



CENTRE PHOTOGRAPHIQUE  
D'ÎLE-DE-FRANCE

PRESS RELEASE - MAY 2025

# *Plongées, fragments, répliques*

## Isabelle Giovacchini

From September 28<sup>th</sup> to December 21<sup>st</sup> 2025



Isabelle Giovacchini, *Les Métamorphoses*, 2023-2024, © Paris, Adagp, 2025, courtesy the artist

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# THE EXHIBITION PROJECT

## • Press conference

Wednesday, September 24<sup>th</sup>

### In the presence of the artist

Free shuttle from Paris (place de la Bastille)

Reservation required, please contact  
Nathan Magdelain : 01 70 05 49 81  
[nathan.magdelain@cpif.net](mailto:nathan.magdelain@cpif.net)

## • Opening

Saturday, September 27<sup>th</sup> at 3pm

### In the presence of the artist

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

## • Artist talk

Saturday, November 29<sup>th</sup> at 3pm

### In the presence of the artist and Magali Nachtergaele, art critic and curator

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

*Plongées, fragments, répliques* is Isabelle Giovacchini's first solo show in an art centre and the fruit of a long period of investigation, manipulation and experimentation. Giovacchini explored image collections and collected found images, transforming these images to reveal new, previously invisible layers of meaning.

If historical images are the most common raw materials in her body of work, Giovacchini should not be seen as a researcher. Indeed, her approach is more a pastiche of archaeological explorations, one that provides a new take on the supposed historical veracity of archival documents. By meticulously selecting, scanning, cropping and reframing images, as well as creating both replicas and fakes, she redirects our gaze, revealing hidden details that give rise to fresh possibilities for our imagination to explore.

Far from fixing her attention on the subject, Giovacchini sets out to reveal the defects present in the reference image, focussing on its materiality and rugosity. For her, the scratches on the surface of a daguerreotype (*Les Métamorphoses*) or the reflection of a lamp used to illuminate an image (*Études d'un culte*) are chance accidents that must be put in the spotlight, as if to disrupt any dreams of glory conveyed by the official narrative.

The exhibition presents an inventory of the artist's most recent researches. It is accompanied by a publication entitled *Nemi*, about her work around Lake Nemi near Rome, a place where stories from antiquity and present-day narratives come together.

# THE ARTIST

## Website :

[www.isabellegiovacchini.com](http://www.isabellegiovacchini.com)

For many years, **Isabelle Giovacchini** has been conducting experimental and empirical work with photography. She borrows the lexical field of this medium (imprint, fragment, double, spectrum) to divert it from its purely figurative and representative functions.

Her works are derived from objects and photographs found over time, in the archives and places she explores. By manipulating them in her studio or laboratory, she attempts to find the boundary point that lies just before their image disappears.

She has notably exhibited at Frac Sud (Marseille, 2007), Occitanie-Montpellier (2008 and 2022), at the Espace de l'Art Concret (Mouans-Sartoux, 2013), at Mamac (Nice, 2013 and 2015), at the CCC (Tours, 2013) at the CPIF (2015 and 2020), as well as in galleries: Xippas (Paris, 2010), Isabelle Gounod (Paris, 2011), Espace à vendre (Paris, 2012), Les Filles du Calvaire (Paris, 2013), In situ (Paris, 2014 and 2020).

## THE PRESENTED SERIES

### *Quand fond la neige, 2014-2017*

These lakes surrounded by the rocky landscapes of the Mercantour massif seem to be part of a desolate lunar environment. Neither our gaze nor even light can pierce these expanses of water, thereby transforming them into screens onto which our fantasies can be projected.

Giovacchini erased these lakes from the surface of images issues taken from the Mercantour National Park photo collection by applying a solution used for modifying gelatin silver prints. The title of the series is taken from an aphorism usually attributed to Shakespeare: "When the snow melts, where goes the white?"

This project was selected and supported by the Fondation des Artistes patronage committee.

