

Birgitte Aarestrup @ Architectural Foundation Gallery

Journey through Europe: Enchanting Architecture

By ERIN J. SMITH / CASA

WHETHER CAPTURING THE SIMPLE LIFESTYLE of old Europe or documenting life at the edge of the Arctic, photographer and world traveler Birgitte Aarestrup reminds us that there is great beauty in simplicity. *Journey through Europe: Enchanting Architecture*, a collection of 25 of Aarestrup's architectural photographs, will be on display at the Architectural Foundation Gallery from January 14th



Paris by Birgitte Aarestrup

through February 25th. An opening reception with the artist will be held on Friday, January 14th from 5 to 7pm. Aarestrup is also celebrating the release of her new book *8 Seasons Above the Arctic Circle*, which tells the story of the indigenous people of Sweden known as the Sámi, who still migrate with the reindeer across the Arctic landscape.

"So few people know the Sámi exist," wrote Aarestrup. "My hope is to bridge distinct cultures, to value their uniqueness, and to contribute to a photographic preservation of their legacy for future generations."

Aarestrup grew up in a suburb in Copenhagen, Denmark. Although her mother was a talented seamstress and fashion designer, Aarestrup had little interest in the creative arts as a child. Instead Aarestrup spent her days out of doors or participating in sports. "It was a totally different world," she said. "We were free to take our bikes anywhere or go skating on the lake. Not like today, where we walk every step our children take. It was an innocent and wonderful world." Her

adventurous spirit and fascination with the world's cultures took Aarestrup abroad to study languages. She spent a year at the Sorbonne in Paris and studied in Barcelona and Austria as well.

Aarestrup was given her first camera, a Hasselblad, by her husband in 1964 before the couple set out to travel. Having worked as an assistant to Danish photographer Jörn Freddie, Aarestrup was ready to begin experimenting on her own. "Starting in with photography on my own rather than going to school allowed me to create my own artistic path. I never knew

what was not possible," she said. "I'm not a technician. My photographs are taken the moment I see it is beautiful." After raising her three sons in rural Sweden, Aarestrup and her family relocated to Santa Barbara in 1983. Her work has been shown in various European magazines and her photographs are part of the permanent Santa Barbara Museum of Art collection. In addition to her photography, Aarestrup has authored several books, including *Windflowers* and most recently, *8 Seasons Above the Arctic Circle*.



Birgitte Aarestrup



Portugal 13 by Birgitte Aarestrup

"I love when I see a wonderful face or the feeling I get when I am standing in nature. I love the silence and the solitude," said Aarestrup, who has remained faithful to traditional methods instead of moving to digital photography. "The moment I feel joy in my eye, I take the picture. Film captures that true moment that can't be recreated."

Architectural Foundation Gallery is located at 229 East Victoria Street, entrance on Garden Street. For more information, call 965-6307 or visit www.afsb.org.