

Outre-vie / Afterlife / पुनर्जन्म
How Many Seas

A public art exhibition of monumental photographs on Carter Road
for FOCUS Photography Festival Mumbai

9 March - 23 March 2017

Presented by What About Art? and supported by the Quebec Government

Artists: Raymonde April, Jessica Auer, Jacques Bellavance, Velibor Božović, Gwynne Fulton, Katie Jung, Chih-Chien Wang, Jinyoung Kim, Lise Latreille, Celia Perrin Sidarous, Marie-Christine Simard, Bogdan Stoica, Andrea Szilasi

What About Art? is proud to present **How Many Seas**, FOCUS Festival's public art project this year. The exhibition consists of eleven monumental photographs for a public exhibition facing the seashore on Bandra's Carter Road. These images, collected by individual artists in Korea, Greece, Quebec, Romania, Bosnia, Ontario, and Iceland, form an open constellation that speaks to the ambiguity of memory. English and Hindi captions trace the distance between these private moments and their new public lives. The texts, like the images themselves, employ different modes of writing: from poetic reflection to transcribed conversations. Together they evoke a fragmentary, allegorical form of storytelling. They are like pages ripped from a monumental book: ruins of a story that one cannot reconstruct, but to which they bear mute witness. *How Many Seas* returns these images to gaze back at the sea. At a time marked by a shifting geopolitics of migration and survival, even small aesthetic acts as forms of resistance.



Raymonde April, *Quebec city, June 1978, 2016*, 138 x 223 cm, inkjet print

June 1978. It is a hot, early summer day in the Lower town of Quebec city. With my friend Fabienne, we are looking for a new space for our artist-run center. We peek through the vitrines of vacant stores, ring the doorbells of office buildings, write down a few phone numbers. A sudden gust of wind rises, announcing a thunderstorm.

Supported by the Quebec Government, the large scale exhibition has been curated and conceptualised by Canadian contemporary artist, photographer and academic, Raymonde April.

April comments, *"The Afterlife project started right after my first residency in Mumbai, in 2012-2013, I wanted to give life to stories and images through a community, sharing a conversation about time, memory, space. I remember very clearly the first time I saw the Bandra seaside at sunset, how wide the ocean was, and how many living beings, people, animals, birds, populated its space, and how I could not decide to leave, being captivated by its multiple horizons. I could not dream of such an immense and beautiful site for showing our work."*

This is April's fifth visit to India and second public art exhibition in Mumbai, the first transpiring four years ago during the first edition of FOCUS in south Mumbai's Horniman Circle. Titled *Equivalences* (2013), it was a result of her 2012 residency at What About Art? awarded by CALQ, an artist exchange program supported by the Quebec Government to encourage cross cultural and artistic dialogue between India and Canada.

Afterlife or Outre-vie in French, is a research group created by April, together with ten artists and graduate students. It seeks to develop photographic and videographic practices that elucidate the ghostly afterlife of the images that comprise our present as much as our historical and artistic memory: Images do not (always) die away; they prolong the lives of foregone places and beings in their absence. The group takes name from the late Quebecois poet Marie Uguay, who writes: "Afterlife is when one is not yet in life, when one looks at it, when one seeks to enter it. One is not dead but already almost alive, almost born, being born perhaps, in this passage beyond borders and beyond time, which defines desire. Desire of the other, desire of the world [...] Afterlife is like overseas or beyond the grave."¹

This year's festival theme, 'Memory' resonates deeply within the group's individual and collective practices as they reflect and expand on the meaning of afterlife in relation to lens-based media. Some members of the group explore human geographies that resonate with the spectral traces of disappearance; others turn to objects to explore the alterity and contingency of the material world. Collectively, Afterlife delves into alternate modes of storytelling. Through processes of montage and staging, unnoticed aspects of our memory are transcribed into their own emotional space, giving rise to unexpected juxtapositions and new meanings that interrogate the multiple, fluid boundaries of self and other, space and time, memory and forgetting, reality and fiction, continuity and fragmentation.

WALK-THROUGH | March 12 | 5PM - 6PM

On March 12th, WAA will be hosting a walk-through on the promenade with participating artists Raymonde April, Velibor Božović and Jinyoung Kim from 5pm - 6pm

SCREENING | March 12 | 6PM - 8PM.

The exhibition continues with a series of video art pieces on display at the WAA project space with drinks from 6pm - 8pm after the walkthrough. The video pieces will also be displayed throughout the two week festival period.

Address:

7 Baitush Apts, 29th Road, Near Sigr Restaurant, off Waterfield Rd, Bandra W, Mumbai 400 050, INDIA
Open Monday to Friday: 2.30pm to 6.30pm
Contact: 99 00 21 17 98

How Many Seas is presented by What About Art?, with the support of Québec Government (Ministère des Relations internationales et de la Francophonie, Québec Government Office in Mumbai, Fonds de recherche – Société et culture); Faculty of Fine Arts, Concordia University; Post Image Research Cluster, Milieux Institute for Arts, Culture and Technology at Concordia and Hexagram International Network for Research-creation in Media arts, Design, Technology and Digital Culture.

