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Special Issue:
Queering Photography

BLOOMSBURY

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Portfolio

A Plastic Tool

Maya RoCHAT

Keywords: photography, art, collage, visual experimentation, social critique, instinctive inspiration

"You simply do not know what you are looking at" is the starting point of my artistic research.

My impetus is to rebel against conformism with heterogeneous, unconventional ensembles of visual ensembles. My work fundamentally confronts photographs, subverting their content, their form, the linear narrative. I frontally propel them into a new dimension, into a brand new now, and maybe into a fantasy future.

Through queering photography, I am not directly questioning gender or sexual identities. I primarily question the photographic medium itself and explore its potential as a tool for engagement and possible change. Complexity and chaos is my weapon, my strategy; the multi-layered images are there to interrogate the spectator's perceptions, confusing their assumptions and ingrained readings.

In our daily life, images are good liars. I constantly observe how society creates ideas and imposes judgments through commercial, social and political visual languages: perfect colorful images = simple reading = maximum impact = status quo.

But I defend rough beauty, drawing with dirt, the smudging of what is sold as perfection, delessons, the human smell, all strange figures, aberrant behavior or simply being loud & free. I want a more exciting society to exist, if to be queer is rebelling against norms and against the conventional, the boring and the exploitative. If it is about creating a new world, then sign me in! We'll make it one image at the time.

Note

Maya RoCHAT uses photography as an investigation of reality—a tool as critical as it is poetic. At the intersection between photography, painting, installation, and video, she combines an instinctive inspiration with a strong visual sense. Her work has been exhibited in Switzerland as well as in Europe in duo, group, and award shows including at Fotomuseum Winterthur, Fotohof Sülzburg, CFG and BAC-Geneva, F-Stop Leiden. Her images have been

published in international journals and magazines such as *Aperture*, *British Journal of Photography*, *Corporix*, and *IPURE*. The "book" medium has a central place in her practice. Maja worked for three years with the publisher Delphine Bedel, Director of Menopace Press, a publishing

project focused on emerging editorial practices. From 2011 to 2012, Maja was a committee member of NEAR, a Swiss association for contemporary photography where she assumed the artistic direction of *Cheese Camo*, an edition promoting photography in Switzerland.



Fig 1 Maja Rochat, *Ginger Degr Is My Dream II*, from the series *Crystal Gear* (2014).

