

CENTRE
RÉGIONAL DE LA PHOTOGRAPHIE
HAUTS-DE-FRANCE

CRP/

PRESS RELEASE

CAMILLE LÉVÊQUE

TSAVT TANEM

JANUARY 15

...

APRIL 24 2022



TSAVT TANEM

january 15 ... april 24 2022

Opening

saturday january 15 / 12.30 pm
in the presence of the artist.

Press Contact

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Free admission

tuesday ... friday
1pm ... 5pm
saturday / sunday / public holidays
2pm ... 6pm

To kick off its 2022 program, the CRP/ is presenting an unseen exhibition of the latest series by French visual artist Camille Lévêque.

Camille Lévêque draws from her Armenian roots to build layered work in which archive images enter into dialogue with her own photographs. Created either here or there, they explore the artist's personal and complex relationship with Armenia. The fantasy fed by family stories is confronted with reality to raise discussions that go beyond the nucleus of the Armenian diaspora. Her fragmented approach attempts to reconstruct and give visibility to a kind of archaeology of identity.

Surrounded by models that share her origins and her fundamental questions, Camille Lévêque establishes her own narrative—an individual mythology generated by the muddled feeling of attraction / repulsion, symptomatic of her dual culture. In her installations, she deconstructs ways of representing the Armenian woman, diverting traditional dress in order to better break the imposed codes.

TSAVT TANEM¹

If you take away our pain, what is left of us?

The generation of Armenians to which I belong—born in France, grandchildren of survivors of the 1915 genocide—has established two extreme poles based on its heritage: adoration and rejection. Though opposites, these two reactions are similarly passionate and inspired by fantasy and pain. Belonging to the Armenian diaspora means carrying the weight of the past, made heavier by the Turkish government's failure to recognize the Armenian genocide. This prevents the whole community from mourning and turning the page.

In the course of my trips between Armenia and France, and during my conversations, I have noticed fears that recur, frustrations or desires that are common among the young people with whom I have spoken and begun to share my questions:

How do we represent our individual and collective identity?

If Turkey could bring itself to recognize the 1915 genocide, would that drastically change our relationship with our history and memory? Is the notion of trauma hereditary?

With the resumption of war in September 2020, can we envisage a future without historical recurrence and imagine our identity without fear of persecution?

How much fantasy and fiction is there in stories recounted from generation to generation and distorted over time, and how does one break out of the self-representations with which our community shackles us? And beyond the Armenia-Turkey case, does this research echo other recent or old diasporas on the European continent, which include many individuals from a wide variety of backgrounds? How can one's own story be connected with other stories? How can they be inter-recounted to create a common, communicable work in which

1. 'Tsavt Tanem' is a popular expression in Armenia that literally translates as "I take away your pain". It is commonly used in various contexts to indicate understanding or empathy.

others could recognize themselves?

Taking as a point of departure the genealogical tree as crumbly map, my aim is to reinvent family history in a speculative narrative. The notion of individual mythology makes it possible to articulate this new kind of album, which has a fluid form.

Through the prism of the maternal link, which makes possible the journey from these origins into my family history, I examine the epigenetic imagination in the transmission of trauma, and seek to establish or dismiss constants in cultural transmission patterns within the family. Whether casual reductionism, or real intergenerational traumatic marking, I question genealogical transmission, taking a distinctly sociological approach in my way of angling my research, and in the form my works assume.

Wishing to develop a practice I have already initiated, revolving around memory representation, the diaspora, and the transmission of these stories, I am presenting this protean research into the notion of identity (or identities) for immigrant descendants.

Using archives, studio photography, and the reconstruction of friends' stories, I seek to free myself from the traditional documentary use of photography. Instead of capturing truth, I view the use of photography as the construction of personal narratives made of evocative images. Emphasizing eyes (or their absence), I place vision, perception and perspective at the center my story. Closed, they reveal another point of view on the shared story, now made up of reminiscences and fantasy.

Reality always being more complex than its representation, here I sketch the beginnings of an approximate scenery, made up of memories and dreams, in which experiences other than my own confront each other, contradicting or reaffirming each other, and attempt to understand whether it is our history that defines us, or we who define it.

Going back and forth between past and present, reality and fiction, I strive to represent the plural identity of children of the diaspora, who carry within themselves a memory made up of constantly negotiated images.

Camille Lévêque, artist

Camille Lévêque

Born in 1985 in Paris.

Camille Lévêque is a self-taught visual artist whose practice mixes photography, collage, textile work, video and installation.

She worked making reports for the UNHCR in Armenia, and was an editorial assistant for Magnum Photos in Paris, before concentrating on her practice as a photographer, editor and graphic designer. She is the founder of the LIVE WILD collective and co-founder of the publishing house ORPHEUS STANDING ALONE.

