combination with a Manfrotto tripod. I created my own shutter time table for my Super and Big stopper. The standard times of Lee are used but I added 50% exposure time to the Super Stopper and 25% to the Big Stopper. This helps me to have not underexposed images. It's easier to bring the blacks back without noise when it's a bit over exposed (ETTR).