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Press kit

ELLAS

Karen Paulina Biswell

March 09, 2023

April 22, 2023

**Opening March 08th 2023*

**Action Poetry March 21st 2023*

Gallery Intervalle

23, rue Le Peletier

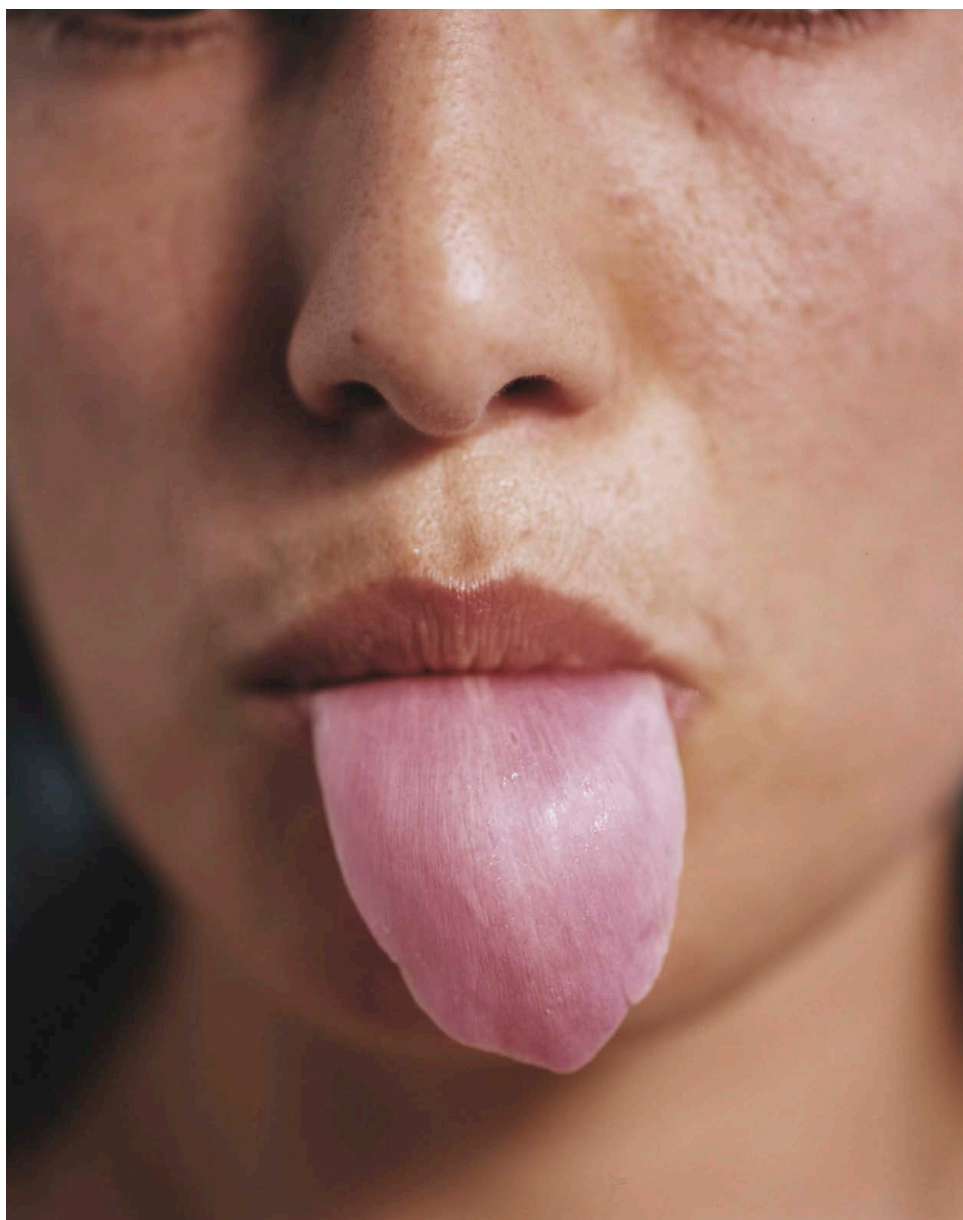
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vanesa, ellas album II, c-type hand printing, 60x50 cm ed.3 out of 5 + 1 AP.

