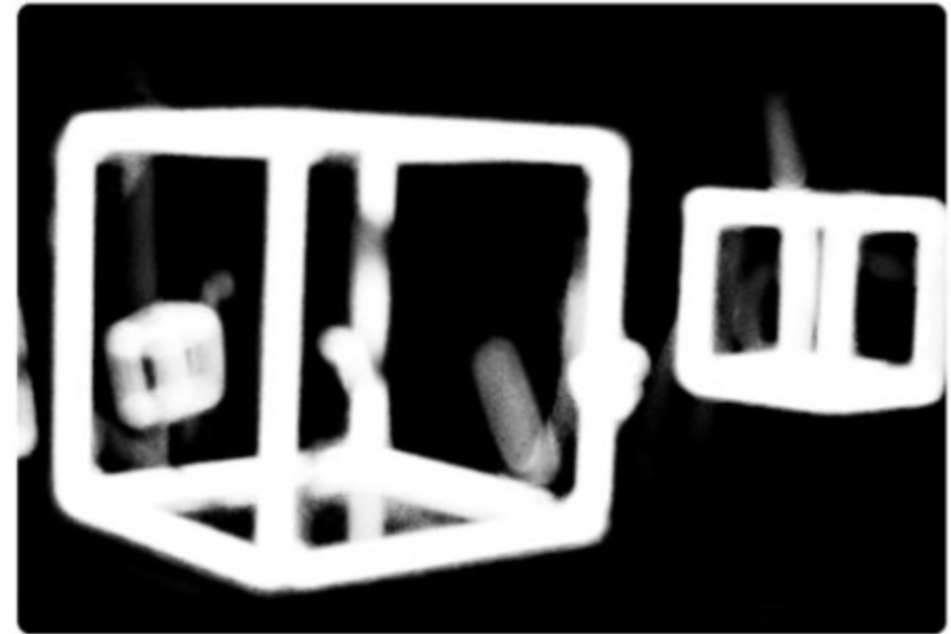


## EXTASIS

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🏷️ Tags: France, Questions and Answers, surrealism

*EXTASIS*, photo essay by [Souhayl A](#)

On a long stay in Australia, I wandered on the East coast and decided to stop for a while in a small village named Nimbin. It's an interesting place, particularly if you want to know more about the Aboriginal Culture of the Bundjalung. But since the seventies, Nimbin has also been known as the Australian capital of cannabis. The village is populated by many hippies organized in small communities. I became really interested in their way of life whilst spending time with them and enjoyed finding out about their new age ideas, especially the Permaculture projects they've built around Nimbin.

The day before my departure, during the Mardi-Gras festival, a couple of girls who were very "peace & love" offered a local delicacy named White Rabbit for me to try as a parting gift. At this point, I was far from suspecting that this delicious cake contained a mix of psychedelic mushrooms, ecstasy and mescaline!

Instead of giving any mystical revelation or putting me in the same empathic mood of people who were enjoying the festival, I sank into a terrible state; In short I suffered a very bad trip beyond reality, which I never want to repeat again!

"Extasis" was the word I couldn't stop screaming all night during my delirious nightmare... It is also a partial reconstruction of my bad trip, through brief flashes and memories, which has survived from the total memory black-out I suffered for days after this episode. ([Souhayl A](#))



## Q&A with Souhayl A

### Photography is...

Photography for me is a perfect suggestion tool, the most appropriate way to capture a special moment that will not happen again. I find it is also one of the most suitable means of expression at this strange age that we live, where people increasingly drop text in favor of an image, hence the growing interest for social networks. I would say that the illiterate of post-modern societies are not those who cannot read or write but those who cannot read an image. For example, nowadays with globalization, an emotionally charged picture with a humanistic approach is more likely to be universally understood and shared between people worldwide, as opposed to 10 readable articles that are undeniably limited into the confines of the local language in which they are written. The language of a photographic report is universal and transcends geographical space.

### Photography and writing...

Photography is by its nature a form of writing in itself. That said, the text often completes the picture as an introduction or a legend to give it more meaning or to guide the reader. I prefer to first look at the pictures and then read the accompanying text. I do not like to lock myself in a concept before I've made my own interpretation of the images I see. There are some images that do not require a written explanation, just the light captured by the camera.

Images can also be combined with text to give deeper meaning to the vision of the author, such as journalistic photo-reports that can be unintelligible without the presence of text.

### Who left the biggest impression on you?

I came to photography by accident, a story too long to tell here; let's say for a long time I had a phobia that one day I would lose my memory and no longer be able to transmit my souvenirs. From the moment I had the means and the time to travel, choosing to carry a camera with me was something obvious. So I am among those who practiced photography for a while before setting foot in a gallery or a museum dedicated to photography. It is only recently that I have endeavored to develop a vision of author essayist, and an interest in the work of other photographers through books and exhibitions.

Among the photographers whose work I studied and enjoyed, there are of course the classics such as Cartier Bresson, Robert Doisneau, Brassai, Ronis... and all the French humanist movement of the last century, who for me are to photography what Balzac, Flaubert and Dostoevsky are to literature.

In terms of contemporary photographers, I am following closely the works of great photographers like Sebastiao Salgado, Albert Watson, Gregory Colbert and some others...

### Is there anything else you'd like to share with the readers?

I like your magazine format; I just ordered 3 copies for cheap and was surprised at the print quality and diversity of the subjects discussed in the reviews! In this crisis period for the media sector, it is always good to support magazines dedicated to photography such as yours. For those who are interested in a new kind of humanist approach to photography, they can see my work on [my website](#) or follow me on my [instagram account](#).