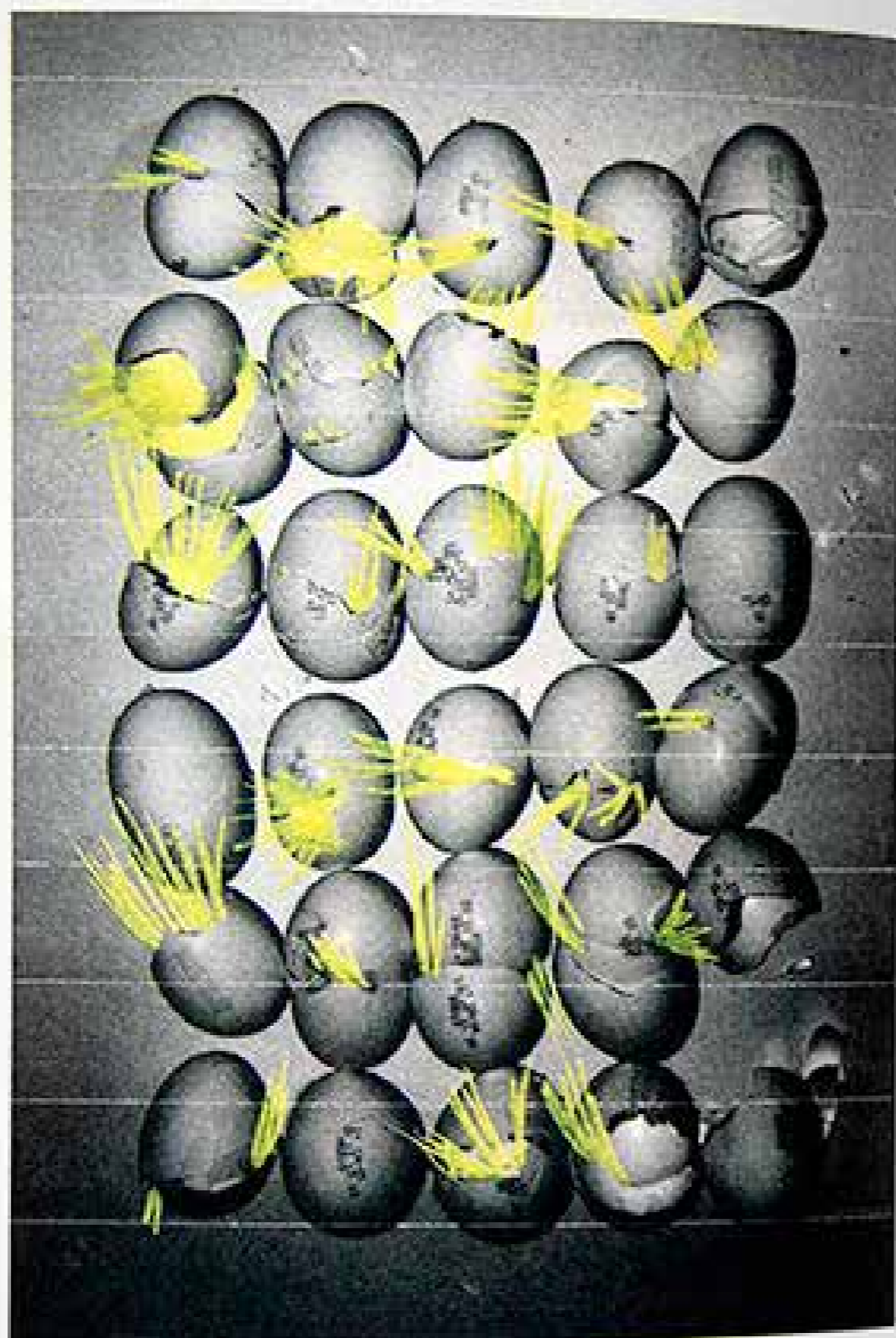


Fig 2 Maya Rochat, *Eggs*, from the series *Crystal Clear* (2014)



Fig 3 Maya Rochat, *Glossy Oryx is My Dream*, from the series *A Plastic Tool* (2014)



Fig 4 Maya Rodrat, *God's Vagina*, from the series *A Plastic Tool* (2014).



Fig 5 Maya Rodrat, *Rooms*, from the series *A Plastic Tool* (2014).



Fig 6 Maya Rodat, Room 2, from the series A Plastic Tool (2014).



Fig 7 Maya Rodat, Bun-fide muss da sein, from the series A Plastic Tool (2014).



Fig 8 Maya Rochat, *Nehr*, from the series *Crystal Clear* (2014).

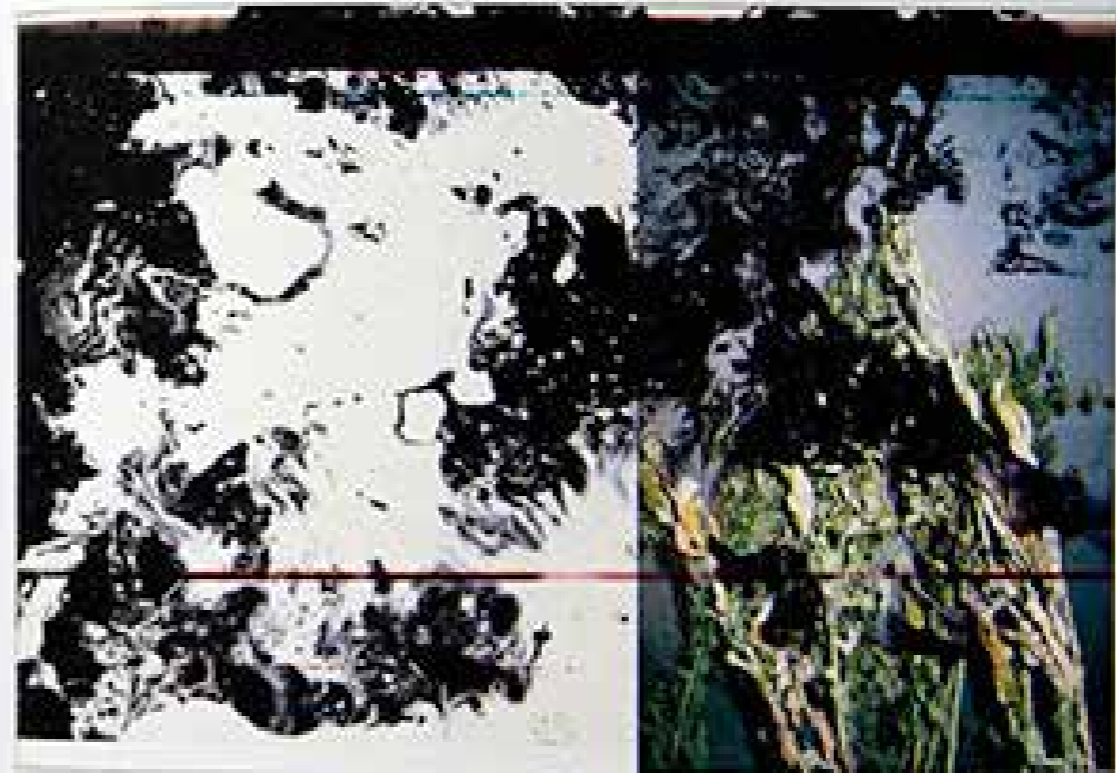


Fig 9 Maya Rochat, *INK*, from the series *Crystal Clear* (2014).

