

JULIETTE AGNEL

Photography / Video

www.julietteagnel.com

Ø (île) / Maria-Laura Cavaliere

Born in 1973, Juliette Agnel currently lives and works in Paris. In the exhibition Ø (île), Juliette Agnel presents for the first time a series of photographs and videos shot during her residency on the small island of Halsnøy in Norway. The iconography of the artist's travels and surroundings are prevalent in most of her productions, serving as a metaphor for an internal journey, an initiatory voyage. By intertwining lyricism and introspection, the artist unveils a landscape that is reminiscent of the atmosphere of an Ossian poem, or the esthetic of painter Caspar D. Friedrich – who celebrated nature as both an ideal and tragic setting, and celebrated in his paintings the island of Rügen, located in the Baltic Sea.

In 2011, Juliette Agnel built a digital camera obscura, an experimental tool that blends the "primitive" esthetic of "poor" photography with the contemporary and innovative aspects of digital photography. The exposure time is long, allowing the artist to experience the material and to give the emotions time to reach internal maturation. The chromatic composition, the grain and the light within her photographs are reminiscent of pictorial practices and are obtained through an intricate and sophisticated exploration of matter and image duration.

Thus, the photographic medium dilates time, enabling the transition from cinema to painting, and projecting viewers into a dreamlike dimension. The artist, faced with the immensity of nature, makes use of the solitude and vastness of her surroundings to question her emotions, meditate upon her thoughts, her ghosts, and reflect upon the meaning of life and death. The set of images and the work as a whole is based on elements derived from the natural décor – the sea, the sky, the sun, the fog, the island – as well as the interior of the artist's temporary residence, a house located on ancient monastic ruins and surrounded by Viking tombs.

The plasticity of the recordings and the careful attention given to a primitive and pictorial esthetic allow the photographs of the Ø (île) series to immerse its viewers into a Goethe novel, and one can hear young Werther declaring his delightful discovery of "...pathless wilds, surrounded by impetuous whirlwinds, where, by the feeble light of the moon, we see the spirits of our ancestors..."