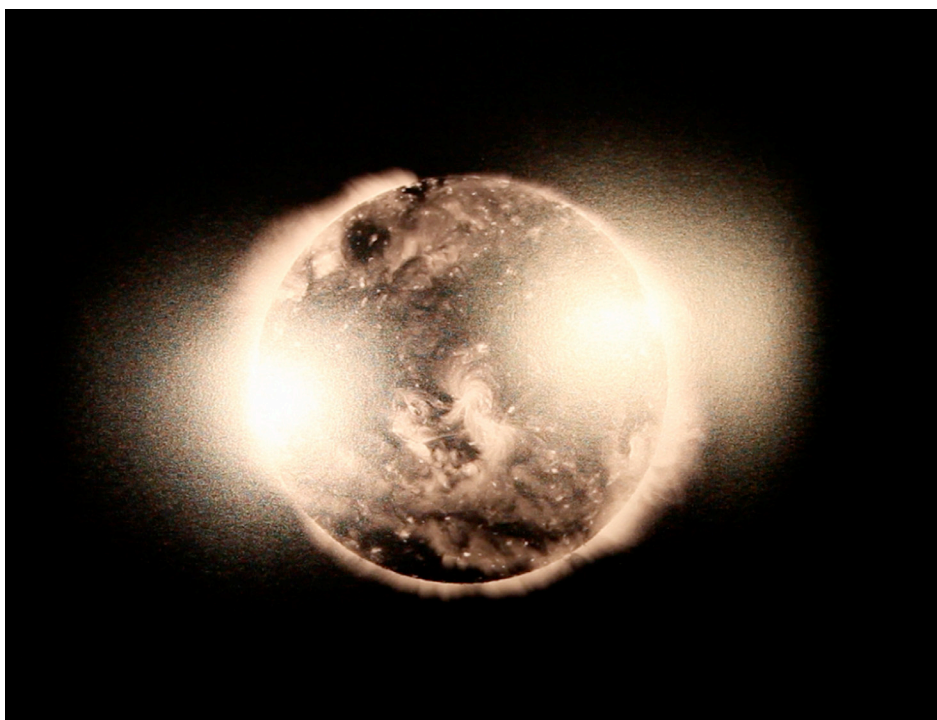


Isabelle Giovacchini, *Quand fond la neige*, 2014-2017, © Adagp, Paris, 2025, Frac Sud Collection

