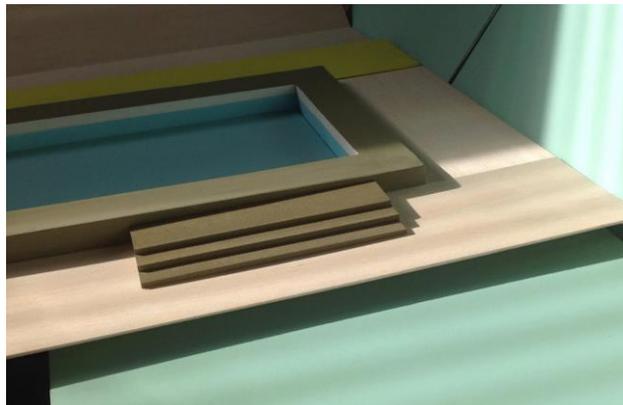
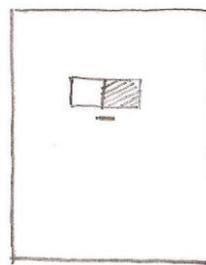


PRESS RELEASE // CAROLINE PAGÈS GALLERY



Raija Malka, Model for 'Torment', 2015



▨ Livro
□ Mesa
— Cadeira

Raija Malka

While the city sleeps

Thierry Simões

Vision of a path knowledge felt all around

Opening Saturday, September 26 from 5 to 8 pm

September 26 – November 18, 2015

Caroline Pagès Gallery

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Two sighs, two nostalgias

In the hospitality offered by someone extending an invite, the risk of being expelled from their own house should be implicit. Perhaps this will be a solution to the migratory crises we are currently witnessing. Its opposite would be "hostipitality", a neologism coined by Jacques Derrida to designate the perversions inherent in the process of welcoming someone arriving from without. There are intolerable sweeps, that kind of hostility that is blindingly obvious; but there are also those who welcome those arriving unconditionally, outside of the law. You should not ask an unknown person to identify themselves; they should be received with arms wide open, no questions asked, and without delay. Shelter is all that is needed for this type of politics without an end.

There is an engraving by Thierry Simões which was started in Canada over fifteen years ago. We will not describe it, because it is indecipherable and has changed, over time, an innumerable number of times. An etching on copper, where through a tangle of figures two stretcher-bearers can be seen. This is the image of an accident, a war, a moment when everything has to be salvaged. The different proofs of the state of this mutating work constitute evidence of life: you can make out differences, changed habits, changes in the weather. There are sunny days, showers, intense rain, fog, and storms. Words to read: the distance from hospitality to hospital is not all that great. And then you have the hospice: hospitality hospital hospice.

Ten prints produced based on the original plate, in 1999-2015. These are unique works. hospitalité hospital hospice. Derrida, Deleuze and Foucault. The laws of hospitality, of critique and of the clinic: the lives of infamous, vagrant, undocumented men. In these landscapes described by

Thierry Simões, there are two stretcher-bearers, who have had their hands full for over fifteen years. They are trying to save lives caught up in a tangle of risks. It reminds us of another series, Goya's "Los Desastres de la Guerra" ("The Disasters of War"). Plate 24, titled "Aun podrán servir" ("They can still be of use", 1810-1814) shows stretcher-bearers transporting a wounded man. One of them looks at us, facing us. Around him, victims are being gathered up, supposedly with the idea of sending them back to the battlefield.

"Vision of a path knowledge felt all around" is the title given by the artist to this presentation of his works. The phrase was inscribed on the copper plate in 1999, when the artist was in residence in Halifax, Nova Scotia, in Canada. (With the impulsive act of writing, a typographical error was introduced – "felt" became "fall". This turned the phrase closest to Goya and his disasters into: "a path knowledge fall all around.") The double meaning is maintained in the work of Thierry Simões. Based on his exiles, on his languages, not just his mother- and "father tongues", but also on a place of welcoming, which can be his studio, he creates an untranslatable work: "I wanted to emphasise the space where the book of prints will be left for consultation, the room plan which indicates the position of the table – and the book – and which in my idea echoes the title. But there is also the fact of the image that evolves over time, without fixing ourselves on any particular one, and you might say that the printed image is the 10 printed images, as well as the empty space which separates them..."¹

A path of knowledge felt everywhere, and all around. According to the typo, that path to knowledge ends up collapsing around us – translation is betrayal, and in this journey between languages, so often the sense is lost. There are different types of proof of this: between Goya's print and Thierry's prints, nothing has changed. The witness is still there, looking at us. The stretcher-bearers are tangled up in the landscape. They follow their path – one of knowledge that can fall apart at any moment. The title is echoed in a print, in a room plan, in a written text. The original plate can still be of use. And through that constant revisiting, you always reach the original moment, that cannot be repeated. The ten prints contain within them the space and time that separates them. The author is constantly betraying his first impulse, as if there were a need to notice that instant that is constantly escaping. Perhaps it is this betrayal that leads him to approach that absence, that death that is repeated, piled up, in a tangle of risks in constant uprootedness.

There is a question which starts with an observation, namely that of the unbreakable link between the maternal and death. The question, put by Anne Dufourmantelle, is: "Can we forget our own language, because it has betrayed, the way we forget our dead?" Derrida responds: "The question of the foreigner concerns what happens at death and when the traveller is laid to rest in a foreign land. 'Displaced persons,' exiles, those who are deported, expelled, rootless, nomads, all share two sources of sighs, two nostalgias: their dead ones and their language..."²

It is in the corridor of the gallery that Thierry Simões has sought the encounter with Raija Malka. In this space, an empty chair appears, which extends the visible voids in the paintings of the Finnish artist. Two texts suggest one action: "Visualize a sheet placed on a chair. Unfold it." and "Visualize a sheet placed on a chair. Fold it." There is an absence, and the image suggested is that of a shroud, which also transports us to Goya's "Desastres". And to the bodies piling up.

