



ELINA BROTHERUS
Les Femmes de la Maison Carré

Exhibition 26 September – 29 November 2015

Acclaimed Finnish photographer Elina Brotherus (b. 1972) confronts photography to classic codes of pictorial representation. With grace and delicacy, her photographs portray characters in their everyday and intimate moments. The photographer captures, in a daily space or a landscape, the universality of human emotions. In her selfportraits the artist is her own model, with a distance devoid of any narcissism.

Through a residency in Maison Louis Carré in May 2015, Elina Brotherus continued her exploration of the relationship between individual and space, responding to the environment of the house and its surroundings. Her new series "Les Femmes de la Maison Carré" will be exhibited in the show, with a selection of works made since 2000.

The exhibition is organized in collaboration with gallery gb agency, Paris, and Galleria Heino, Helsinki. It will be accompanied by a catalogue including a text by Susanna Pettersson, in Finnish, English and French, and presenting fourteen photographs of the series.

The blank page

Elina Brotherus and human-enlivened spaces



A woman sits at a table, holding asparagus. Her profile is depicted softly drawn through a window; the light is beautiful. Leafy trees are reflected in the glass. We are looking in through a window at the Maison Louis Carré.

Remaining on the other side of the glass are the building's interior and the person shown in the photograph. On this side of the glass are the rest of us. This is a key work in Elina Brotherus's photo series *Les Femmes de la Maison Carré* (2015), which crystallises the notion of a gliding between indoor and outdoor spaces.

Brotherus photographed the *Les Femmes de la Maison Carré* series during the summer of 2015. Space by space, indoors and out, she took over the Maison Louis Carré (1959) near Paris, which was designed by Alvar Aalto for the art dealer and gallery owner Louis Carré (1897-1977). This was essential in order to understand Aalto's architecture. The dialogue between interior and exterior spaces can also be seen in many of the works in the series, in which Brotherus skilfully uses reflections, mirror surfaces, light and shadows.

Brotherus literally shows us how the Maison Louis Carré's rooms and outdoor swimming pool area appear in different light at various times of day. She moved around, spent time in spaces, looked and made countless mental notes. Brotherus took photos when the light was at its best. Thus she followed architect Leonardo Mosso's observation of how light intensifies, wall by wall, climaxing with the incandescence of the midday sun.

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Speaking about architecture in 1967, Aalto stressed that "each task is different; its solutions cannot be made formulaically". He set the Maison Louis Carré amid an open landscape with

the Forest of Rambouillet visible on the western horizon. Aalto's strong hand can be seen everywhere, down to the tiny details, yet the result is unique.

The same is true of Brotherus's works. Although their language is completely recognisable as hers, the starting point of the photo series is once again a new one, formed on the site.

"I seek, do, find — and take pictures. I don't interfere with the space, but the human presence awakens it," Brotherus says.

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The name of the photo series, *Les Femmes de la Maison Carré (Women of the Maison Carré)*, spurs us to solve puzzles. A person in a picture signifies a place, proposes a narrative that we as viewers instinctively begin to construct. Who are these women? Where have they come from? What era do they represent? Could one of them be Luis Carré's wife or friend? In her works Brotherus includes history related to the building as well as to the life of its resident, Louis Carré.

The parties held in the house, the discussions held in the shelter of its walls, the nights spent in the bedrooms, the meals prepared in the kitchen and the time spent by the pool — all these come to life as fragmentary scenes. The sounds of life can be heard as a muffled murmur in the background of Brotherus's works. They bubble up from earlier layers of time only to fade in the background again a moment later — as if the images summon forth memories, scenes and feelings from the past.

"Pictures are like blank pages where a story is written regardless of me," Brotherus says.

The works form a cinematic entity made up of disconnected scenes, bound together by a visually consistent milieu. Just as Carré praised Aalto's masterful use of materials and saw his integrated expression as a form of poetry, Brotherus's pictures bring human presence and scale into the milieu.

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The human body had great significance for Aalto and his architectural contemporaries, particularly the Swiss-born Le Corbusier (1887-1965), who developed a modular scale system based on the human body. Its basic unit was a man standing with an arm stretched up. Le Corbusier was inspired by the Renaissance-era ideas of Vitruvius and Leon Battista Alberti, who studied the mathematic proportions of the body and which were concretely realised in Leonardo da Vinci's drawing *L'Uomo Vitruviano* (ca. 1490). Aalto worked using the same principles, though not as precisely as Le Corbusier.

Brotherus brings her own image and body into the space. The dance-like gestures familiar from her earlier works take on new meaning when brought into Aalto's architectonic framework.

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The pictures in *Les Femmes de la Maison Carré* are at once composed and natural. They are direct and mysterious. They live in this moment and in the past. They also effortlessly make

use of the structure and its surroundings. In practice, Brotherus walks into one of modern architecture's most iconic buildings and makes the experience completely her own.

