



## **Max Oetfli: Visible Evidence**

### **Photographs 1965–1975**

#### **Self-Guiding Worksheet**

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*Self (1)*, 1973, gelatin silver print, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, gift of Max Oetfli, through the Auckland Art Gallery Foundation, 2018

**AUCKLAND**  
**ART GALLERY**  
**TOI OTAMAKI**

# Welcome to the black-and-white world of Max Oettli!

Max Oettli was born in Switzerland and moved to Aotearoa New Zealand with his family in 1956. Max Oettli is an important artist in Aotearoa who helped shift the way people think about photography with his spontaneous approach and point of view.

As you can see in the pictures, Oettli took photographs at all hours of the night and day, of everyday people, streets, and objects. He wanted to capture these moments because they tell interesting stories about the world around us.



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*Cabbage Tree*, 1972, gelatin silver print, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, gift of Max Oettli, through the Auckland Art Gallery Foundation, 2018

Explore the exhibition space.  
Take your time to **look** at each photo.  
Use your all your **SENSES** to enjoy this  
exhibition. **Imagine...**

What does the huge puddle in the backyard **LOOK** like?



What does the rustling of the trees in the park **SOUND** like?



What does the freshly caught fish **SMELL** like?



What does the meat patty from the sneaky night snack **TASTE** like?



What might the cold metal bars in the playground **FEEL** like to **TOUCH**?



*Lucas and Jean René Oetli, Windisch, 1989, gelatin silver print, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, gift of Max Oetli, through the Auckland Art Gallery Foundation, 2018*



*Fish shop (2), Ponsonby, 1973, gelatin silver print, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, gift of Max Oetli, through the Auckland Art Gallery Foundation, 2018*

1. **Choose a photo** and **look closely**. What can you see?

**Write or draw** at least 5 things you see – e.g., objects, people, places.

Photograph title: \_\_\_\_\_

Year made: \_\_\_\_\_



2. **Find a photo** with people in it.

Cover your ears with your hands and **imagine** the voices in this photo. What do you think they are saying to each other?

**Share your thoughts** with a friend.



3. **Choose a photo** that you really like. What do you like about it?  
Does it remind you of anything?

**Make a sketch** of the photo in this box, noticing details like the areas of light and shadow and the different, objects, faces and expressions.



With a friend, **share** what you noticed and sketched.  
**Talk** about why you like the photo.



4. **Find** the photo *Girl Licking Escalator*, 1971.

Oetfli took this photo quickly in a shop on Queen Street in Auckland.

Why do you think the little girl is licking the escalator?

**Share your thoughts** with a friend.



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*Girl Licking Escalator*, 1971, gelatin silver print, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, gift of Max Oetfli, through the Auckland Art Gallery Foundation, 2018

**Write** down 3 words to describe how it might feel to **TOUCH** and another 3 words to describe how it might **TASTE!**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. **Look** at the size of Oettli's photographs. What do they remind you of? Why do you think he made them to be quite small? How do they affect how you look at them?

**Share your thoughts** with a friend.



6. Our world is full of colour, but Oettli captured his world in black and white. What does the world around us look and feel like when colours are taken away? Where else do we see black and white pictures? Why do you think Oettli chose to work in black and white?

**Write** down your thoughts:



You are a photographer! What would you like to photograph and why?  
What kind of stories do you want to tell?

**Write** a list of ideas:





# Follow-up activity

We hope you enjoyed learning about Max Oetli and his photographs. Now it's your turn to **take some photos!**

1. **Borrow a camera or phone** to take some photographs. Remember to ask adults for their permission first!
2. **Choose an indoor space or go for a walk outside** with someone in your whānau to take your photographs.
3. **Be spontaneous** – capture the moments!

Mix up the words below to come up with ideas of what you could photograph. Have fun and experiment!

**Spaces: where  
you can take your  
photographs**

**Verbs: how you can  
move through the  
space**

**Times: when you  
can take your  
photographs**

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Bus stop

Walking

Early morning

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Local park

Running

Morning tea

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Busy street

Spinning

Midday

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School

Upside down

Afternoon

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Home

Dancing

Night

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**Example:**

I'm going to take a photo at the bus stop while I'm dancing in the early morning.

**Share** your photos with families, friends, or teachers!  
Ask them what they think and what they would name the photograph.

**Share** your photo (and its title!) with the Gallery:  
[education@aucklandartgallery.com](mailto:education@aucklandartgallery.com)

## Have fun!



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*Fish shop (2)*, Ponsonby, 1973, gelatin silver print,  
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, gift of Max Oetli,  
through the Auckland Art Gallery Foundation, 2018