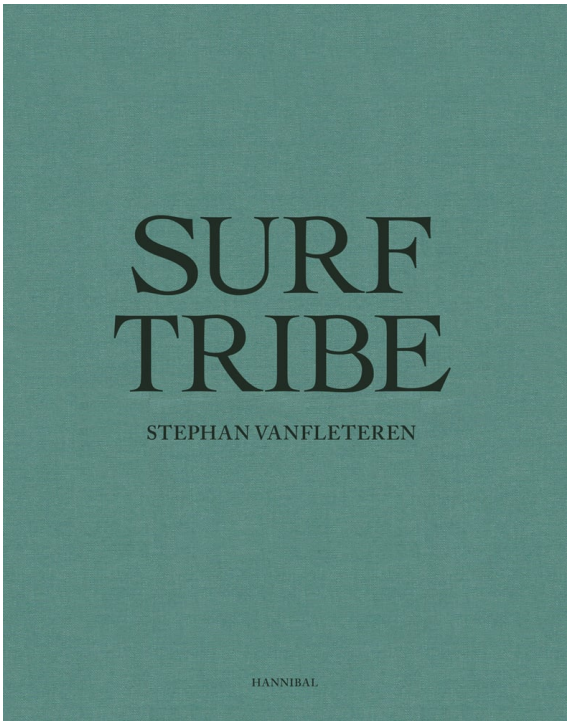
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Surf Tribe

Stephan Vanfleteren

ISBN	9789492677365
Publisher	Hannibal Books
Binding	Hardback
Territory	USA & Canada
Size	8.66 in x 11.22 in
Pages	400 Pages
Illustrations	300 b&w
Price	$85.00

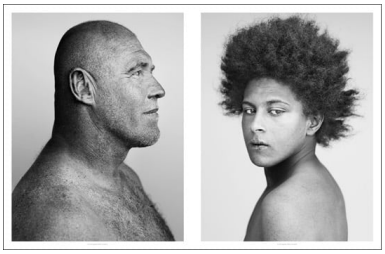
- An incomparable new photo book about the international surf culture by Stephan Vanfleteren
- Showcases captivating portraits of some of the world's surf icons

With *Surf Tribe*, photographer Stephan Vanfleteren shows that there is far more to surf culture than just sport and competition. Surfing is also about a deep admiration and respect for the ocean, as well as the feeling of insignificance when confronted with the forces of nature. Surfers use the waves for fun, but also to forget and to battle, both with others and with themselves. Vanfleteren looks beyond the traditional borders of the United States and Australia and searches the globe for people who live in places where sea and land meet. He documents a fluid community, with nature as its sole leader. He has sought out young talent, living icons, and old legends, both competitive and free surfers. The photographs here are serene black and white portraits in Vanfleteren's well-known, haunting style; as always, he reaches below the surface and goes to the core of his subjects. Included, amongst many others, are Kelly Slater, Gerry Lopez, John Florence, Mickey Munoz, Filipe Toledo and Stephanie Gilmore. Surfer, journalist, and actor Gerry Lopez has contributed the Foreword. *Surf Tribe* has been exhibited in Knokke-Heist (Belgium), Kunsthal Rotterdam (Netherlands), Gallery Kahmann Amsterdam (Netherlands). The next exhibition will be in June 2019 in France. If you are interested in the stories behind the book, go to: www.surftribe.be

Stephan Vanfleteren (°1969) is one of Belgium's most renowned photographers. Among the general public, he is mainly celebrated for his penetrating black and white portraits of famous and anonymous people. However, his oeuvre is much more diverse than that. Starting his career as a press photographer, Vanfleteren made captivating photo reports about the events that dominated the news. Later on, he began to elaborate a variation of themes in extended photo reportages, going from storefront façades to a journey along the mythical Atlantic Wall. For his most recent work, Vanfleteren withdrew into his studio to focus on his own version of classic themes such as nude portraits and still life photography. In the latter, entitled Nature Morte, he portrayed in color dead animals that he found near his home. Where most of his images are very time phased, this series marks an evolution in Vanfleteren's work towards a more timeless approach and subject matter. Whether it concerns his journalistic, documentary or artistic photographic projects. Vanfleteren always remains true to his characteristic style and esthetic. A pallet of black and whites, the use of sharp contrasts and well-defined details is the trademark that he developed throughout the years. Also, his recent color work shows his impressibility, combined with his craftsmanship, his involvement with the subject which can be landscape, still life, portrait or nude. His expansive personal stories and reflections of encounters are mesmerizing excursions of a photographer who feels as much a witness as an accomplice. A melancholic soul hides in the sensitive photographer. **Stephan Vanfleteren** received in August 2021 a Doctor Honoris Causa from the VUB - Brussels University, Belgium. His latest project is 'Transcripts of a Sea', on view at the Museum of Fine Arts, Ghent, Belgium until 2026.







Published 25th May 2018