¹ Marie Uguay. *L'Outre-vie*. Montreal, Éditions du Noroît, 1976 (our translation).

The exhibition is made up of 11 inkjet prints on Flex banner, 138 cm high, between 200-225 cm wide.



Jessica Auer, *Strandarfall_January 19th*, 2015, 138 x 192,6 cm, inkjet print

As I approached the bend in the road, I stopped to watch the snow squalls as they glided up the fjord. White against grey. White folding over blue. Behind me, the town which rests in the mountains' shadow for months at a time somehow shone in a warmer, more welcoming light. After taking an especially deep breath, I continued straight for the dense blanket of snow ahead believing that eventually I would come out the other side.



Bogdan Stoica, *Costel, or the Contemporary Slave*, 2016, 138 x 190 cm, inkjet print

She would never give you a cigarette break! Work without rest! Let's work, but like humans! Why should I work like a madman? I look at my plate. What is the use of these leftovers? Nothing edible about it. Just bones. — He will soon have his pay. The 21st or the 22nd. You would not see him again, except that he has nowhere to go. He will come back. He will spend his money. He will exhaust everything in one day.



Chih-Chien Wang, *Thread on Water*, 2015, 138 x 188,6 cm, inkjet print

So I took a photo of the water, I looked at it for a while, maybe a day or two, and thought of the shape of the waves and how the time flew. Gradually the water started to move, then again the movement turned into a photo. It shifted between action and stillness as if time somehow was trapped but sometimes wasn't.



Andrea Szilasi, *Fishermen*, 2015, 138 x 205,2 cm, inkjet print

I found myself in the possession of a large and imposing 19th century art history book with doublure binding and gilt edges. Slowly, I began to claim the book as my own by cutting out some images and by gluing in others. On this particular page, the disjointed worlds of the opera and fishermen co-exist.



Celia Perrin Sidarous, *Vibration (Kerameikos)*, 2016, 138 x 184 cm, inkjet print

Excavations began in 1863. Many of the monuments at Kerameikos site are plaster replicas as the originals are housed and conserved in museums. The walls of the adjacent Kerameikos Archaeological Museum are extended by several porticoes, that run along its perimeter. The river Eridanos is nearby.



Lise Latreille, *Breakwater, Toronto Island*, 2015, 138 x 205,2 cm, inkjet print

There were many indistinguishable days, many indistinguishable walks up and down the beach in search of something, or nothing: a nothing to set apart, a nothing that corresponded with something in me that I couldn't identify until I saw its shape in the world.



Marie-Christine Simard, *Daniel, Gagnon Airfield*, 2009, 138 x 190.7 cm, inkjet print

The only way out of Gagnon, a mining town in Northern Quebec, was by plane or train. The airstrip was the main connection to the rest of the world and despite his fear of flying, Daniel flew to Baie-Comeau often to attend school or figure skating competitions.



Velibor Božović, *Carved in Stone, Fatnica, Bosnia & Herzegovina*, 2011, 138 x 223 cm, inkjet print

Who did a 14th century's stone mason in a village of Fatnica in Herzegovina have in mind carving this man and woman, bit by bit? The deceased? Or did he see his heroic self, sword in hand, protecting a beautiful neighbour he was in love with?



Jinyoung Kim, *Objects on the Rooftop, Unfold*, 2014, 138 x 188,6 cm, inkjet print

Goryeong in 2013. Mountains, electric fans, drawers, chairs and mirrors, bricks and bookshelves, shelves and coat hanger. Roads, cars, power lines and heatwave. And the walls that only came up to my chest.



Jacques Bellavance, *Raufarhólshellir*, 2016, 138 x 188,6 cm, inkjet print

The cold breeze led us to an icicle field, we would not progress further on that day.

About What About Art?

WAA is an arts management agency started by French arts manager Eve Lemesle. WAA works within and offers technical expertise to the growing Indian art scene. WAA provides apposite infrastructure to artists for production, fabrication and site installation. The agency also offers expertise to curators, galleries, museums and collectors to set up large exhibitions, public art projects and to maintain collections.

WAA has organised several international artist exchange programs, and handled projects for artists such as Shilpa Gupta, Rashid Rana, William Kentridge, Nikhil Chopra, Tejal Shah, Raymonde April, Sunil Gawde and Charles Freger.

The WAA Residency and Studios offer affordable studio space in the heart of Bandra. Its aim is to support the needs and economies of emerging artists and provides a structure that includes production management and immediate access to the city’s art network. The residency is open to artists working in all fields of visual art.

Most recently, WAA hosted Canadian artist Sarah Pupo, CALQ recipient for 2016, for a four month long residency.

About FOCUS

FOCUS Photography Festival Mumbai was launched in 2013. Modelled on the democratic nature of photography, the premise of the festival revolves around making its rich history freely accessible to all. FOCUS extends out of the gallery space and onto the walls, shops and cafes of Mumbai as well into the very streets of the city. Working with a cross-section of different spaces, the festivals aims to not only celebrate the art form through an eclectic choice of artists and new cultural collaborations, but also to reach and engage with a diverse array of visitors. One such space is Bandra’s Carter Road where How Many Seas will face both the public and the sea.

