

Text by Sini Rinne-Kanto, Paris 2015.

It was a late Sunday afternoon in the summer of 2014, when I met Patricia Reinhart for the first time. Introduced by a mutual friend of ours, we ended up spending a rainy afternoon together on the terrace of Palais de Tokyo.

The summer came and went. The next time when we saw each other was at a group exhibition entitled 48°28'39"N 2°12'47"E - Les pierres se battent entre elles, in which Patricia was participating with her video work *Die ihr Brot mit Tränen aß* (Requiem for an unendurable paradise). Yet the context for a screening sounded rather demanding, as the exhibition took place in direct sunlight in a middle of a forest, with no electricity on hand. Leaving the chance for the unexpected though, as she usually does in her work, Patricia had discovered an abandoned tent in the very same spot where the exhibition was bound to be. Screened inside the tent, this work revealed to be a combination of video material and still photographs. This technique entitled *ciné-collage*, developed by Patricia herself, allows the use of photographs as painterly layers, creating thus a singular texture for the work. In the video, a woman follows a desolate path, from rural to urban purgatory: the scenery changes from the pool to the stormy sea, from the garden to the burning city of Wien. Profound patterns of symbolism accumulate: antagonistic yet complimentary symbols of life and transformation - water and fire - are playing important roles in her work. While water in movement constitutes a symbol for a transitory state between different possibilities, those accomplished and those still to emerge, the fire stands for death and rebirth, purification and illumination. I still recall that afternoon very well; it was my first encounter with Patricia's work, surrounded by a highly contrasting context.

In December, I received a small handwritten envelope by mail, containing an exclusive invitation for Patricia's solo show, a performative installation entitled *Synchronicity Part 2, (The Black Velvet Room Paris)*, a follow-up for the installation and public screening organized at the Canal St. Martin the previous summer. The address was aptly to be found at Rue de l'Exposition, in a rather posh area of the 7th arrondissement: after being received by a blond vamp dressed in a fur coat, I was led into a private apartment enveloped entirely in black. A mixed scent of cigarettes and perfume was lingering in the apartment, while the guests were sipping wine and chattering in low voices. Reminiscent of a Freudian setup, the space was constructed in an intimate dialogue with her works: I had the impression as if the whole apartment was actually a stage with a *mise-en-scène*, and we, the guests, were the actors of this play.

All the works on display were projected and installed in a non-classical way: a screening of her video *Die ihr Brot mit Tränen aß* (Requiem for an unendurable paradise) was projected from an open window on the wall of the neighboring building, a super 8 film projection of *Ophelia* was projected on the back of a painting, a paper with a handwritten love poem was rotating on a record player ... The ensemble created surprising encounters in the exhibition space: the entity floated into an opaque gradual degradation of surroundings and eventually, allowing me to forget where I was.

Many things happened over the long winter months: during these months, when our friendship got deeper, I also discovered probably Patricia's most intimate series of work: her self-portraits. This series started in 2001 when she arrived to Paris for the first time, and has been an ongoing project ever since: it is a way to record the past, yet actively to reconstruct a new paragraph. In this series, a form of double-portraits unfolds itself, and an image finds itself captured in another portrait. This self-reflective approach allows mirroring the subject both as familiar and as subconscious, while a self-narrative takes place within the framework. Despite the series' intimacy, the photos nevertheless impose a distance, exactly because of their form: self-portraiture allows oneself being a tourist in one's own reality with a hidden gaze, drifting away into a soft abstract pastness.

At this moment, when writing this text, almost one year has passed since our first encounter: our meeting, perhaps an arbitrary one, has become a meaningful narrative. It seems like an eligible way to conclude this text in presenting Patricia's latest work. A shift towards new techniques and experimentations with her series entitled *Patience*, aquarelles on linen dating from 2015, can be observed. They enter in a constructive dialogue with her previous body of work - yet a clear shift in time and space can be observed. The new direction suggests that the chapter is about to reach its end, after having leafed through some torn pages. The figure of a woman is arriving at her destination after the apocalyptic series of events, and a moment of reconciliation reveals itself: a serene garden is looming out in the horizon, but still with the presence of gentle and soft shadows.