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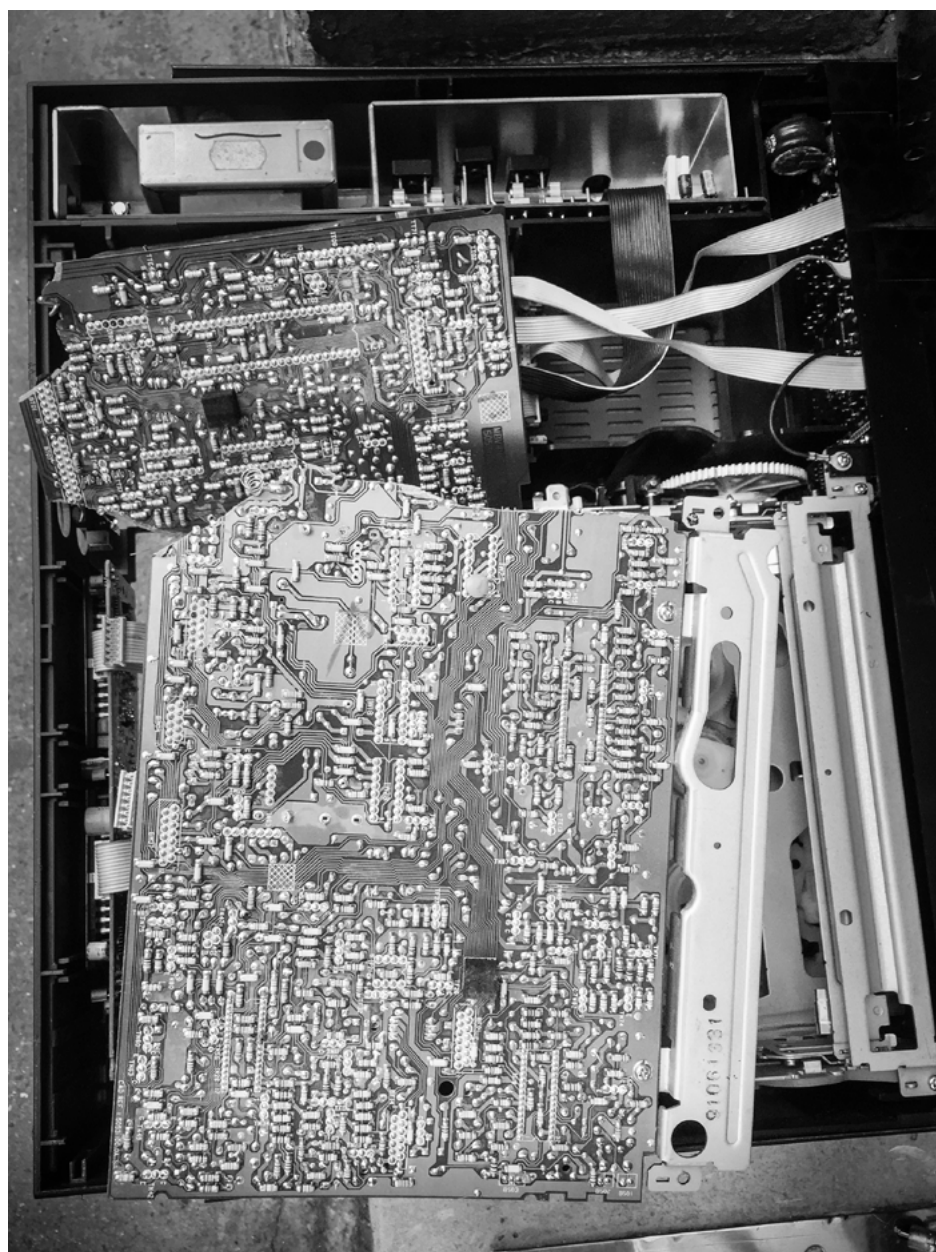
EXHIBITION TEXTS

Prisca LOBJOY | *Les régions du passé*

Exhibition from Thursday, March 28th to Tuesday, May 7th, 2024

On the occasion of the exhibition, Remèdes gallery publishes a limited edition exhibition catalog with 150 copies, including 40 copies containing a signed and numbered special print. Texts by: Samantha Barroero, Bruno Dubreuil

Texts available upon request for the press.