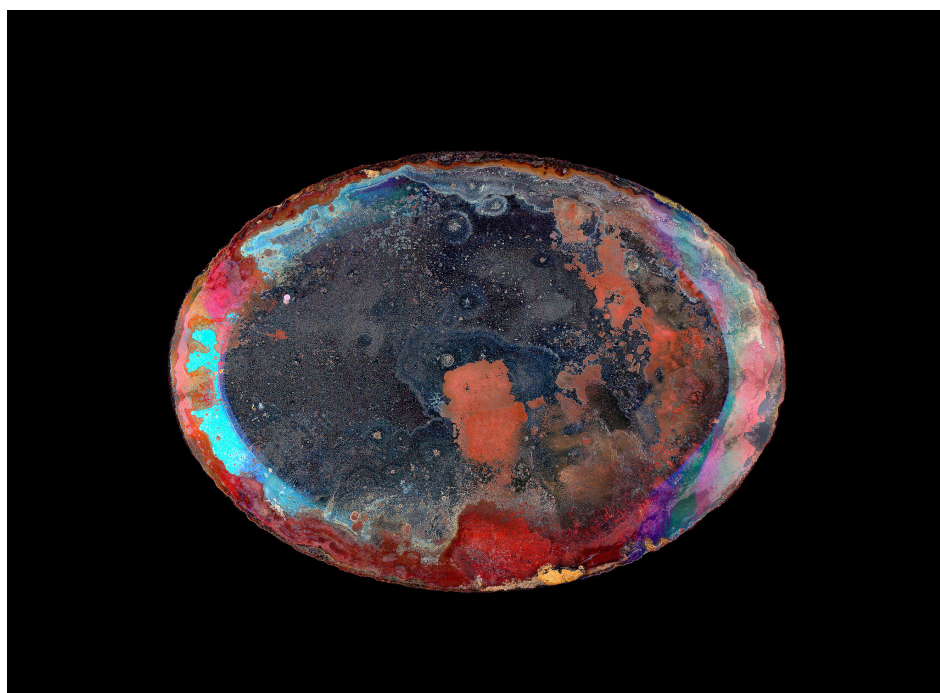


## *Leçon de ténèbres, 2011*

Two smudges of light can be seen on a photo of the sun. This video is a recording of these marks that seem to be in orbit around the sun, but which are in fact the reflection of two lights that Giovacchini is holding off-screen.



Isabelle Giovacchini, *Leçon de ténèbres*, 2011, © Adagp, Paris, 2025, courtesy the artist  
(image from the video)