The initial impulse to place Thierry's and Raija's works in dialogue is owed to a certain idea of suspension which comes about in the works of both artists. That intention was overcome by the circumstances of a process, less of dialogue between the artists, and more of affirmation of their solitudes. That desire for a conversation is lost in the corridor, that passage that gives access to all the rooms. That is where you enter and leave the works, be that in the form of the prints, the texts or the paintings exhibited.

There could be other reasons behind bringing these two artists together at the same time: that of theatre, for instance. This is a common element shared by the works of Thierry and Raija. Their works contain elements that could be used as props in a play or for a performance. This has already been the case for both artists. Another shared theme is that of absence. And we could also add insomnia. It is known that Samuel Beckett suffered from insomnia throughout his life and that starting in the 1930's, he suffered from panic attacks, especially when he was alone in his room at nightfall.

¹ Translator's note: Translation of the original quote in French: "je voudrais mettre l'accent sur l'espace où sera déposé pour être consulté le livre de gravure, le plan de la salle marquant l'emplacement de la table – et du livre – le plan faisant selon mon idée écho au titre. Mais il y a aussi le fait de l'image qui évolue dans le temps sans se fixer sur aucune et l'ont dirait que l'image gravée est les 10 images gravées et l'espace vide qui les sépare..."

² Translator's note: Translation of citation taken from: Mieke Bat and Rent de Vries, Editors, *Of Hospitality – Anne Dufourmantelle invites Jacques Derrida to respond* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000)

The paintings of Raija Malka are brought together by the title "While the City Sleeps". One of the works is called "Last pair out". The painting yet again reveals, as do many other works, the artist's obsession with architecture and especially with edges, that place where two sides meet: here we have a representation where planes of colour converge on a corner, revealing a space that in spite of being definable tends towards abstraction, because paradoxically it escapes definition, given that it is impossible to find a real reference that is suitable for describing it. The image presented thus appears suspended in limbo, as if waiting to be materialized through a model, a stage set or in an exhibition hall. This has already been done with other paintings by this artist – there are elements present in the works that have later been transformed into sculptures, and that through that transition have gained a physicality which is no longer only that of the painting, but also that of a critical process, of the "mise en abyme".

A piece within a piece. A work within a work. The paintings of Raija Malka are potential works of architecture and sculpture. They are stages, and also shelters. In the title work of the exhibition, it is impossible not to notice a solar eclipse, fixed at the centre stage so that light will never return to the stage. In these places of solitude – hotel rooms, swimming pools, wells – on these screens where everything is projectable, in these works in the course of abstraction, everything tends towards a corner, a space of "Private confessions", as is the title of another canvas. From these abysses (a word of Greek origin meaning "bottomless"), which fold and unfold, come the echoes of the traditions of abstract and minimalist art, of the theatre of the absurd, of the "nouveau roman". The expression "mise en abyme" was coined by André Gide, who, in 1893 wrote on Shakespeare's Hamlet: "I rather like it when, in a work of art you find, transposed, on the level of the characters, the very subject of that work". And if in the work of Raija Malka the void is the image of this abyss, it can also be seen as the place of every imaginable possibility. This is also where the appeal to that most difficult of challenges fits in: that of hospitality. While the city sleeps, you read: "Regretting, that's what helps you on, that's what gets you on towards the end of the world, regretting what is, regretting what was, it's not the same thing, yes, it's the same, you don't know, what's happening, what's happened, perhaps it's the same, the same regrets, that's what transports you, towards the end of regretting."³

Óscar Faria, Oporto, September 2015

Raija Malka (FIN, born in 1959) lives and works in Lisbon and Helsinki. She graduated from the School of Arts, Design and Architecture at the Aalto University in 1985, and was a resident at the La Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris from 1991 to 1997.

Solo exhibitions include *Gymnasion*, curated by Isabel Carlos, Centro de Arte Moderna – Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon (2013); *Waiting for Godot*, Teatro São Luiz, Lisbon (2013) and Teatro Municipal de Almada, PT (2012); *Tidelines*, Borusan Music House, Istanbul, TUR (2012) and Kiasma – Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki (2011). Her work was also exhibited in institutions such as the Amos Anderson Art Museum, Helsinki; Kunsthalle, Helsinki and Lönnström Art Museum, Rauma, FIN.

Malka's work can be found in the public collections of the Helsinki Design Museum; Turku Art Museum, FIN; Sampo, Turku, FIN; Finnish State Art Commission; Saastamoinen Foundation, FIN; Helsinki City Art Museum and Amos Anderson Art Museum, FIN.

Thierry Simões (FR, born in 1968) lives and works in Lisbon. His work has been shown regularly at Sismógrafo, curated by Óscar Faria, Oporto, PT (2014 and 2015); Centro de Artes José de Guimarães, curated by Nuno Faria, Guimarães, PT (2013 and 2012); and Galeria Quadrado Azul, Lisbon and Oporto, PT. It was also exhibited in institutions such as the Fundação Carmona e Costa, Lisbon (2013); and the Museu da Cidade de Lisboa (2009).

His work can be found in the public collections of the Madeira Corporation Services, Funchal, PT; the Fundação Carmona e Costa, Lisbon; and OTR espaço de arte, Madrid, among others.

³ Translator's note: Quote from Samuel Beckett, *The Unnamable* (London: Faber & Faber, 2012)

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