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Silver print from enlarger, 19.88x24.02 inches, limited edition of 8 copies

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Text by Samantha Barroero | *I EVERYTHING WILL BE FINE*

Conversation between Samantha Barroero and Prisca Lobjoy

SB: Under the title «The Regions of the Past,» you present photographs taken between 2013 and 2018, a series that you have chosen to revisit and exhibit for your solo exhibition at Remèdes Gallery in 2024. Can we discuss the working process and the various production phases to explain not only the importance of this space-time in your photographic practice, but also the shift you have made to question, as you highlight: «an intimate memory associated with the places traversed»?

PL: Lila Rouquet, who directs Remèdes Gallery, proposed exhibiting «The Regions of the Past,» which she discovered two years ago during her visit to my studio. I found it interesting to revisit the series on this occasion. This project required time. Paradoxically, at the moment I undertook it, time was scarce. These photographs were taken at a particular moment in my life, as I began documenting each visit to my father during the last five years of his life. The prospect of an inevitable end is a special time when experienced in reality. If it is anticipated in fiction, through reading a book, or watching a movie; there, upon the announcement of the inevitable loss of a loved one, time suddenly changes scale. We find ourselves in suspended time. And yet, despite this, much happens. Anxiety is inevitably very present. Reflecting on the past, with memories surfacing and escaping, is also inexorable. Each person reacts in their own way when this emerges. As a photographer, I simply took photographs. It was an almost physical need, a psychological necessity. My movements were also clearly spatio-temporal round trips. These photographs

are the visual transcription of this journey. From Paris to the family home in Vaucluse, photography allowed me to extract myself from an emotionally challenging situation, to escape from reality to capture others. But the starting point of this project was to reveal these traversed territories. Often, I only had my mobile phone. Lo-fi photography has always interested me, and with this series, this operating mode was the most suitable. I also used a digital medium format that allowed me, in manual mode, to photograph at night or with little light.

SB: The shooting ends in 2018, what happens until 2024?

PL: These images were buried for a while on my computer. And to prolong these moments and to tame absence, from 2019 onwards, I undertook the task of sorting through all the accumulated photographic material. Sitting in front of my screen, it was like an immobile journey to extract them from the digital abyss. The fleeting visions captured around the family home or in the surrounding areas are the ones that hold my attention the most. Certainly because they are sensory captures of that period.

SB: Indeed, there are many landscapes, some still lifes, and only two portraits - and even those are two faces erased by the condensation on a window. As if the human element, far from being anecdotal, could be read in the negative...

PL: I consciously eliminated all narrative photographs, those linked to facts, to the story of my life. That's not what interests me

in photography until now. My way of working conditioned this ratio. Some photographs are taken from the train - through the window. I also took many photographs of the surroundings of the family home. I walked in more or less distant circles around it. I needed to get out, and I often went for walks, to breathe, to stretch my legs, to see, to observe nature. I roamed the landscape. And it's really observation that motivates my work.

SB: It's all about the off-screen?

PL: Indeed, off-screen has always interested me in photography. It's also always surprising to realize that even when you take a fleeting look at something, a point of view, there is always a gap between what you see and what the camera records. It's the sensations that an image provides that I seek in my practice. My photographs do not illustrate, do not inform, even at this particular moment in life. Off-screen allows for necessary vanishing points and, above all, gives space to the viewer.

SB: From our first discussion, you mentioned the influence of Gilles Deleuze. And it is true that this series evokes for me the famous Deleuzian image-time relationship, where the viewer watches a hero who is no longer capable of acting on reality - not because he fails or misses his actions, but because he realizes the futility of his action, the sterility of the means he gives himself. The main character's self inaction then takes a hit. His inaction leads him to emotion, to feeling. It speaks of a cinema where action shatters against a world frozen by time and space. This image-time is an image where the hero, too, becomes a spectator of what happens to him.

PL: Indeed, when I rediscovered these images on the screen, I was like a spectator of that moment in my life. But nevertheless,

whether at the time of shooting or when I tackle the selection of images to create the series, I also deliberately put myself into action through photography.