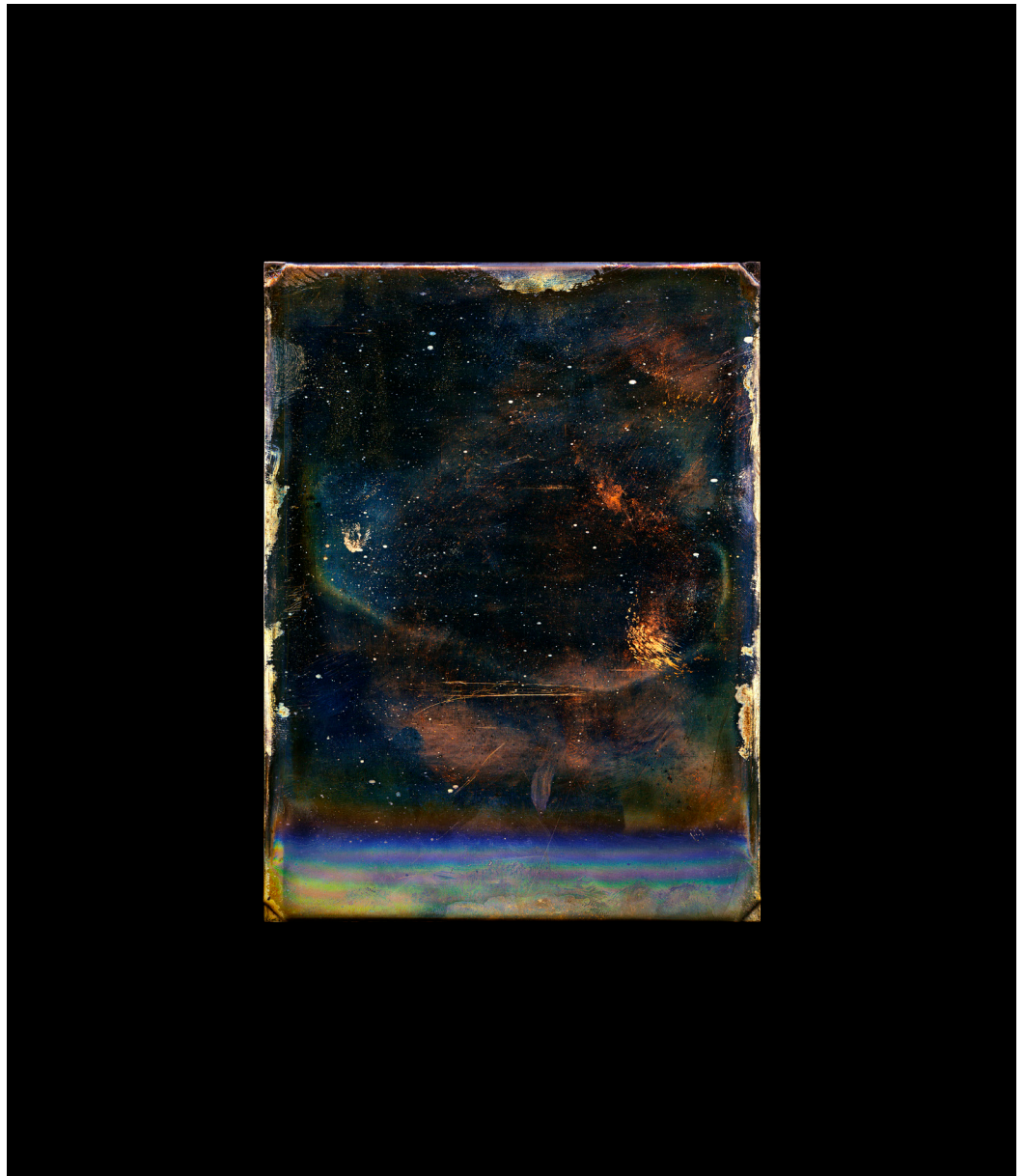


Isabelle Giovacchini, *Vif-argent*, 2022-2025, © Adagp, Paris, 2025, courtesy the artist

## *Vif-argent, 2022-2025*

*Vif-argent* is an experiment that answers a curious question: what image does a mirror reflect when scanned?

The artist thus confronted century-old, pitted mirrors with the rays of his scanner. The scanner, dazzled by its own light, translates the damage to the mirrors' silver into pure abstractions.



Isabelle Giovacchini, *Les Métamorphoses*, 2023-2024, © Adagp, Paris, 2025, courtesy the artist

### ***Les Métamorphoses*, 20123-2024**

*Les Métamorphoses* is a series of prints produced by scanning daguerreotypes taken from the collection at the Société française de photographie. As the selected images had either been seriously damaged or almost erased over the course of time, any figurative aspects had been lost.

Converted into black & white by the scanner, the results of this accidental damage and partially erased images produce an ensemble of shapes, traces and signs. Giovacchini takes the process one step further by making a digital print that enhances the effect.

This project benefited from the support of Région Île-de-France.



Isabelle Giovacchini, *Lapidaires - Un désœuvrement*, 2011, © Adagp, Paris, 2025, courtesy the artist

### ***Lapidaires - Un désœuvrement*, 2011**

The starting point of *Lapidaires - Un désœuvrement* is a fresco by Fra Filippo Lippi entitled *Disputa di santo Stefano*, on which the gold initially used to ornament the clothes of the painted figures has disappeared with the passage of time.

This work is made up of eight piles of gold placed in display cases of various height. The quantity of gold in the centre of each case is the equivalent of the quantity supposedly lost by each of the eight figures in the fresco. The more gold there is, the higher the pedestal.



