

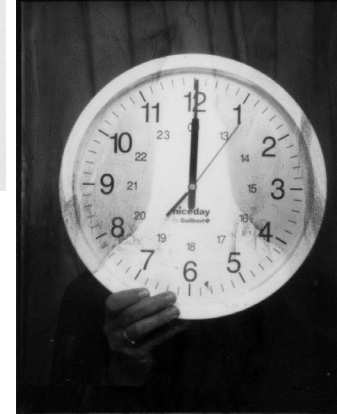
THE ANALOGUE PHOTOBOOTH BY AUTOFOTO

I am a real-life time machine. Inside me, you will experience a sequence of events that hasn't changed much in nearly a century. Draw my pleated curtain, spin my seat to adjust its height and sit. My first flash usually comes by surprise, illuminating you as it pops with a warm heat you can feel on your skin. Next, the lull of anticipation between each flash as you decide your next pose in the reflection of my dark glass. I can see you there, but flipped the other way around, as my mirror transfers your image directly to paper. And then you must wait, as a series of mechanisms pull into motion in complete darkness, clicking and humming inside my belly. My arms dip and dunk the paper into warm photographic baths, which develop, reverse and rinse the image. After four minutes, a wet shiny photographic strip slides out to be collected outside in the daylight.

Unlike other photographers, I give you the power to create your image within the privacy of my space. I don't judge. I am consistent and I tell the truth. I've likely made a portrait of someone in your family: an identity photograph or a more playful memento. For example, your young grandmother in her Sunday best; your father in his teenage rebellion; and you, with your newborn baby. If you place these photos together, you'll see that any of these images could have been made yesterday – only the clues of a hairstyle or a jacket collar will reveal their era. Some say this produces a deep connection between people across generations. Some say this is my magic. I say that I transform everything into my kind of time and space, simply because this is my design. →

OPPOSITE: AUTOFOTO PHOTOBOOTH, HACKNEY, LONDON, 2022





My photo strips are robust, material things. They are found on fridges, leaning atop mantelpieces, at the bottom of handbags, folded in wallets or marking a page inside a book. They can get wet, are hard to tear, rarely fade, and have no age or date stamp. I have developed so many images in my lifetime and each of them is unique – no duplicates, no negatives, no copies. I hear that a person can now carry 15,000 photographs in their pocket. That’s a lot of pictures.

There used to be many like me, but only a few of us survive today. It takes a labour of love to keep me going. Like an old car, I need tinkering with to run smoothly and prevent my joints seizing up. Still, people continue to visit me and I continue to bear witness to their lives. The moments of joy. Tearful goodbyes. Friendships old and new. Growing families. Changing identities. New generations of humans, all transformed into four-frames of black, white and grey. I don’t know how long I’ll keep going, but I do know my images will continue to be in the world for years to come, perhaps even for centuries. ■



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: ANATOL JOSEPHO, 1927; 'TIME BETWEEN FLASHES', CORRIN QUINN, 1921; AUTOFOTO PHOTOBOOTH DELIVERY SLOT; AUTOFOTO PHOTOBOOTH ROTATIONAL STOOL
OPPOSITE: AUTOFOTO FAMILY PHOTOSTRIP, 2021