PRESS RELEASE

Intervalle Gallery is very pleased to exhibit for the first time the work of a major artist of the Colombian and international scene. Karen Paulina Biswell (1983) shares her life between Bogota and Paris. «Ellas» is far from the conceptual preoccupations sometimes dry and conventional. The artist exhibits a powerful and carnal female identity that defines her own status. The performative photographic work is rooted in the quest for a definition of the female gender. Karen Paulina Biswell creates a grey area between subjectivization and commodification that stimulates a critical look at femininity. Her subjects express an unspoken claim that excludes passivity. The ambivalence of the postures and the exaggerated casualness forbid any classification.

Karen Paulina Biswell's photographs can be found in public and institutional collections such as the Musée du Quai Branly - Jacques Chirac, Pérez Art Museum, Miami, the Museo del Banco de la Republica, Colombia, the Collection des Rencontres de la Photographie, Musée Réattu, Arles, as well as the MAMM - Museo de Arte Moderno de Medellin.

Text by Sophie Boursat, visual artist, writer and curator.

ELLAS*, exhibition that Karen Paulina Biswell presents today at the gallery Intervalle, is an important exhibition. It is important for Colombian photography, because it affirms the vitality and creativity of the analog photography introducing to us prints of an exceptional quality, but above all because it confirms the artistic dimension of Karen Paulina Biswell's images in their performative quality, while she constantly pursues her research that digs deeper and deeper into the problems of existence of the female gender.

In the introduction to their joint essay "Thinking Anew," philosophers Lucy Irigaray and Michael Marder write:

"We must also return to our sexual identity and learn how to inhabit it as a framework, starting from which we can relate to the environment, to the other(s), and, first of all, to ourselves. Instead of resorting to the external equipment – or the Gestell – of technology, we can approach the whole from the morphologic place, which corresponds to our sexual identity without letting ourselves be reduced to a neutralised "whatever" individual. We can, in this way, keep and cultivate our natural energy. What is more, being sexual provides us with additional energy, which allows us to resist our subjection to the undifferentiated technical energy and to build a human relational world, capable of ensuring the coexistence between us without any domination or exclusion of other living beings."

It is in this same perspective of investigation of the sexual identity that she has made hers for several years that Karen Paulina Biswell weaves deep links with the plant world and that she uses it today fully as an ally of her work. For, like female sexuality, the plant world has always been surrounded by mysteries. "Vita in plantis es occulta" said Saint Thomas Aquinas, which is why, explains Michael Marder, these occult memories give rise to totemism and fertility rites. But Karen's works, far from the archaisms, open especially on the "arches" of a new feminism which would consider itself today more phenomenological than societal.

Because ELLAS* is them and more than all of us, her models, Karen chooses to photograph them always displaced in an exterior, free of any sign of sociological assignment, of social classification. No pressure is put on them so that in this "here and now" the reality of their lives can manifest itself.

PRESS RELEASE

No pressure weighs on them so that in this “here and now” can manifest the reality of their power. Heroines of all possibilities, divine women in the sense of a divine without beginning or end, here they are photographed as queens enthroned by this centered immobility where animal intelligence and vegetable knowledge merge, simultaneously offered and ready to take over the world and the hearts of men, fatal by this latent capacity to accomplish these instantaneous changes of state where the song of Eros begins.

Karen Paulina Biswell associates this generative power with that of the bees, so the honey flows in this exhibition, a manifestation of exchange and the power of giving that belongs to the natural world. A fusion takes place and the bodies themselves become vegetalized. The sumptuous “cathedralization” of the wombs unfolds, where a plant life whispers, smiles and grazes. The solidly planted bones become “arche”, the point of origin of a sacralized architecture in a movement of spiritual verticalization, while out of our sight, but still turned towards the light, passages are made, brazen strategies far from all common knowledge. What we know about women’s desire is often that we know nothing or so little about it. Paradox of the luxuriance of the corollas and of a culture of silence where the bodies secrete and the sensitivities bloom by the constant work of a desire at work.