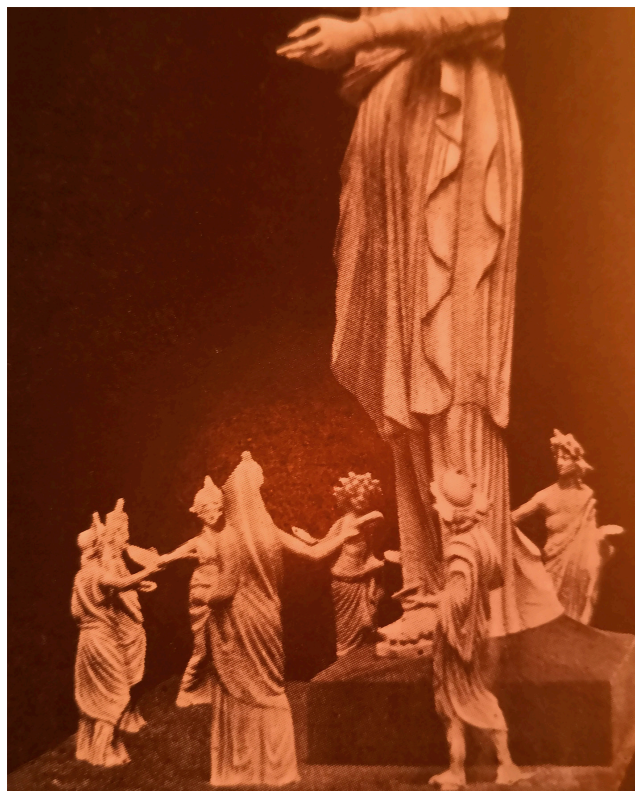
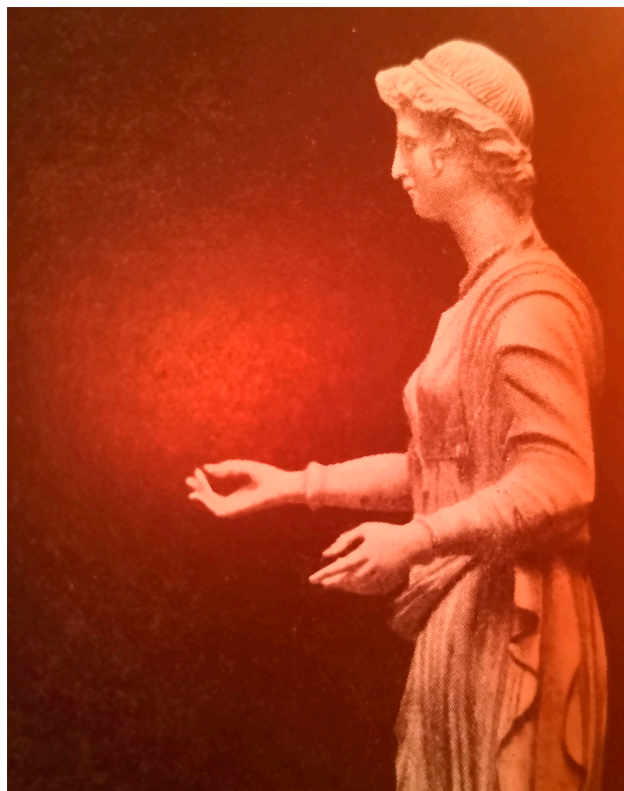
## ***Nemi, 2019-2025***

Lake Nemi is the birthplace of the worship of Diana. It is interesting from an archaeological point of view because it was home to two of Caligula's ships that were found during a dig in the interwar years. The ships were exhibited in a museum built specially for the purpose on the shores of the lake but were destroyed in a fire in 1944. They live on today in archives in Milan, Rome and Nemi itself, where the museum has been restored to host models of each one.

Combining different series of photographs and replicas of notebooks, *Nemi* bears witness to several years' research and creative activity around the lake and the various collections of images. This installation evokes an imaginary archaeological quest through the site's many layers of history, while maintaining the idea that, despite this abundance of documentation, the mystery surrounding the story remains intact.

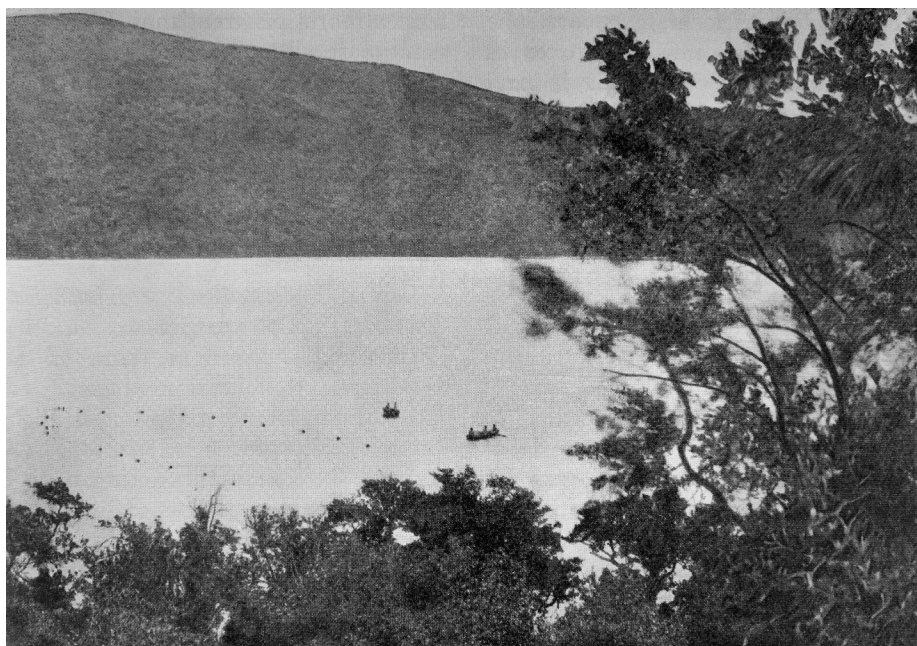
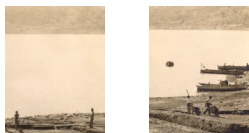
This project was developed during Isabelle Giovacchini's research and postproduction residency at CPIF.

