

TEXT //
MARTA SKOCZEŃ

GENERAL BIOGRAPHY MARTA SKOCZEŃ

Marta Skoczeń (born in 1994 in Łódź, Poland) is a visual artist working with video, photography and drawing. She graduated from Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts de Paris in 2020 (Clément Cogitore studio) and the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw in 2019 (Graphic Art). In her work, she mainly focuses on femininity, memory, and the meeting of past and present, navigating between the field of visual art and cinema. The artist has participated in many exhibitions and festivals dedicated to film like *Entre toi et moi* in the Fondation d'Entreprise Pernod Ricard (2020), the Biennale de la jeune création contemporaine *Mulhouse 021*, VASTLAB Experimental Los Angeles, Berlin Revolution Film Festival (2021) and High Coast International Film Festival in Sweden, *Fluidité* in Centquatre (2022). Marta Skoczeń has been awarded the *LOOP Fair Acquisition Award 2022* by Loop Fair Barcelona.

GENERAL WORK MARTA SKOCZEŃ

Through photographs and videos, I create visual narratives on female subjects in a state of longing for the other. The portraits take place in symbolic shelters; both interior and exterior, in spaces where time seems suspended, and where subjects face comforting isolation.

I want to show the need for movement which pushes us out of the reassuring dimension represented by our interiors throughout contact with nature. It makes me think of the paintings of 19th-century female artists where female subjects are represented in enclosed spaces, in all types of activities, such as sewing. These spaces were naturally assigned to women during this period, and it is this woman locked inside the picture whom I wish to symbolically liberate.


Marta Skoczen

galerie dohyanglee

Attachments

A solo exhibition of the works of **Marta Skoczeń**
Curated by Marilou Thirache

April 13th - May 11th 2024

With the support for the galleries / exhibition of  Centre national des arts plastiques
(National Centre for Visual Arts).

For Marta Skoczeń's first solo exhibition, Galerie Dohyang Lee presents a selection of works by the artist, from her earliest creations to her most recent, synthesising her work around the notion of attachment.

Attachment refers to a deep emotional and affective bond between one person and another, or between a person and a thing. It is a fundamental process in human development and plays a crucial role in shaping human relationships. Widely studied in psychology, it is associated with family ties and the cultural heritages that stem from them.

Attachements (Attachments) is the title of the artist's latest video production, and is the centrepiece of the exhibition. Two women are portrayed: one evoking a maternal figure, the other evoking adolescence. They are shown in turn, one then the other, without ever being together. They each seem to be experiencing a form of solitude, locked away in enclosed domestic spaces. Are they in different places? In separate spaces? Are they far apart? The distance between them, whether physical or emotional, is elusive. Devoid of words, this film poetically illustrates the notion of attachment and generational transmission, from woman to woman, mother to daughter. It depicts the unspoken wounds inherited and passed down from generation to generation in a non-verbal way. The work captures the passage of time, interweaving the cycles of these women's lives with those of nature: animal rhythms, meteorological metamorphoses, and the flow of water.

Marta Skoczeń instinctively makes women her favourite subject. She depicts them at every stage of life, from childhood to old age, through adolescence and motherhood. This cyclical representation illustrates the different seasons of life. In the culture and history of Marta Skoczeń's native Poland, femininity is synonymous with power, but also with suffering. Marta Skoczeń's photographs and videos depict these women as sunken in their own world, as if disenchanting, their gaze frontal but elusive. Psychological and transgressive, these portraits of women isolated indoors, in domestic spaces, evoke a physical and emotional power. The attachment these women have to the home refers to the emotional and affective bond they can develop with their home, through the security, comfort and familiarity it can evoke. Experiences in these spaces, whether positive or negative, influence this attachment and strengthen the emotional bond with the space, which becomes a shelter, a refuge. It offers a feeling of protection from the outside world. Yet it remains a space of isolation and confinement, unfortunately often assigned to the social role of women.

The artist juxtaposes these interiors with moments of contemplation of natural outdoor spaces, creating a striking contrast but also establishing a deep connection with the female characters she depicts. *Les filles qui se baignent* (Bathers) depicts two young girls on the edge between childhood and adolescence, navigating a delicate period of transition. *L'eau et la lumière* (Water and Light) is an instantaneous illustration of the different temporalities of nature, the fragility of the passage between the seasons and the stages of life. On the other hand, *Regina* offers us a portrait of an elderly woman at the top of a vast hill. Despite her apparent solitude, she bears a serene smile. These natural outdoor spaces sound therapeutic and liberating, seeming to fill a void. They symbolise risk and freedom. They evoke peace and escape.

