



Nicolas Floç'h – Invisible, Seascapes

21 May 2021 - 11 July 2021

Fondation Thalie is pleased to present Invisible, Seascapes, bringing together several photographic series and sculptures by Nicolas Floç'h. For the past ten years, Floç'h has been developing a production which addresses global changes as well as the definition of an underwater sea landscape—or seascape. Previously exhibited at the Frac Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, the Initium Maris and Invisible projects—carried out in Brittany, in the Mediterranean as well as in Japan—are presented here alongside a series of photographs and installations dedicated to the architecture of artificial reefs. Together these works highlight Floç'h's research, which deals with a period of transition and which reveals the impact of climate change on the balance of ecosystems.

Nicolas Floç'h's mission is to establish a photographic typology of French underwater seascapes and to put them into perspective in the face of anthropic pressures, thereby showing the changes in their productivity and building up a definitive photographic database. The Paysages productifs photographic series, begun in 2015, is a continuation of the Structures productives series. Initium Maris provides an approach to underwater seascapes and their transformations in the West of France, between Saint-Malo and Saint-Nazaire, as well as in Japan. In the South, Invisible reveals a peri-urban environment in the Mediterranean.

In Western culture, the word «landscape» comes from the vocabulary of painters. From the 16th century onwards, it has been used to designate a pictorial genre that artistized reality, revealing to a given place the landscape it possesses without necessarily knowing it. Thus, the landscape corresponds to a kind of homage to nature—the latter born a second time through the magic of colors, perspectives, shadows and lights, touches, impasto and other creative effects of the artist.

How does a major subject—the landscape—continue to be determined from an artistic heritage and how does art, in dialogue with science, help to define, understand and represent the world? In order to be able to consider a given space, we must be able to apprehend it. It is through the representations that are made of it that a given space exists.

The immensity that lies beneath the surface, the underwater environment, is for many a non-space, or one of an imaginary and recomposed geography. The idea we have of it is determined by the gaze that we cast and, when it comes to the ocean, it is constructed from a set of filters: the gaze of the marine biologist, that of the explorer, of the athlete or, behind the glass, to the scenarized and artificial environment of the aquarium... we only perceive what is shown, and is shown only what one sees. Observation—by the scientist or by the artist—is at the core of the construction of the research or the work of art. Indeed, knowledge passes through experience, the physical experience of a territory making it possible to collect and analyze data, to conceptualize or question this environment and its representations. What we call landscape is the perception of an environment. Without a gaze to behold it, without experience it cannot be: it is constructed, it is transmitted. It is the representation of a reality. For Gilles Clément, the landscape is «what is under the expanse of the gaze.» In the ocean, it is all the habitats that form the underwater landscapes, the sea bottom, the rocks, the algae, and the water column, that is to say the space that goes from the surface to the bottom sediment.

However, under water more than anywhere else, the landscape is formed of the visible and the invisible. In a sublime paradox, the invisible determines the visible, the microscopic becomes landscape—not by means of an enlargement, but by accumulation in the immense expanse. Plankton, organic and inorganic matter dissolved in bodies of water become color, density or transparency in panoramic views. The living is everywhere, interacting and determining this specificity of the underwater space, where the vanishing point of the landscape tends not towards the horizon but towards the monochrome. These immersive and omnipresent hues of bodies of water reveal immense and marvelous seascapes emerging from the depths. These underwater expanses are changing, they are our present and our future. It seems essential and urgent to me to represent them with broad vistas and in a legible way in their banality, their diversity and their complexity so that they may appear to the eyes of the greatest number.

Initium Maris refers to the region of Finistère, extrême ouest (the 'extreme Westwardpoint'), and its Latin etymology, Finis Terrae—the earth's end. This project therefore does not place us at the "earth's end", but at "sea edge". This edge is the beginning of the exploration of the coast in its submerged part, of an expedition to see, to show, and to think the invisible.

Text by Nicolas Floç'h (in « Initium Maris, carnet de bord », 2019, Edition GwinZegal)

Nicolas Floç'h was born in 1970 in Rennes, France. He lives and works in Paris, and teaches at EESAB-Site de Rennes. He is represented by Galerie Maubert in Paris and Galerie LMNO in Brussels. His work has been regularly featured in French and international institutions including the SMAK, Ghent, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, MAC/VAL, Vitry-sur-Seine, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, MAMM, Moscow, Setouchi Triennial, Japan, Kyocera Museum, Kyoto, Japan, MALI, Lima, Peru, Matucana 100, Santiago, Chile. At the same time as the exhibition in Brussels, Nicolas Floç'h is part of the group show La Mer imaginaire at Villa Carmignac – Porquerolles island.

The series presented in the exhibition have been produced, for the serie Invisible by the Parc national des Calanques, Fondation Camargo, Observatoire des Sciences de l'Univers – Institut Pythéas (Aix-Marseille Université, CNRS, IRD), the FRAC Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, with the support of Ministère de la Culture, Préfecture des Bouches-du-Rhône, Conseil départemental des Bouches-du-Rhône and Fondation Daniel et Nina Carasso. For the project Initium Maris led by Artconnexion, with the support of the Fondation de France, Fondation Daniel et Nina Carasso, Université du Littoral Côte d'Opale, Université de Lille, CNRS, UMR 8187 – LOG – Laboratoire d'Océanologie et de Géosciences, Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle – Concarneau, Ifremer and Fondation Thalie.

Practical information

Commented tour by the artist on 20 May at 4 pm
Exhibition from 21 May to 11 July, 2021
Wednesday to Sunday, 2 pm to 6 pm and by appointment
Price: 7€/ 5€/ free admission**
*Job seekers, under 26, SMART members
**Students, children up to 12
Free entrance for Art Brussels Week from 3 to 6 June, 2021

To ensure your safety and respect the health conditions, we have implemented the following measures:

Mandatory mask wearing
Provision of hydroalcoholic gel
Exposure gauge limited to 37 people

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Details

Start:
21 May 2021

End:
11 July 2021

Event Categories:
[fototentoonstellingen](#), [galeries](#)

Event Tags:
[Fondation Thalie](#), [Invisible seascapes](#), [Nicolas Floç'h](#)

Venue

[Fondation Thalie](#)

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