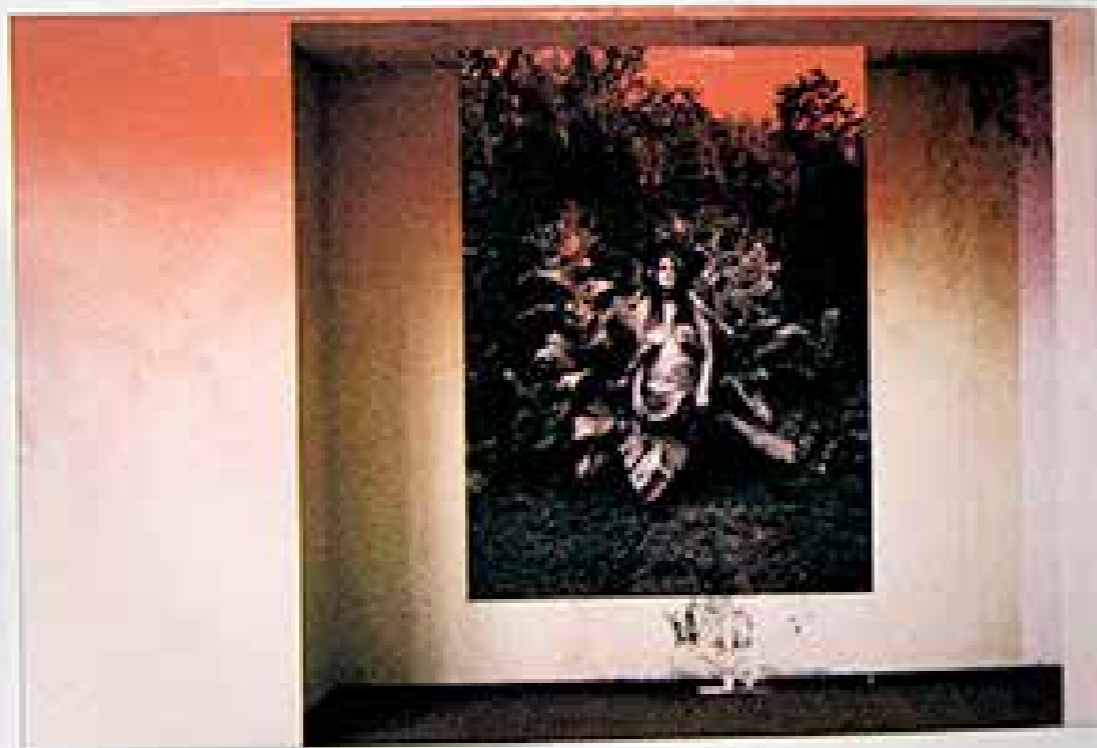


Fig. 10 Maya Róchat, *El fin del mundo*, from the series *Crysal Gear* (2011)

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Exhibition Review

Luigi Ghirri. *Pensare per immagini. Icone, Paesaggi, Architetture*

MAXXI National Museum of 20th Century Arts, Rome,
April 24—October 27, 2013, organized by Francesca Fabiani,
Laura Gasparini, and Giuliano Sergio

Reviewed by Beth Saunders

The retrospective exhibition *Luigi Ghirri. Pensare per immagini. Icone, Paesaggi, Architetture* (Luigi Ghirri: Thinking Through Images, Icons, Landscapes, Architecture) at MAXXI National Museum of 20th Century Arts in Rome, along with its accompanying catalog, present the prolific Italian photographer Luigi Ghirri (1943–1992) as a perceptive investigator and interpreter of a world already constructed of images. In its comprehensive display of over 300 photographs, artist's books, vintage catalogs, and personal ephemera, the exhibition asks viewers to think through and beyond individual photographs, and into the photographer's working method, by highlighting Ghirri's activities as curator, publisher, and collector; the curators of this exhibition, Francesca Fabiani, Laura Gasparini, and Giuliano Sergio, successfully argue that Ghirri's unique contribution to photography lay within the totality of his investigations, rather than any singular image, no matter how shrewdly composed.

The exhibition traces the development of Ghirri's career through a loose organization of three thematic groupings: icons, Landscapes, and Architecture. Derived from his extensive writings, some of which are excerpted as quotations printed on the gallery walls, these themes anchor the viewer within Ghirri's theories on photography and most frequent subjects. The museum's tote cards trace the series—or, in many cases, multiple series—in which each photograph appeared, demonstrating how Ghirri returned to certain images, reordering and recombining them to create different relationships and meanings throughout time. In fact, the same motifs repeat throughout the exhibition—palm trees, beaches, windows, mirrors, cameras, frames, etc.—such that Ghirri's visual lexicon threatens to unravel the viewer's sense of a curatorial authority beyond the photographer's own. Rather than presenting a problem, this strategy effectively immerses