Ménage et alentours (Housework and around) changes the scene. This video transcribes a narrative of a female character who emerges from her domestic space. Like a journal, the video illustrates fragments of life, snapshots of urban and natural landscapes filmed with a telephone, which the artist combines with original poems. In this approach, she questions codes of beauty, the position of women in the city, and social conventions.

galerie dohyanglee

Marta Skoczeń (born 1994 in Poland) is an artist working with video, photography and drawing. She is a graduate of the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris (DNSAP 2020, Clément Cogitore studio) and the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw (MA 2019, Graphic Art). In her work, she talks about femininity, memory and the encounter between the past and the present, navigating between the fields of art and cinema. In 2022, she won the *LOOP Fair Acquisition Award* for her film *Maison sans clé* (House Without a Key), presented by Galerie Dohyang Lee, Paris.

Marilou Thirache
Translated in English by Emmelene Landon

TEXT BY WOJTEK SZCZERBETKA

for the exhibition *Mock-up Houses*, Sauna, Warsaw, Poland, July 2022

The exhibition title “Mock-up Houses” refers to houses understood as certain models. A house, according to G. Bachelard, is “the topography of our intimate being”. Despite the geometric shape of a house (understood as a building), the notion of home extends beyond its space to accommodate feelings, memories, fears and longings of our own, and those belonging to others. Thus, our idea of home is indeed such a mock up, something that could be called a work in progress. It’s not surprising, then, that the imagery and feelings associated with home in the exhibition are intertwined with portraits of young girls whose identities are in the process of transition — this often happens just as we leave the family home, the family nest.

A key element in Marta Skoczeń’s work is also a feeling of suspension. It is as though in the photographs we see, something happen right before the picture was taken, or shortly after. It is in this kind of suspension that we find the heroines the author is portraying. Depending on the period in which the pictures were taken, as well as its context, this feeling of suspension can have different causes. Leaving home involves a certain going out into the world, a certain vulnerability. In situations of crisis, we sometimes find ourselves returning to the family home, running away from it, or building our own. In “Everything is Organic”, this vulnerability is associated with the lockdowns taking place around the world — an unusual, at the very least, oppressive situation in which home becomes a cage, a prison. Thus, the notion of home is not without reason always linked with a particular feeling, which, depending on individual memories associated with home, triggers various emotional responses. Undoubtedly, our perceptions of reality, which we received from our family, are associated with home. The emotions exuded from the girls photographed and filmed on camera reflect these states: of wistfulness, uncertainty, carelessness or even boredom — waiting for an answer that is not coming, without any certainty as to whether it is coming at all.

In the photos, we find empty streets and spaces.

Marta’s poetic visual language is often accompanied by text — a marriage of which are video works (such as “Les Ennuis”) that can be seen as an extension of her photographic work. In a broader perspective, this suspension also occurs in “Water and Light”, which in turn refers to the moment between autumn and winter — in which nature, not yet fully awakened, slowly emerges from its winter stasis. The portraits in the exhibition were mostly shot on the way somewhere: in places (like the suburbs of Paris and Warsaw) and non-places (such as a train). Being in transit is also a moment of suspension — geographically (between point A and B), as well as mentally (a state of boredom). The mundanity of these found situations encourages casual conversations that go beyond the discomfort they might cause on a daily basis. It also makes the right conditions to talk about one’s artistic practice, and even to take part in it — the portrayed people, although chosen by way of a traveling impulse, share common characteristics, often being the author’s creative pursuits — freedom, youth, individuality.

The cohesive element of the exhibition as a whole is knitting, which appears in many of Marta’s works. The heroines of the photographs and films surrender themselves to domestic “housework”, engaged in sewing when they happen to be bored. The works in the exhibition are combined with crafts, housework with artwork, and it can be said that all the artwork is sewn with the same threads, so drawing, an inseparable part of the artist’s oeuvre, also appears in the exhibition, acting both as a draft and a “trigger” of the artist’s creative force.

Wojtek Szczerbetka

TEXT BY MARILOU THIRACHE

for the exhibition *Terra Mater*, Galerie 7 rue de Paradis, Paris, France, June 2022

Marta Skoczeń's works present themselves as true visual stories. Her narratives are filled with a sense of tenderness, taking us into spaces where time seems to be suspended, frozen; captured in a moment of latency, as if between presence and absence. They constitute poetic visual narratives about nature, as well as the exterior world as a space containing both freedom and risk; and the interior, the home, as a place of protection and shelter. Both simultaneously present themselves as having the ability to be dangerous and healing at the same time.