This project benefited from the support of Région Île-de-France, the ministère de la Culture – DRAC Île-de-France, the Villa Médicis, the Museo Leonardo da Vinci (Milan), Les Amis du NMWA, the Institut français, the Centre national des arts plastiques, the Fondation des Artistes and Fujifilm France, and the advice of The École Française de Rome.



Isabelle Giovacchini, *Nemi (Étude d'un culte)*, detail, 2024, © Adagp, Paris, 2025, Centre national des arts plastiques Collection







## AROUND THE EXHIBITION

### ***Nemi*, Poursuite éditions, 2025**

160 x 220 mm

112 pages

**Texts by Malek Abbou  
and Henri Guelle**

This publication benefited from the support of the Cnap and the DRAC Île-de-France (« Mieux produire, mieux diffuser » programme).

«What remains of a lake whose water has been drained? What remains of a museum without the archaeological works or objects it is supposed to house? Such a starting point has the appearance of an investigation. Can photography, which is itself a surface, even show depth, geological or historical strata? Isabelle Giovacchini draws on both the field and the archive to discuss Nemi, his photogenic qualities, as much as the nature of photography.»

Henri Guelle

## TRAVELLING EXHIBITION

Co-produced with Le Lait Art Centre (Albi), the exhibition *Plongées, fragments, répliques* will be shown in their exhibition space in 2026.

**Le Lait**  
5 rue de l'École Normale  
81000 Albi

<https://www.centredartlelait.com>

**Le Lait**  
*centre d'art  
contemporain*

## ARTIST NEWS

### *Ce qui fut, ce qui est*



muséeBourdelle

Exhibition at Musée Bourdelle, Paris

Until July 27<sup>th</sup> 2025

<https://www.bourdelle.paris.fr/visiter/expositions/isabelle-giovacchini-ce-qui-fut-ce-qui-est>

### *Réinventer la photographie*



National photographic commission

Two centuries after the invention of photography, this public commission proposes to participate in reinventions of photography in a context of expansion of means of production of images, notably through the uses of artificial intelligence, taking note of the renewed interest in the techniques which have marked the history of the medium.

<https://www.cnap.fr/actualites/evenements/lau-reats-de-la-commande-photographique-nationale-reinventer-la-photographie>

## OUR PARTNERS

Isabelle Giovacchini and the Centre Photographique d'Île-de-France would like to thank the Centre national des arts plastique and the Frac Sud (Marseille).

The exhibition *Plongées, fragments, répliques* benefited from the support of the ministère de la Culture - DRAC Île-de-France (Capsule program) and of Région Île-de-France (2022-2023 « Artistes en résidence » – bourse programme).

It also benefited from the support of the Fondation de France, the Villa Médicis, the Museo Leonardo da Vinci (Milan), the Amis du NMWA, the French Institute and Fujifilm France.

The coproduction of the exhibition along with Centre d'art Le Lait (Albi) and the coproduction of the book *Nemi* along with Poursuites Editions benefited from the support of DRAC Île-de-France - ministère de la Culture through the programme « Mieux produire, mieux diffuser ».

### CPIF partners

