

IRÈNE JONAS

THE SUITCASE

EXHIBITION: 5 NOVEMBER - 5 DECEMBER 2020

Each year, Galerie Thierry Bigaignon is happy to welcome an artist who it does not represent so as to shed some light on a body of work which is particularly interesting. Following the Japanese artist Hideyuki Ishibashi and his series « Présage » showed in 2019, the Parisian gallerist decided this year to exhibit Irène Jonas' series « The suitcase » which he personally fell in love with.



In this photographic quest conducted between 2018 and 2020, Irène Jonas takes us to places marked by history: Munich, Dachau, Prora, Nuremberg, Prague, Terezin, The Wolf's Lair, etc. Starting from a black and white print that she enhances with oil painting, Irène Jonas accentuates the absence of landmarks between past and present, the confusion between dream and reality to merge intimate memory and historical memory.

Sociologist and photographer, Irène Jonas integrates the image into much of her research. Her sociological work on the family photo led her to question the intersection between personal memory and history. Irène Jonas explains: "These photographs are stories that I tell myself, stories born at the crossroads of an intimate memory and a collective memory. They are the result of an inherited memory and an imaginary reconstruction, they do not tell the story of Nazism but approach an emotional awareness of what Nazism could have been".

From these places marked by the Holocaust, these places which symbolize this historical period that the artist did not live directly but which was impregnated through the words, then fed later by documentaries and books, Irène Jonas wanted re-creating a here and now seen through the filter of a childlike imagination marked by the past. Photographed like a period film, directing its lens and framing to exclude anything that did not relate to the image of the photographer's idea of this bygone era, each character is brought to play an independent role of the reality in which he had been seized.

A favorite series for Thierry Bigaignon, who says: "When Olivier Bourgoïn, from the *Révélateur* agency, came

to the gallery to present this work to me, I was immediately won over. This is a particularly deep series and produced with remarkable delicacy. Halfway between photography and painting, between imaginary narration and historical reality, between darkness and light, Irene takes us into a very special atmosphere that leaves traces when we leave the gallery".

Member of the *Révélateur* agency since 2016, Irène Jonas pursues a dual approach, one in black and white, the other in painted photographs. In 2018, she won the first FotoMasterclass prize and exhibited at Fotofever. In 2019, she exhibited at the Rennes Opera House on the theme of the Phantom Vessel and produced a projection of 80 photos on a musical piece by Jean Cras. Her book "Dormir, dit-elle" was published by Arnaud Bizational and "Crépuscules", from which the series "The Suitcase" was taken by Editions de Juillet.

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