



CENTRE PHOTOGRAPHIQUE
D'ILE-DE-FRANCE

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The invisible life

With Rita Barros, Carla Cabanas, Bárbara Fonte,
Ana Janeiro, Manuela Marques, Brígida Mendes,
Rita Castro Neves, Margarida Paiva, Ção Pestana,
Graça Sarsfield, São Trindade et Júlia Ventura

Curated by : Raquel Guerra

From 24th April to 17th July 2022



Graça Sarsfield, *Untitled #2*, from the *Nem 3 dias o Mundo vê passar* series, 2021, pigment ink print from a scanned negative, 82 x 100 cm, courtesy Graça Sarsfield

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THE EXHIBITION PROJECT

• Press conference Friday 22nd April from 11 am

Press conference in the presence of the artists and the curator. Free shuttle from Paris (Place de la Bastille).

Reservation required. Please contact

Francesco Biasi :

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• Vernissage Saturday 23rd April at 3 pm

Events in the presence of the artists and curator :

3 - 4 pm : Inauguration

4 - 5 pm : Performance by **Ana Janeiro**

5 - 6.30 pm : Panel discussion with the artists and curator

Free shuttle from Paris (Place de la Bastille). Reservation required.

In the last decades of the 20th century, gender studies mainly focused on artistic practices and theories imagined and created by women. Numerous women authors and artists studied in depth and developed on questions that established their intentions and reflected their beliefs. However their body of work, ideas and thoughts are still not widely known.

In this context - and curious about the Portuguese scene - the CPIF invited Raquel Guerra* to consider the question. The resulting exhibition, *The Invisible Life* (whose title was inspired by "The Invisible Life of Euridice Gusmao" by Brazilian author Martha Batalha) presents the work of twelve Portuguese women artists from different generations who use photography in their practice and work with images in the widest sense of the term.

Eva deixa de ser costela (Eva stops being a rib)**

Invisibility is an artificial construct. Let's consider that our understanding of reality is situated somewhere between what we can observe and the set of values that mean something is actually visible. As such, it is clear that invisibility results from the non-recognition of one person by another for cultural reasons. Contrary to blindness, invisibility is not a physical affliction.

In a contemporary society that is characterised by an insatiable appetite for all things visual, being invisible tends to mean one is insignificant or non-existent. Invisibility either results from a deliberate and conscious decision, or from a subconscious action that is the result of a deeply rooted, structural and almost universally accepted social construction. Contemporary society perpetuates a model of female invisibility. More often than not, it falls to women to adopt a role in relation with their supposedly "natural qualities".

Confronted with an essentially masculine model of action, power and strength, women are still expected to show a certain degree of submission and passivity. A quasi-paternalistic perspective of their body seen from a solely reproductive viewpoint credits the idea that women are unable to think or take action, thereby making them invisible.

Emancipation and social visibility are some of the key points addressed in feminist studies. Women's right to bodily integrity; the right to express our opinion of (or vision for) the world and the desire to no longer live in the shadow of men drove us to take part in a struggle that we Portuguese women continue to fight.

The Invisible Life is a reflection on the female condition and the status of the woman artist in Portugal, a country where the most basic gender rights are still far from being respected.

This exhibition brings together works by Rita Barros, Carla Cabanas, Bárbara Fonte, Ana Janeiro, Manuela Marques, Brígida Mendes, Rita Castro Neves, Margarida Paiva, Ção Pestana, Graça Sarsfield, São Trindade and Júlia Ventura. It embraces the notion of identity and the self-portrait as a means for reconstructing one's own identity and how women artists question their own condition by representing other women. Finally it engenders a metaphorical exchange about this notion of invisibility.

The Invisible Life aims to illustrate the strength of women and, in so doing, strives to counter the invisible life that is often forced upon us and demonstrate that we are so much more than one of Adam's ribs.

Raquel Guerra

* Raquel Guerra was in residence at the CPIF in 2021.

**An extract from the song *Eva* by Silvio Rodriguez, 1989

THE ARTISTS AND THE CURATOR

RITA BARROS (1980) lives and works in New York - ritabarros.com
CARLA CABANAS (1979) lives and works in Lisbonne - carlacabanas.com
BÁRBARA FONTE (1981) lives and works in Braga - barbarafonte.com
ANA JANEIRO (1979) lives and works in Oeiras - anajaneiro.org
MANUELA MARQUES (1959) lives and works in Paris - galerieannebarrault.com
BRÍGIDA MENDES (1977) lives and works in Lisbonne
RITA CASTRO NEVES (1971) lives and works in Porto - ritacastroneves.com/pt/
MARGARIDA PAIVA (1975) lives and works in Oslo - margaridapaiva.net
ÇÃO PESTANA (1953) lives and works in Lisbonne
GRAÇA SANSFIELD (1947) lives and works in Porto
SÃO TRINDADE (1960) lives and works in Lisbonne - saotrindade.pt
JÚLIA VENTURA (1952) lives and works in Lisbonne

RAQUEL GUERRA (1976) lives and works in Porto - raquelguerra.org

OUR PARTNERES

This project received the support of the Fondation Calouste Gulbenkian - Délégation en France, which co-financed the exhibition as part of the *EXPOSITIONS GULBENKIAN* programme that promotes the presence of Portuguese artists in French cultural institutions.



The project also received the support of Porto city hall.