A desire to be considered with the greatest seriousness and the greatest respect because today it is a question of our very survival. *Mutatis Mutandis*, if the things that need to be changed are changed, then the secret of the plant remains the whole secret of the plant, behind the silence of women lies the key to the future of the whole of humanity. Thus, the attempts of objectivizations of our positivist sciences will not be able to make anything there, it is hardly if we will see by a half-opened mouth, the germination of a truth revealing itself in a half-darkness.

*Ellas : Them

* Gestell: term used by Heidegger to describe what lies behind and under modern technology
(The question concerning technology, 1954)



natalia, ellas album II, c-type hand printing, 30x40 cm ed.4 out of 5 + 1 AP.

Intervalle Gallery

Since 2014, Intervalle advocates for a dozen French and foreign artists and promotes their work. The gallery, dedicated mainly to the photographic medium, connects neophyte buyers, collectors, amateurs and institutions with the artists that inspire it. The gallery is particularly interested in politically charged images and in artists who confront the world in a sometimes-documentary way.

After 8 years of activity in the Belleville district of Paris, Intervalle will move in 2022 to a new space at 23 rue Le Peletier in the 9th arrondissement. Intervalle regularly presents its artists in the most demanding exhibitions (Paris Photo, Art Paris, Approche Paris, etc.). The gallery is affiliated with the Centre National des Art Plastique (CNAP).

Karen Paulina Biswell

Born to Colombian parents who emigrated to Paris escaping the extreme political violence of the early 90's. Based on her amphibious experience between the western European world and a visual attraction to the reality underlying the romantic rhetoric of indigenous peoples, she constructs a visual universe that generates intense tensions between the historical past, mythical time and contemporary present. The images that Biswell reveals are moments that manifest as a ritual essence, at the same time they evoke the classic editorials of fashion publications.

Her varied oeuvre – which is consistently defying definition – is drawn to subjects of vulnerability morality and human fate. She is committed to capturing the lesser known aspects of contemporary life, the invisible and defiant elements of society, taking a deep interest in extreme states and the depths of the human mind and experience.

Biswell recently participated in the Dusseldorf Photo + Biennale with the wildpalms gallery, showing her latest project “KIMA” a collaboration with Maria Amilbia Siagama Siagama, guardian of the memory of the Embera community. In November 2021, she invests one of the rooms of the famous Parisian hotel La Louisianne, rue de Seine, for an installation-performance with her alter-ego AICANON, entitled Villa Eden under the curatorship of Pascal Beausse. In 2018 the program of photographic residencies of the Museum of Quai Branly - Jacques Chirac, allows him to realize his project “Dear Pipi,” in French Guiana. Continuing the themes addressed in this work during his stay in China - the body, interface to understand the different and the unknown - the installation “Body” is presented in 2019 at the A4 Art Museum in Chengdu.

His photographs have been shown in exhibitions at Espacio 23 Miami, the Momenta Image Biennial in Montreal, 60 Wall Gallery - Deutsche Bank, New York, the Vasarely Foundation in Aix-en-Provence, the Museum of Modern Art in Medellin, the Cité International des Arts in Paris and the Rencontres de la Photographie in Arles.

Karen Paulina Biswell has been nominated for the 8th edition of the Prix Pictet, the Higashikawa Award in Japan, the Gd4 Photo art Award by MAST Foundation and the Prix de la Photo Madame Figaro in Arles in 2016, the Masterclass World Press Photo-Joop Swart in 2014. In 2022, she won the first prize at the Strike a Pose festival in Dusseldorf, and the honorable mention of the IX Premio Colombo-Suizo de fotografía (Colombia) in 2013.

Her work is part of the public and institutional collections of the Musée du Quai Branly - Jacques Chirac, the Museo del Banco de la Republica, Colombia, the Jorge M. Pérez collection, the collection of the Rencontres d'Arles and the MAMM - Museum of Modern Art in Medellin.

