



## François SCHUITEN

Selling Exhibition - *Variation on La Douce*

April 19th to May 6th 2012



To mark the release of “La Douce”, the first solo album by François Schuiten, Galerie Champaka presents an innovative approach. “Photo-drawings”, made in collaboration with Marie-Françoise Plissart, silkscreens enhanced by the artist, facsimile prints of three dream pages, and originals (nine new illustrations) are all variations on *The 12*, the steam locomotive at the heart of this new hymn to black and white.

### The “Photo-drawings”

The collaboration between Marie-Françoise Plissart and François Schuiten was punctuated by the album “*L’enfant penché*” and by a photographic exhibition in Brussels and Paris. In both cases, Schuiten intervened with the photos of Plissart. Produced in the traditional manner, these were relatively small. Since then, printing techniques in pigment inks have allowed large format prints to be produced on paper that allows the designer to intervene with even greater ease and inventiveness.

When the Gallery Champaka proposed the creation of eight “photo-drawings” in a large format (60 x 90 cms to 140 x 100 cms), the artists are enthusiastic. Each will be a single print. Marie-Françoise has researched in the archives of railway photography made at a time close to the last journey of the 12 train. Ideally, in places where the locomotive could have travelled. Made using the darkroom technique from large negatives, these shots offer a beautiful richness in their materials. From these emerge the splendid compositions of the website *Tour & Taxis* (July 1992), the *Residence Palace* (late 1995) and *Martini Tower* (February 1996). The latter, a lost symbol of urban modernity of the Fifties and Sixties, so fascinates the duo that they make three completely different variations. The later photograph of the *Germoir Bridge* (April 2007) follows the same system of iconic locations in Brussels. The chance to shoot the last “12” (January 2012), in its hangar in Leuven, was unmissable.

Each photo, conceived with care, leaves enough life to accommodate new points of tension generated by the intervention of François Schuiten. So many opportunities to see, in a magical moment, the past and present reunite.

### The Originals

François Schuiten made nine major illustrations unpublished in the album appearing from Casterman. They depict in action the locomotive which drives the narrative of “*La Douce*”. Among others with the mechanic-machinist Van Bel and/or with a wild girl, mute from birth, to whom the Old One passes on his knowledge of the railway.

### The Enhanced Prints

The enhanced print is an original creation in which the artist enhances a design previously reproduced by an artistic printing technique. Halfway between a very limited edition print and an original work, the enhanced print allows the artist to explore a new creative medium and the collector to acquire a unique work. François Schuiten has selected four iconic panels from “*La Douce*”, and completed the drawing in order to remove the text. Once the image is printed in four copies (numbered and signed) by screen printing (120 x 80 cm), he has enhanced each piece using grease pencils and white gouache.

### The Giant Pages

Consisting of 84 pages, “*La Douce*” is broken up by three sequences depicting the dreams of the mechanic-machinist, in search of his lost machine. These museum-quality pages are printed in an enlarged format (100 cm high) and in 4 numbered and signed copies. Each facsimile captures the material of the paper and the finesse of the draughtsmanship in India ink, in order to magnify Schuiten’s artistry in black and white.



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