



Dominique Lacloche, *LEAF I*, 2019.
Silver gelatin print on Gunnera Manicata leaf
210 x 245 cm

DOMINIQUE LACLOCHE

Dominique Lacloche develops gelatin silver prints on giant Gunnera Manicata leaves. The leaves of this 150 million year-old South American plant are distinctive for their disproportionate size, measuring up to 2 to 3 meters wide. Handling the plant is extremely precarious: the monumental space 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 may prevail over the “image subject” at any given moment and transport you 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.

Lacloche the same landscape; a clump of trees bordering a lake. Over 20 years, her camera has intuitively edged closer and closer to the surface of the water. The images have slowly mutated from figurative landscape to reflections of branches disturbed by the ripples of the water.

The images revealed on the leaves have become compositions of sinuous and abstract lines and signs, like an unknown calligraphy waiting to be deciphered.

At our scale, the images are encompassing and poetic, absorbing us in their reflection; yet due to the salience of the work’s spatial disposition and the leaf’s texture on which the images are developed, the leaf becomes a space of invention and aesthetic correspondances that is communicated through its veins and holes, faintly or clearly, as an interweaving of lines, generator of new textures and forms.

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 technicity of the work’s organic element, is imbued with something of the unspeakable recommencement of things. Each “image leaf” 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.