



CENTRE PHOTOGRAPHIQUE
D'ILE-DE-FRANCE

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Le moindre souffle

Sandra Rocha

From October 10th to
December 19th, 2021

Curated by:
Sandra Rocha,
Fannie Escoulen
et Nathalie Giraudeau



Sandra Rocha, *Algues I*, 2010, pigment print on smooth cotton paper, 66,6 x 100 cm

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I say there is nothing in the whole universe that persists. Everything flows, and is formed as a fleeting image.

(Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Book XV – Pythagoras's teachings)

Sandra Rocha's installation at the Centre Photographique d'Île-de-France is the result of a fruitful encounter between the fixed and moving images produced by the artist in her native Azores, in the heart of this land that gave her birth.

• **Press conference**

Friday October 8th at 11 am

In the presence of the artist and the curators.

Free shuttle bus from Paris (departs from Place de la Bastille).

Reservation required.

To reserve, contact Francesco Biasi:

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• **Vernissage**

Saturday October 9th at 3 pm

Free shuttle bus from Paris (departs from Place de la Bastille).

Reservation required.

Continuing on from her previous series, Sandra Rocha once again puts man in his natural environment and the ties of community forged between all living creatures at the heart of her new composition.

The comforting landscapes she calls into being - which seem to have been taken straight from the Garden of Eden - invite bodies like celestial apparitions to commune with Mother Nature, nature whose lush vegetation seems to protect these beings who are totally at one with the elements.

Exceptionally attentive to everything around her, Sandra Rocha juxtaposes without distinction or hierarchy humans and animals (as well as mineral and vegetable elements) in images that cause us to question our status as living beings. We were all born from the matrix of Mother Earth, but what have we done to the world that gave us birth? The Anthropocene Epoch, this period marked by humankind's ascendancy over nature, has produced the imbalance in our planetary ecosystem of which we are all too well aware. Can our civilisation regenerate itself and allow all the species that comprise it to live harmoniously together? As if inviting us to ponder on the question, Sandra Rocha sets the scene for these interrogations and establishes a dialogue (of reconciliation?) between these different worlds and between living creatures. Steeped in the influence of the masterpieces of classical literature, notably Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, she also pays tribute to contemporary texts such as *Le moindre souffle (sur le vivant)* by Jean-Christophe Bailly *. These texts are veritable fellow travellers that guide her in her quest and sustain her creativity.

Using image sequences, she portrays symbolic micro narratives that reflect our state of mind and our suffering. How can we live with our identity, our sexuality and our femininity? How can we understand these people who look like us, but who are also strangers?

The young bodies that she places within her images interact with each other and resonate with the rocks, the trees and the water. Animals are never far and they share humanity's desire to live in dignity. These bodies in touch with their immediate surroundings could be transformed at any moment and be reincarnated as a flower, an animal, a star or a god. They are the prolongation of possible past lives and, to quote Emanuele Coccia, "[...] forms that blur together, (...) engendering each other". **

In the distance, we can hear the ancient song of the *Metamorphoses*. We can see Narcissus endeavouring to find a person who he thinks is separate, but who is in fact a part of him, or rather is him. We can see Actaeon being transformed into a stag by Diana, and Hermaphroditus losing his identity as his body merges into that of the nymph Salmacis. And to this multitude of mythologies, each of which contains the many meanders of life itself, Sandra Rocha provides continuity, a hymn to the beauty of the world and its agitations, sung with the living breath of the chorus of life itself.

Fannie Escoulen

* Jean-Christophe Bailly, "Le Parti pris des animaux", Paris, published by Christian Bourgeois (2013).

** Emanuele Coccia, "Métamorphoses", Paris, published by Payot & Rivages, (2020).

Sandra Rocha was born in the Azores in 1974 and lives in Paris.

Sandra initially trained at Ar.Co in Lisbon, where she enrolled in 1996. After graduating, she worked for a Portuguese daily newspaper for 4 years. In 2003, she left the newspaper and co-founded a collective of photographers, Kameraphoto, which was active from 2003 to 2011. During this time, she worked regularly for the press, notably receiving the Visão/BES photojournalism grand prix in 2005, when Ian Berry was president of the jury. She is still the only woman to have ever received this award.

In 2008, she was awarded a master's degree in the history of contemporary art by the Social and Human Sciences faculty at NOVA University in Lisbon. The same year, she was selected to enter the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation's "Artistic Creation Creativity" programme, which allowed her to work on her project *Portrait of Lady*.

In more recent years, she has favoured books as a means of expression.

In 2019, having spent 6 years in France and published three monographs, Sandra Rocha's work was featured in the book *50 ans de la Photographie Française* by Michel Poivert.

Fannie Escoulen was born in 1978 in Valence, France. She lives and works in Marseille and Paris.

A graduate from the École Nationale Supérieure de la Photographie d'Arles, Fannie Escoulen is an independent exhibition curator specialising in contemporary photography. She was the assistant director of the BAL in Paris from 2007 to 2014, and has notably curated monographic exhibitions by Antoine d'Agata and Stéphane Duroy at the BAL, Kate Barry at the Rencontres d'Arles and Anne-Marie Filaire at the Mucem.

In 2018, the French Ministry of Culture tasked her with organising an events programme for Paris Photo focussing on women photographers. She regularly collaborates with several publishers and acts as a consultant for both companies and patrons wishing to support photography. In 2020, she curated *Ici mieux qu'en face* at the Petit Palais in Paris, an exhibition dedicated to the artist Laurence Aëgerter.

Project partners

This project is supported by the Fondation Calouste Gulbenkian - Délégation en France, who co-financed it as part of its *GULBENKIAN EXHIBITIONS* programme designed to promote Portuguese art in French cultural institutions.



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