SB: And here comes Deleuze again! As you construct the series, the question of image-movement also animates you. The action here is really the work of memory that you make perceptible through the choices and photographic treatments. But it is also by applying this mysterious code to your «surviving» images. Here, you operate by addition on certain images, and thus reality slips into fiction. With this operating mode, implemented in «The Regions of the Past,» a projection of a rational or irrational elsewhere opens up. And you draw us into a spiral between reality and fiction that allows for other possible readings.

PL: It is an intervention on the image that I decided upon when working on this series in 2019. A digital photo is coded information. The digital image is made up of pixels, and each pixel is represented by a code. This represents a large amount of information. A very simple manipulation performed on the computer on the image file can transform a photograph into coded language and vice versa. The lines of code superimposed on certain photos in the series come from a single photograph that generated a thousand pages of code! «The Regions of the Past» questions memory; today we all have a phenomenal amount of photos on our computers and mobile phones... intimate memories that are countless lines of code. It's dizzying! It's a language that is foreign to me, yet it still belongs to digital photography, and this dual aspect of a photograph interests me. It's the same photograph, in another form. The lines of code are an additional trace. I associated snippets of code superimposed on certain photographs, like a form of poetry, a cryptic language that speaks of the impossibility of saying, which emphasizes the missing

words... «The Regions of the Past» are mnemonic traces. Rhythm and temporality are important to read this series.

SB: Your codes evoke Tarkovsky's discussion of the traces of time in his cinema. For him, the dominant, all-powerful factor of the image is rhythm, expressing the passage of time within the film.

PL: I admire Tarkovsky's cinema. His polaroids published in the book «Instant Light» touch me deeply. And his book «Sculpting in Time» marked me. I actually read it in 2019. He talks precisely about «the substance of reality that surrounds us at every moment,» and especially this sentence that I had even imagined putting as an epigraph for this catalog: «time and memory merge into each other like the two sides of the same coin. There is no memory without time.»

SB: Cinema, moving image, often recur in our discussion. You are a photographer but also a videographer. And although since 2011, the photographic medium has taken precedence over your experimental films, one cannot overlook that you come from the moving image. Can we go back to this turning point in your practice?

PL: Yes, I come from video. I spent eighteen years making films at an intense pace, as part of the Gotan Project music group. I was the visual identity of the concerts with my videos but also the album covers... After that, I really needed to return to a solitary practice, which would offer me the opportunity to explore subjects more personally. Capturing movement has always been at the center of my artistic concerns. But honestly, I think I have also always been obsessed with the still image. And this, from the beginning of my video work - and still today, it's photography that I seek. There is this permanent ambivalence

in me between the still image and the moving image. When I refocused on the photographic medium from 2013 onwards, it was the cinematographic influence that prevailed in my images, as for example in my series «Euphoria,» which, for Jonathan Kemp, are «intimate portraits showing drag queens in situ, taken at work and secretly... Through the photographic act, a private moment with their reflection becomes a public event... These are bodies that refuse to perform, that resist capture. These frozen moments of bodies in motion give us the broken arc of an incomplete gesture, whose repetition or reiteration supports gender illusions, and whose suspension disrupts.» Today, with my camera, I take still shots but always connected to flows, like a trace of those moments that elude me. Photography for me is like an epiphany. A moment when you are in a heightened perceptual state. Catching emotions, capturing sensations through metamorphosis are at the heart of my photographic intentions. With «The Regions of the Past,» it seems to me that I have taken another step. I had already made a change in my practice with «Vegetal Nebula,» where by photographing closely and at night plants in parks, I had reworked my images with pictorial gestures and thus, brought about a change in perception of the very nature of the photographed subject.