Since 2014, she has been experimenting with notions of anonymity, authorship and identity through the LIVE WILD collective, in which she works under seven different names—her own and six aliases.

Through different constructed works and aliases, she questions the importance of the figure of the artist in the development of their practice and career.

While constantly developing her practice, she essentially explores the notions of memory, identity and privacy, making the family a cornerstone of her analysis.

Essentially working on the recontextualization and decontextualization of archives, she strives to illustrate the idea of memory, its impact on the present and future, its boundaries and erasure, as well as distortions of perception linked to the passing of time.

Having a strong interest in the notion of family mythology, her research starts from an individual perspective in order to confront a collective field, thus building a conversation around the importance of memory in hereditary history and in our relationship with reality.

The photographic object becomes an excuse to question our ability to exchange, perceive and document truth, or, conversely, to distort it to our advantage and reinvent ourselves.

By pushing the boundaries of the medium, she plays with the past in a way, trying to find a new approach to autobiography, whether at the individual or collective scale.

She has won a number of prizes including the Prix Picto / Métiers d'art (FR), Spotlight Award (UK), Vence Award for Contemporary Photography (FR), Fotografia Europea Award (IT), Emerging Talents (IT), Debuts (PO), Prix Maison Blanche (FR).

She was a finalist for the HSBC Prize for Photography (FR), the Prix Résidence BMW (FR), the C/O Berlin Talent Award (DE), the New Vanguard (US), Voies Off Arles (FR), the PhMuseum Grant (IT), and the International Festival of Fashion, Photography and Fashion Accessories (FR).

<http://camilleleveque.com>

<http://www.thelivewildcollective.com>

Her work can be found in collections at the La Villa Noailles, the Frac M ECA, the Collection d epartementale d'art contemporain de la Seine-Saint-Denis (FR), the Picto Foundation (FR), the Orestyadi Foundation (IT) and the Palais Galliera (FR), and it has been regularly exhibited internationally at institutions such as the Mattatoio (IT), the Fondation Fiminco (FR), the Museum of Modern Art (RU), Aperture Gallery (US), Red Hook Labs (US), UNSEEN (NL), MOCA (UA), Fondazione Fabbri (IT) and Le 104 (FR). Her work has been presented in publications such as *Le Monde*, *Lib eration*, *Foam Magazine*, *Dazed and Confused*, *Internazionale*, *GUP*, *The Irish Times*, *Freitag*, and *El Pa s*.

She has lived and worked in Turkey, Armenia and the United States, and is currently based in the Paris region.



First page
There's no looking backwards,
Ivry-sur-Seine
© Camille Lévêque

↗
Anthony,
Ivry-sur-Seine, 2020
© Camille Lévêque

→
Surp Gayané,
2019
© Camille Lévêque



↗
Eva,
Ivry-sur-Seine, 2019
© Camille Lévêque

→
Areni,
2019
© Camille Lévêque





↗
Garni, 2019
© Camille Lévêque

→
The caregiver and the patient
© Camille Lévêque

The CRP/

The CRP/ Centre régional de la photographie based in Douchy-les-Mines develops art centre missions in the field of photography and contemporary images.

Founded in 1982, the CRP/ grew out of a collective of photographers who came from the photo club of the Usinor Denain Work Council. As a mobile association at the time, the CRP spent four years developing exhibitions and organising photography competitions. In 1983, in connection with its photographic commissions and its production of works, the Ministry of Culture recognised the CRP/'s art library, which became the first of its kind in France in the field of photography. In 1986, the CRP/ moved in to a former post office made available by the town of Douchy-les-Mines, and in 1991 the Ministry of Culture recognised it as a national art centre.

As a centre that supports creativity, at the outset it developed a project to commission works linked with its territory: the Mission Photographique Transmanche (1988 to 2006), which lay the foundations of its collection. This has since been supplemented through the art centre's programme and productions. The CRP/ is one of the few art centres endowed with a collection directly linked to its own production activity. The CRP/ collection currently contains almost 15,000 works, with an art library offering the public over 500 works that may be borrowed. Linked to its significant publication activity, it also has a document collection of over 9000 books.

The CRP/'s activities include creative support, research, production, distribution and mediation, all of which is developed in a region that is marked by its industrial past, an area that showed a very early commitment to culture. Today the CRP/ is a place of experience transmission, awareness-raising, mediation and training in the field of images, with a transregional and national reputation.

The CRP/'s artistic and cultural vision, endeavours to be forward-looking, encouraging young artists through its research and support mission, keeping in mind the regional history of images to which its collection testifies. It is regionally rooted while also giving attention to other art scenes abroad, through invitations to artists who come and shift or renew visitors' perceptions of their history and region, and provide access to other cultural and societal issues in the world.

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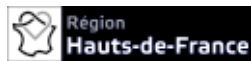
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