

## PRESS RELEASE // CAROLINE PAGÈS GALLERY



Manuela Marques, *Don 1*, 2013. Archival pigment print on RC paper, 60 x 97 cm, Ed. 3 + 2 AP

### Manuela Marques

#### *Backstage*

**Opening Friday, November 22 at 10 pm**

November 22 – January 25, 2014

#### Caroline Pagès Gallery

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Manuela Marques has developed work centred on the question of the image and the visibility processes linked to it. I am referring here to a specific type of image, namely images that can be reproduced - something associated above all with the practice of photography but also with video work. Both media retain a close relationship to their subjects, whether this relationship is of an indexational or digital nature, and in Manuela Marques' work this relationship always takes on a sense of construction. Her works can at present be categorised more readily into the social/anthropological field than into that of psychology. They document specific realities, but do not for this reason present them as obvious wholes. On the contrary, and as a result of conscious choices, framing, perspective and other techniques, each reality presented displays levels of ambiguity and oddity which disturb our understanding of it, and remind us that our experience of the real is one of constant mismatch.

*Backstage*, the most recent individual exhibition by the artist, returns again to these same concerns through a selection of new photographic and video works produced in Ahmedabad, the largest city in the

state of Gujarat, India. Just like in her previous project, produced in São Paulo<sup>1</sup>, here too the city is the central point of reference, despite the fact that the most frequently adopted perspectives are frontal and close-ups. We are talking about direct points of view, which nevertheless run counter to the very effect of linearity they create, providing us snapshots of everyday life in Ahmedabad that are based on its history, customs, habits and people but at the same time draw away from these references; in both cases visually reconfiguring the life of the city.

The first room contains different plays on opacity and transparency. The photos in the series *Backstage*, taken at night and in backlighting, reveal strongly chromatic abstract compositions, which suddenly transform into backstreet views of a street market next to a garden fence, all the while blurring the distinction between indoor and outdoor space. In *Cerf-Volant*, the contrast between light and shade produces one sole image, taken from a low angle, where the branches and leaves of a tree are seen under an intensely lit sky. However the unexpected presence of a toy (a paper parrot) amidst the foliage by chance adds another reality to that view, unveiling its meanings.

In the second room an additional two photos taken from a closer perspective draws our attention further towards small details or to everyday rituals and how they resonate with signals of social distance or proximity, respectively. In *Don*, a hand offers something unapprehensive to someone unknown, while the allusion to an encounter reappears metaphorically in the shape of the fire in *Feu*.

The specific characteristics of street work are also evoked and reworked by the artist's camera in the remaining two rooms. In *Lucky Charm* - a sort of inventory of motorcycle handlebars<sup>2</sup> decorated with kerchiefs - the effect of repetition, linked to the idea of photographic series, to work and to ritual, coexists with the impression of uniqueness arising from the patterns and colours of each of those charms. Through the genre of portraiture, however - in this case portraits of street vendors - both the photograph *Travailleur 1* and the video *Travailleur 2*, shown in the last room, develop visual aberrations which are superimposed on the faces, making them more or less difficult to identify. While the transparency of the soap bubbles in the photograph still allow us to perceive a face, the bubble in the video, shot in extreme close up, as it is being blown, gradually obscures the face until the point when it is replaced by a blue blot that in equal measure dazzles and destabilises our perception.

Through the use of ever-closer perspectives, Manuela Marques makes this exhibition move gradually from its starting point of the visual towards the social. She then uses the social perspective as a starting point from which to extract consequences of a visual order, without one field nullifying the other.

Sofia Nunes, November 2013  
Translated by Nadia Alves

**Manuela Marques** (PT/FR b. 1959) lives and works in Paris.

Her first solo show in Portugal took place at the *Encontros da Imagem* in Braga, 2002. In 2005 her work was selected for the Lisbon's Photography Biennale and in 2011 she was awarded the BESphoto prize.

Since the beginning of the 90s, Manuela Marques has been showing her work regularly at many French institutions such as the National Photography Centre, the Ile-de-France Photography Centre, the Malraux Museum, Auvergne and Upper Normandy Contemporary Art Regional Centres, Chamarande's Departmental Domain, the Lambert Collection and the Agnès B Gallery. In Brazil, Marques' work was shown in São Paulo at the Vermelho Gallery, Estação Pinacoteca and Museum of Image and Sound, in Brasília at the Contemporary Cultural Space and Modern Art Museum, and in Niterói at the Contemporary Art Museum.

Collectively, her work has also been shown in Madrid (PhotoEspaña), New York (Schroeder Romero Gallery) and Canada (Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, among other institutions).

Manuela Marques' work can be found in many public collections in France such as the National Fund of Contemporary Art in Paris, the Regional Fund of Contemporary Art in Auvergne, the Malraux Museum Collection, Chamarande's Departmental Domain, Camões Institute in Paris and the Agnès B Collection. In Portugal, it can be found in the Berardo Collection and Banco Espírito Santo Photography Collection in Lisbon as well as in the Image Museum Collection in Braga. Her work is also included in the Wedge Collection in Toronto and the BES Investment Collection in São Paulo.

**For more information and visuals please contact the gallery at [+315] 21 387 33 76 or [+351] 91 679 56 97 or email us at [gallery@carolinepages.com](mailto:gallery@carolinepages.com).**

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<sup>1</sup> Which earned her the Portuguese BES Photo Award in 2011

<sup>2</sup> A means of transport widely used by local workers