Photobooks
by Sebastian Hau

Francis Rocard,
Alfred S. McEwen,
Xavier Barral
Mars, a Photographic
Exploration

Culled from images taken by a NASA satellite, artist Sébastien Girard, publisher Xavier Barral and astrophysicist Francis Rocard have created an astonishing book of more than 200 photographs with explanatory texts and an index. We have in the past reviewed some of Girard’s books here, noting the concentration he brings to their production in all stages (see last year’s Strip-a-gram for example). Xavier Barral has repeatedly been praised for the quality of his books. In the autumn LE BAL published a catalogue for an exhibition by Mark Cohen called Dark Knees whose conception and attention to detail marks him out as one of the best publishers of photobooks right now. Barral says that Mars is a baby he had been carrying for some time, an oversized book that is impressive on several counts. It uses the high-quality scientific material shot by the Mars probe to recreate a strange world that appeals to our sense of the mysterious. The reader can study the images in the light of the textual explanations. The hills, ravines and even tornadoes of the extraterrestrial geological and meteorological phenomena are enough to warrant close examination for a couple of winter months. This is a coffee-table book in the best sense, and an example of Sci-Fi book-making that raises the bar.

Éditions Xavier Barral
ISBN 9782365110006