**Biotic Photography**

Dominique Lacloche prints silver gelatin photographic images on giant Gunnera Manicata leaves. The leaves of this 40-year-old South American plant are distinctive for their disproportionate size, measuring up to 2 or 3 meters across. Handling the plant is extremely precarious: the monumental apace with the fragility of living matter.

It is through light that this unique plant and photographic technique converge – the unpredictable nature of organic life and of chemical “life” plays out through both photosynthesis and photographic revelation. The image passes through anarchic, delicate, unpredictable phases, and the artistic gesture yields to the force of external events that impose themselves like “natural” laws.

The disproportionate size of the leaves, which can be used as the simple material support for an image, as part of an installation, as a pretext for other manipulations of images (superimpositions, work on the photographic negative, etc.), may prevail over the “image subject” at any given moment and transport vision to a world where the monumental dictates its own laws. The spatial arrangement and intelligibility of these giant leaves is thus a test of strength for the artist, an endeavor to strike the right balance.

The images revealed on the leaves are most often of landscapes reflected in water. At our scale, these landscapes are encompassing and poetic, absorbing us in their reflection; yet due to the salience of the work’s spatial disposition and the material on which the images are printed, the landscapes unveil a further interior gaze.. Like apparitions hovering between the infinitely elusive and the infinitely intimate, what is communicated through the veins of the leaves, faintly or clearly, is akin to visions of “another world” strangely familiar to us.

The visual operation at work here, which is played out just as much in Lacloche’s technical balancing of elements, as it is in the unpredictable and uncompromising intricate technicalities of the work’s natural element, is imbued with something of the unspeakable recommencement of things. Each “leaf image” leads to another, and then another, like the unfolding of multiple ways of showing the world as a creative source. The ‘here and now’ uncoils – renewed, regenerated, or in a state of inexorable destruction – the slow and imposing march of a state of nature and a “state of art”, reconciled.

Sandra Vanbremeersch