“ I wanted to show this need for a movement which pushes us out of the reassuring interiors through contact with nature. It makes me think of the paintings of 19th-century female artists where female subjects are represented in enclosed spaces, in all types of activities, such as sewing. These spaces were usually assigned to women during this period. It is this image of the woman locked inside whom I wish to symbolically liberate. ”

Instinctively, Marta Skoczeń chooses women as her favorite subject. In the culture and history of her native country, Poland, the notion of femininity can be synonymous with power but also with suffering. The artist's photographs and videos represent women, who seem to be immersed in the world of their own, as if disenchanting, keeping a frontal yet fleeting gaze. At once psychological and transgressive, these portraits of women, isolated indoors, evoke a sense of physical and emotional power, whilst questioning the position of women in today's society.

On the other hand, the exterior — the nature — makes us think of curative and liberating spaces, allowing a certain void in us to be filled. The artist builds spaces of contemplation allowing the spectator to see a missing piece of their past. This can be found in her video works, which, through the continuity of the projected shots, refer to human memory, which can sometimes lose its linearity. The choice of places filmed by the artist is also marked by her own experiences, her own story. It is a way for her to transcribe her own memories modified by her amnesia, through her memory, which is associative. Photographing and filming the exteriors is “an act based on the body's ability to express the unspeakable that has been forgotten or repressed”.

Marta Skoczeń's photographs and films have been made between France and Poland. In particular, her work echoes the region where her mother's side of the family comes from, where she spent most of her holidays. It's a small town in southern Poland, very quiet, peaceful, surrounded by the countryside, full of fields and gardens. It is mysterious, filled with dark and secret stories, which are often left untold. This environment — marked by the weight of the past and by omnipresent, even dazzling nature — acts as Marta Skoczeń's main artistic force. First expressed through drawing, then through photography and cinema. Drawing plays an important role here especially, as she always makes sketches for all her works.

Marilou Thirache
Correction of the English version by Wojtek Szczerbetka

TEXT BY PAULINE WEBER

for the Diploma's catalogue, Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts de Paris, Paris, France, 2021

How to materialize in images the phenomena of expectation, isolation, presence, and its corollary absence? Through the joint practices of video and photography, Marta Skoczeń tries to answer these questions by poetically drawing the stories of women enclosed between four walls.

I wanted to show this need for a movement which pushes us out of the reassuring interiors through contact with nature. It makes me think of the paintings of 19th-century female artists where female subjects are represented in enclosed spaces, in all types of activities, such as sewing. These spaces were usually assigned to women during this period. It is this image of the woman locked inside whom I wish to symbolically liberate.

Psychological portraits in which gazes are alternately pressing, elusive, disillusioned, weary and with great intensity: for this, the artist favors the analog, a medium that she has loved since her adolescence for its softness and its sensitivity to light. *There is this natural and evanescent finish that I try to convey in my photographs. When I work digitally, I deliberately break outlines that are far too sharp and perfect by nature. What I like is the delicacy in the treatment of colors specific to analog, she confides.*

Through her videos, Marta Skoczeń has been exploring the theme of isolation, reinforced by the consequences of the pandemic. An intuitive work that mixes past-present, preparatory drawings, unconscious messages that dictate images to her in continuous research, but also texts that she writes and integrates into the editing. Inspired by the photographs of Julia Margaret Cameron or Francesca Woodman, Marta reconstructs memories modified by the passage of time by giving a voice to all women.

Pauline Weber

TEXT BY MARTA SKOCZEŃ WITH LARA AL-GUBORY
2020

Through photographs and videos, I create visual narratives on female subjects in a state of longing for the other. The portraits take place in symbolic shelters; both interior and exterior, in spaces where time seems suspended, and where subjects face comforting isolation.

I try to capture my subject's presence accurately and to give them sincere attention. To photograph someone is a process which requires in-depth research into each person's unique qualities. The choice of the represented person depends on the psychic proximity that exists between them and me, despite the distance induced by the use of lens. The device and the setting in space distinguishes me from the person being portrayed. This creative process can be compared to delicacy and sensitivity to the light of analogue technology.

The choice of the places I evoke is inspired by the functioning of memory, which is associative. Photographing the outdoors is to me a well-founded act on the body's ability to express the unspeakable, which is to be drawn from oblivion. What I try to transcribe through images are my own memories, modified by amnesia, nevertheless referring to the concrete of the past experience. The meaning of what is seen is to be constructed by the spectator.

Marta Skoczeń. Rédaction : Lara Al-Gubory