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Astrid Verhoef - The Netherlands (page 294-295)

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With her extraordinary series **Urbanite**, Dutch photographer Astrid Verhoef combines civilisation with wild landscapes. As a result, we see unusual and playful scenes, in which she plays the role of the urbanite or businesswoman. *Urbanite 15 (bottom left)* shows her standing in the middle of a snow patch, covering her face with her hands. It seems as if she doesn't want to face the lush landscape around her.

In *Urbanite 04 (above)* the protagonist is dragging a bright red suitcase up a stony hill covered with thorn bushes. As a businesswoman, accordingly dressed and wearing high heels, her journey through the inhospitable landscape lies heavy on her shoulders, which becomes clear in the 33 stages shown in this one image. Even though the enterprise seems kind of absurd, we see her reaching the top and glancing into the distance. The image can be seen as a symbol of female endurance, as she proudly overcomes all obstacles, and reaches her goal with perseverance.

The synchronicity enhances the impressive humorous aspect of the composition, which is pointed out by the zeal of the figure and the bright colour of the suitcase. In *Urbanite 02 (bottom right)* the falling businesswoman against the wide horizon of the desert is just as out of place. The artist further stresses the situation by the invasion of the computer mice rushing towards her. Verhoef surprises the viewer again with her unusual, different and ravishing arrangements.