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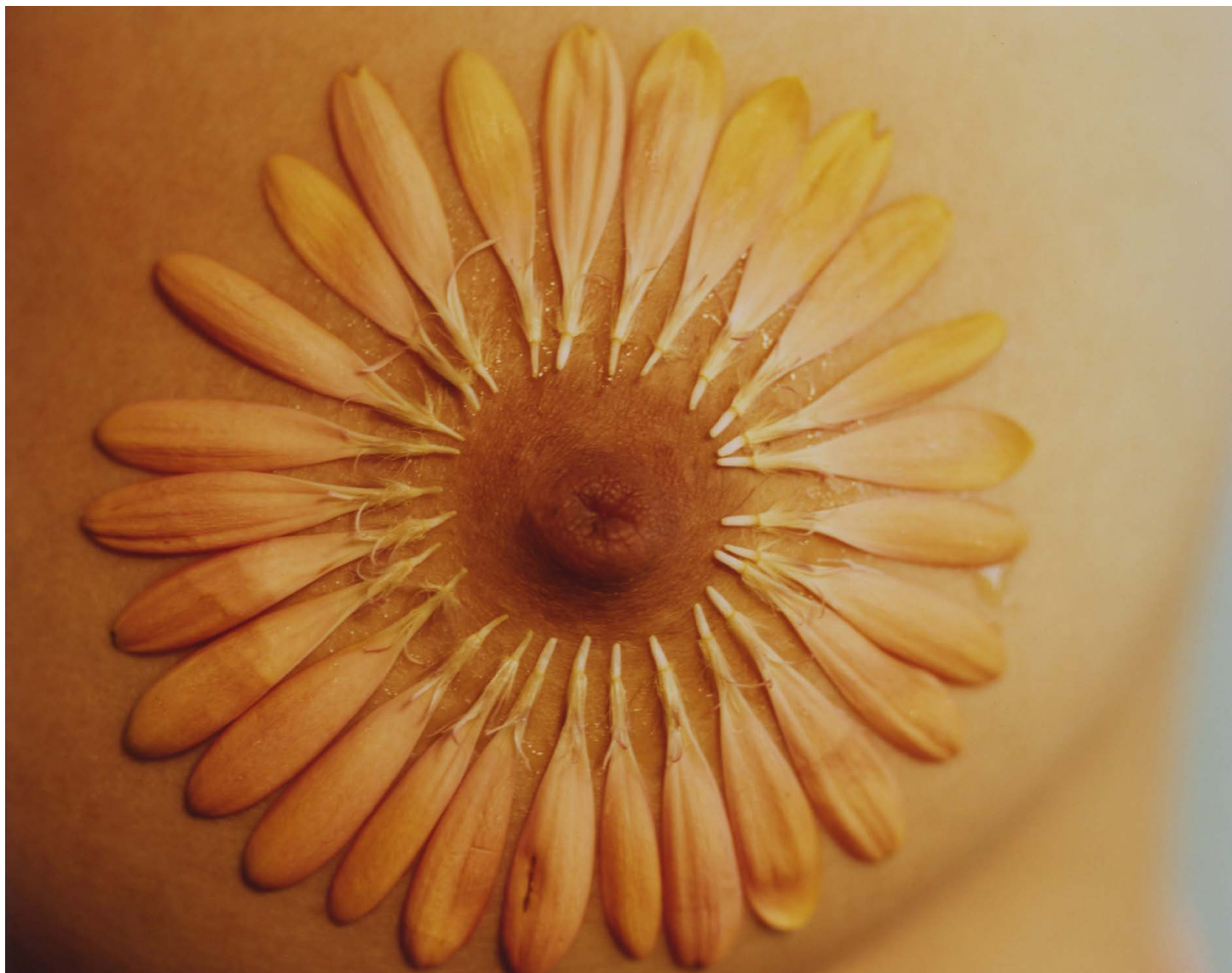


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