

## **LOCAL ANTHROPOGENIES – PHYLOGENESIS**

### **A PHOTOGRAPHIC HISTORY OF PHOTOGRAPHY**

## **30. PIERRE RADISIC (ONU, 1958)**

### **Geological orchestration**



Pierre Radisic

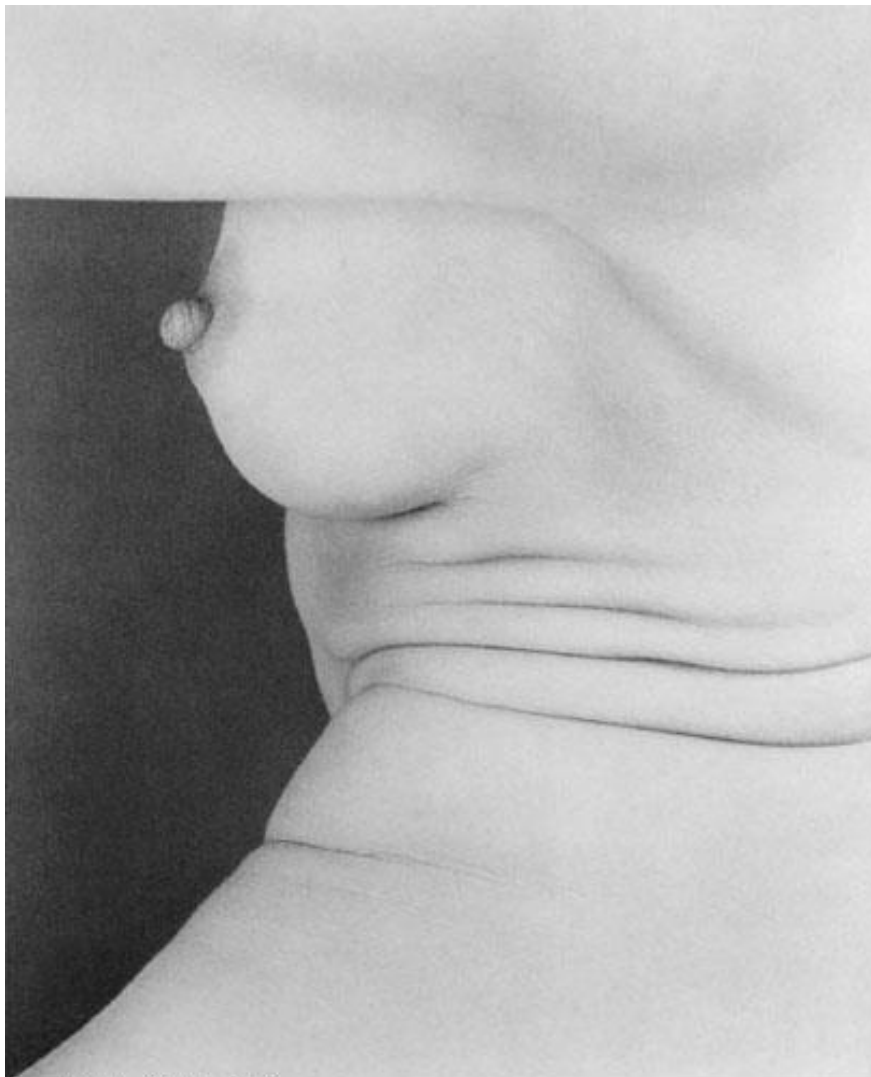
A century and a half of photography leads us to believe that an isolated photo, as it is an immediate recording, could not have the orchestral deployment of Olympia's Apollo, of a Piero della Francesca fresco, or of Mallarmé's 'O si chère de loin', or still, of Mozart's *Don Juan* 'Ah! Chi mi dice mai'. Pierre Radisic, who fed off classical and contemporary music, searched for a path to photographic orchestration through the geological effect favoured by the indicial nature of photography. And took two paths that were almost contrary.

The first is the most obvious. Let us intensify the negative under the electronic 1500 joules flash slightly above and from the side, so that any pore or hair of a skin stands erect or ploughs like ground accidents. When we reach our destination, let us impose an 'excessive' development to the print, 46 X 56 cm, which will magnify the geology of the surfaces through the grain. However, the orchestration is still timid, and one finally resorts to the good old graphic touch up, using a paintbrush and ink. Whereas the latter had previously compensated what was too abrupt in photos, it now reinforces the local extravagances, leading them to granular intensities in between which resonances of aberrances develop. In a word, it boosts up the photographical.