Many contemporary artists such as Thomas Struth, Andreas Gursky, Candida Höfer and Ola Kolehmainen have photographed and interpreted iconic buildings. The reference point for Brotherus's works is not however to be found among these photographers of architecture and various kinds of interiors, but in depictions of people's presence and existence. The spaces and the figures who appear in them fit together organically. The space is not a stage set for the pictures, nor is the artist disguised for them. This is a question of human depiction in which the artist, time and time again, looks at the world through the person in the picture — and vice versa.

The writer is Museum Director of the Ateneum Art Museum / The Finnish National Gallery and Adjunct Professor in museology..

This text is published in the exhibition catalogue.

LOUIS CARRÉ (1897-1977)

Louis Carré was one of those wise collectors and art dealers who got involved in the avant-garde movements during the 20th century. After academic training as a jurist and a career as an antique dealer specializing in French plate, he opened his Parisian gallery in 1938 with Paul Klee, Juan Gris and Le Corbusier.

Louis Carré's militant renown in the arena of modern art asserted itself during the hardships of the Occupation when he defended the new French creativity of Dufy, Matisse, Rouault, Vuillart, Jacques Villon and André Marchand. During the post-war period, he especially exhibited Bazaine, Kupka, Estève and Léger.

In the manner of Guggenheim and Maeght, Louis Carré left as a legacy an architectural work: his villa in Bazoches-sur-Guyonne, close to Versailles, designed by his friend, the Finnish Alvar Aalto, one of the greatest architects and designers of the 20th century.

MAISON LOUIS CARRÉ BY ALVAR AALTO: AN OUTSTANDING EXHIBITION VENUE

Listed as a historical monument in 1996 and opened to the public eleven years later, the house is the single representative in France of the architecture of Alvar Aalto (1898-1976). Its design is the embodiment of the perfect understanding between the two men, who saw art as a material way of improving and enhancing the ordinary daily life.

Louis and Olga Carré's principal residence in the countryside, this house is considered one of the architect's masterpieces. Faithful to his fluid conception of space, and his very personal vision – eminently humanist – of modernism, Aalto succeeded perfectly in integrating his villa into the soft landscape of Ile-de-France's and fulfilling the wishes of his client. He designed everything, from the general plan and the garden to the furniture and fittings, thus creating a total work of art.

The dwelling of a prosperous couple, comfortable and sophisticated yet without ostentation, the villa was also intended to be a setting for its owners' magnificent collection, featuring paintings by Bonnard, Léger, Picasso, Dufy, Lansky and Klee and sculptures by Laurens, Degas, Calder and Giacometti, as well as African art pieces. When Olga Carré passed away in 2002, these artworks were sold and dispersed, and the house thus lost one of its essential functions. It is precisely this dimension, dear to Louis Carré, that we seek to reawaken by temporary exhibitions.

In year 2014 the Association presented two exhibitions: *André Marchand* and *Secundino Hernández, works from the Miettinen collection*. After the group show *MISE AU VERT* in spring 2015, we present *Elina Brotherus – Les Femmes de la Maison Carré*, the first exhibition of photographs organized in the house.

CONTACT

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PRACTICAL INFORMATION

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www.maisonlouiscarre.fr

Open:

March to November, Saturdays and Sundays 2-6pm upon reservation
(resa@maisonlouiscarre.fr).

Private visits and groups upon request. Maximum size of a tour 19 persons.

Group visits outside normal opening days and hours are possible on arrangement.

Admission fees:

15€ for adults, 5€ reduced price, free for children under 12 with family.

10€ for groups over 10 persons.

The admission fee includes a guided tour in English/French.

Maison Louis Carré has been the property of Association Alvar Aalto en France since 2006.

Besides seminars on architecture and design, two contemporary art exhibitions are organized yearly.

Elin Brotherus will be presented in a private show in gb agency, Paris, 12 November 2015 –9 January 2016.

<http://www.elinabrotherus.com>

<http://www.gbagency.fr>

<http://www.galleriaheino.fi>

IMAGES AVAILABLE

Series Les femmes de la Maison Carré



1 - Salle à manger

2015

pigment ink print

70 x 104 cm



2 - Salon 1 (diptyque)

2015

pigment ink print

60 x 90 cm



3 - Salon 2 (diptyque)

2015

pigment ink print

60 x 90 cm



4 - Asperge

2015

pigment ink print

70 x 104 cm



5 - Transat

2015

pigment ink print

70 x 104 cm



6 - Piscine

2015

pigment ink print

70 x 104 cm



7 – Vestiaire 1

2015

pigment ink print

70 x 46 cm

Other works



8 – Artist and Model reflected in a Mirror 1

2007

chromogenic color print

130 x 104 cm

from the series Artist and her model



9 – Der Wanderer 4

2004

chromogenic color print

105 x 119 cm

from the series The New Painting



10 – Figure au bord de l'eau

2002

chromogenic color print

80 x 102 cm

from the series The New Painting



11 – In the mirror 2

2007

chromogenic color print

40 x 52 cm

from the series Artist and her model