SB: With «Vegetal Nebula,» you started to break away from purely technical aspects of photography and thus, could fully assume the use of digital and dare to intervene on the images in post-production. With this second solo exhibition at Remèdes Gallery, you clearly display your photographic practice, and offer with «The Regions of the Past,» the necessary element of mystery for the existence of an artwork (and not just an image) in the eye of the viewer. Videographer, photographer, ultimately, it doesn't matter, since it's an artist who always thinks of the image as an

experimentation that encourages shifts and a circulation of clues between history and memory. From these links woven through time, a thread emerges, taking the form of a narrative that is only visible through absence and the unknown. And this can make us think of the words of Nan Goldin, collected in Laura Poitras' documentary: «I built my entire career on complexes - mine and those of 90% of the people I photographed... Stripping down is what every human being deeply seeks, because without it life would have no meaning, it would be nothing but a distorted mirror of reality. However, there is nothing more difficult than exposing oneself; to achieve it, one must forget oneself (...) I quickly understood that to capture something interesting through my camera, I had to be the first to let go...»

PL: I started to be interested in photography at the age of 17. My brother taught me how to develop my images in the small lab he had set up at home. Then, I studied mural art in Paris. After my studies, I oriented my practice towards photography, experimental video, and digital media. For me, the camera would be this transitional object described by the British pediatrician, psychiatrist, and psychoanalyst Winnicott, whom I discovered as a teenager in my father's library. The transitional object - a toy, for example - is what allows the child to bridge between his mother and the outside world. For me, the camera has this function because it allows me access to reality. With «The Regions of the Past,» this is the first time indeed that my personal history is the starting point of a work. And certainly, letting go was necessary. I had already felt it, as you said, in «Vegetal Nebula,» but here it takes even more precedence in my working process. I didn't select images of the family home, or portraits of my loved ones, but I deliberately selected fragments of the world in which I moved: the earth on which I

stood, the trees that allowed me to breathe, the sky that soothed me. And yes, indeed, this work comes at a pivotal moment in my existence, one where I become aware of the fundamentals and the nature that surrounds us and are essential to our existence. In contact with nature, we feel alive. It's the tree that grows, that is weakened by the storm, or that also ages and dies, burned by a fire, or simply by old age, while a young shoot emerges from the ground. This question of letting go continues with the work done in close collaboration with two professional photographic printers: Diamantino Quintas and Gérard Issert from Granon Digital. It's a great stroke of luck to have met them. They are very important in this work both for their skills and for their human qualities. They accompany me to transition from the digital format to paper printing. They are messengers. It's a decisive step in the project that I will call «time layer 2024»!

SB: In conclusion, we will say that what attracts the eye in this series is this delicate balance between mastery and letting go. What I find surprising is to realize that your work sensitively captures the loss of a place, a body, a soul. Here, you have revealed a way to transform mourning in all its complexity and visually express it. Exhibiting this series once again shifts the gaze into another perimeter, and allows it to be observed up close, under a different light. And we are struck because everything we don't like or like about ourselves takes on another meaning and becomes certainly cruel, but beautiful, because alive, vibrant, with bursts of colors, moments of joy. Hence the strength of this title: «Everything Will Be Fine,» a nod to the inevitable passage of time and the attention paid every day to fleeting moments, and to others.

Interview conducted by Samantha Barroero
Paris, January-February 2024

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Text by Bruno Dubreuil | *Prisca Lobjoy, nébuleuse en ébullition*

What she photographs is the impermanence of the world's events rather than their frozen image for eternity. Images that float between light and darkness in which passage unfolds rather than the decisive moment. Life in its most transitory form.

Prisca Lobjoy is above all a sensual gaze cast upon the world, a photography on the surface of the skin. For she works with her body as much as with the flow of thought, leaning on an almost animistic worldview, attentive to emotions and the song of nature.

Absorbed in the infinitely large or drowned in the contemplation of tiny worlds, she surrenders to the vertigo of this parallel world that is the world of images.

And for her, photography is often a first step, a material that will be transformed by plastic gestures (superimpositions, pictorial interventions). This is how she intertwines her intimate memory with the soon-to-be silent code of contemporary machines (The regions of the past), or how she dots with white spots efflorescences, as if crossed by star dust (Vegetal Nebula). Everything is connected, tightly woven. The organic spills over the screens and suggests a heartbeat, a palpitation. Intermediate moments, suspended spaces, then take shape.

Prisca Lobjoy's photographs are breath images attuned to the metamorphoses of the living.



01.12. 2013, 22h

Pigment print, 17.72x11.81 inches, limited edition of 8 copies

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