Pierre Radisic, *Lucky*, Cliché, 5

Among the most fertile grounds to bear this cataclysmic orchestration, the first that we will observe is the adult human face, which is the result of a branched-off phylogenesis aged of several millions of years and an ontogenesis furrowing with emotions, resentment, social openings and stereotypes, and libidinal singularities. In the *Couples* (PHPHJ13; Zoom January 1983), geological accidents stuck out even more as they contrasted through the comparison between two male/female faces whilst retaining their singularity as they were photographed and framed separately. Human trunks could also be suitable as far as they were no longer grasped as 'wholes' consisting of the integral parts of WORLD 2 or as aggregatively pulsatory elements of WORLD 1, but as autonomous tissue accidents through which we recognize WORLD 3. The orchestrated geology beats like a drum on the black, shiny, forged trunk of most-African *Lucky* (\*\*Cliché, 5), and resonates as a gamelan on the pale, smooth, stretched trunk of Vietnamese *Marilou* (\*\*CI, 4).



Pierre Radisic, *Marilou*, CI, 4

We shall not be taken aback by the fact that, since 1990, Pierre Radisic has tested an almost opposite journey, since geology is not solely sedimentary and volcanic rocks, but also metamorphic rocks. In other words, they are the secret changes of form and texture as well as deposit and eruption. Instead of boosting up from the very start, one may, to the contrary, underboost the crawling confusions of an underbrush in the Forest de Soignes or the Cévennes in a virtually insignificant shooting that retains the almost formless potentialities translated on the positive through windows that are more translucent than transparent to reinforce their non-actuality.

Assuredly, orchestration again triggers touching up. However, this time, it will be chemical, no longer graphical, as when we are dealing with intimate metamorphoses. Seven activators (seven like the hues of the diatonic range) were selected: gold with red and blue effects, selenium with its mauve black effect, uranium and its brick red effect, antimony with its dark orange effect, vanadium with its yellow effect, sulphurs with their diverse brown effects, and secondary developers with their diversified blue effects. Then, on the plastic gradients of the shooting, the outline of a snail, a toad, a dragon, a totem, a mouth, an armpit, or sexual organs set going. As for photography, a 'chemically controlled catastrophe' (René Thom), the essence reached here is not a simple teratology of those particular perceptive catastrophes, but is the emergence of the underlying, of the fibre-space of the topologist who, without being a form yet, is filled with possible forms (they are not all) with their possible consecutions. And a bit of forest takes the intensity of a burning bush (\*).

We are indeed in 1990. Hence, in a post-modern manner, faraway from any Jansenism of the milieu: the means mobilized intersect from photography to painting to chemistry, as with many of our contemporaries. History reactivates itself at the same time as geology, and the transfigured forest has not shame in being culturally nameable, such as the *Freischütz* instead of the *Après-midi d'un faune*. The Bauhausian Combinatory has definitely given its place to the germinal and embryonic space of differential Topology. The reflected light image of painting and cinema gives way to the image in light emitted by television, which is no longer Robert Frank's black and white emitter but a colour emitter. Opera, so close to colour television (as Hergé had foreseen in *The Castafiore Emerald*), is omnipresent as the rustling of the orchestra and the accumulation of worm-eaten sets. The same underlying is trapped in the faces, in the underbrushes of the Cévennes, and in the chemical photography and the disturbing entrails of the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie (\*\*\*\*). And mankind, assuredly, far from being a microcosm, is now a state-moment of universe.



Pierre Radisic, *Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie, Bruxelles*

Pierre Radisic's chemical and alchemical sorcery is worthy of attention. It displays one of photography's virtualities but suggests more. The entire vision of the Western world, very mechanistic at the beginning (Greek temples and sculptures), becomes increasingly chemical. Everyday, we see that the Universe and Life are for a great part (the largest part) a question of chemistry and that there are really many neurotransmitters lying within our most intimate enthusiasms.

Prigorine and Stengers's *Nouvelle Alliance* marked many of our contemporaries in 1979. It is more of a mediation of chemists than of physicists. By a suggestive occurrence, it was written very close by to the workshops of Pierre Radisic and Colette Duck.

**Henri Van Lier**

**A photographic history of photography**

in *Les Cahiers de la Photographie*, 1992

*List of abbreviations of common references:*

CI: *Caméra International*, Paris.

The acronyms (\*), (\*\*), (\*\*\*) refer to the first, second, and third illustration of the chapters, respectively. Thus, the reference (\*\*\*) AP, 417) must be interpreted as: "This refers to the third illustration of the chapter, and you will find a better reproduction, or a different one, with the necessary technical specifications, in *The Art of Photography* listed under number 417".