

PATRICK FAIGENBAUM

Photographies, 1974-2020

January 18 – March 5, 2022

3, rue du Cloître Saint-Merri, 75004 - Paris



Nature morte avec pastèques, feuille de laurier, hélichryse et pierre à feu, 2019-2021
 Pigment inkjet print from silver negative
 69 x 69 cm (framed)
 © Patrick Faigenbaum
 Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Bruxelles

Galerie Nathalie Obadia is delighted to present Patrick Faigenbaum's third solo exhibition at its Paris location of rue du Cloître Saint-Merri, following *Kolkata/Calcutta* in 2015 and *Santulussurgiu* in 2008. After the important solo exhibition, *Patrick Faigenbaum, Fotografien 1974-2020* (July 3 – November 21, 2021), held at the Josef Albers Museum Quadrat Bottrop (Germany), Galerie Nathalie Obadia presents, as a type of retrospective, a selected group of photographs by the artist, from his first images to more recent series.

Born in Paris in 1954, Patrick Faigenbaum first studied to be a painter, before turning, in the 1970s, to photography. A resident of the Villa Medici in Rome, from 1985 to 1987, he became known for his black-and-white gelatin-silver series, *Familles italiennes* (1984-1991), in which he photographs aristocratic families living in Italian palaces from another time.

A portrait can be anonymous without losing any of its power or distinctive quality. In July 1974, Patrick Faigenbaum was 20 years old. He was walking around the city of Boston when he noticed a man on a bench, his face hidden, body huddled up, in an attitude of pain or withdrawal. The wall behind him is striated by the shadows of foliage, natural paintbrush strokes on a concrete wall. The photograph the artist takes touches on "*the limit where the portrait tends to dissolve into the immense domain of the picturesque*," as art critic Jean-François Chevrier underlines. A solitary image that echoes his more recent work, *Rue de Crimée*, also presented in the exhibition. The four photographs, devoid of voyeurism and pessimism, show homeless people, living in the street next to Patrick Faigenbaum's home. They are actors in his daily life, whose use of the same urban space appears to be the sole point in common. The cold tones echo the harsh realities of life suggested by the images. The dignity of Patrick Faigenbaum's models is omnipresent in all of his work; his focus bestows, on those he photographs – Samantha, Eržika and all the others, acquaintances or anonymous – "*a place and a stature, a stable ground and structure*."²

The cities, inhabited and visited, portrayed like people, are another major component of Patrick Faigenbaum's corpus. During a trip to Prague, in the early 1990s (he had discovered the city in 1984), his eyes shifted: from portraits to city, from urban fabric to inhabitants, no longer seeing a distinction between the two subjects. He was invited to Bremen (Germany) from 1996 to 1998, where he experimented, for the first time, with color photography. The region of Calcutta (India), which he visited several times after being awarded the Henri-Cartier Bresson prize in 2013, is the setting for a decisive series of photographs, in which we recognize all the motifs that are important to him. By a "network of complicities," Patrick Faigenbaum makes the acquaintance of intellectuals, artists, Bengali filmmakers, as is evidenced in the snapshot of the well-known sitarist Budhaditya Mukherjee, taken during one of his performances. The photographic perspective, which is that of a stranger, is benevolent and curious about his surroundings and those that evolve there.

"*What today distinguishes Faigenbaum's approach – the term 'approach' seems appropriate – rests in his way of transcribing an empathetic relationship, that is to say the sense of pathos, in the overtly pictorial or plastic treatment of motif*."³

His representations of the human figure combine the "necessary distance" between the artist and his model with a "fleeting intimacy."⁴ In the portraits of the artist's mother, Suzanne Faigenbaum, who passed away in 2015, the intimacy is tender and poignant. A group of four images shows her seated, facing the lens, clad in a blue blouse. She appears fragile, her gaze lost. A mosaic of sixty-six color photographs "records", somewhere between a documentary and private journal, her apartment on rue de Clichy, which remained vacant after her death. Patrick Faigenbaum wanted to keep the traces of objects, furniture, and habits that are suggested in this interior, "*like a painting emptied of a departed presence*."⁵

Since the late 1990s, the artist has frequently traveled to Sardinia, to the rural village of Santulussurgiu, where his partner, Angela Ledda, comes from. He photographs Salvatorica Sechi, Angela's mother, in her everyday life. In the photographs taken at Santulussurgiu, the Italian sun lights up places and fruit. Patrick Faigenbaum carefully composes arrangements of grapes, watermelons, and other fruit. His richly colored still-lives echo Dutch 17th-century paintings. They "form a landscape scale model, where objects can be ideally combined, associated, distributed in the light, in the same way as figures that compose group portraits."⁶

With his heightened attention to figures and to objects alike, to faces and to landscapes, Patrick Faigenbaum's varied work gives the "genreless genre" that is portraiture multiple definitions. The works assembled in this retrospective exhibition certainly attest to this.

¹ Jean-François Chevrier, « Êtres et images », Vancouver Art Gallery/ Académie de France à Rome – Villa Médicis, 2013.

² Jean-François Chevrier, *Patrick Faigenbaum. Fotografias, 1973-2006*, Centro de Arte Moderna José de Azeredo Perdigão - Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbonne, Portugal.

³ Jean-François Chevrier, *Patrick Faigenbaum, Fotografien, 1974-2020*, éd. Heinz Liesbrock et Jean-François Chevrier, Bottrop, Albers Museum / Munich, Schirmer-Mosel, 2021.

⁴ Kathleen S. Bartels, « Introduction », Vancouver Art Gallery/ Académie de France à Rome – Villa Médicis, 2013.

⁵ Jean-François Chevrier, *Patrick Faigenbaum, Fotografien, 1974-2020*, op. cit

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Jean-François Chevrier, « Noir et blanc ou l'éclaircissement », *Patrick Faigenbaum. L'Éclaircissement*, éd. Xavier Barral, 2014.

Patrick Faigenbaum was born in Paris (France) in 1954 where he lives and works.

Patrick Faigenbaum is a major artist on the contemporary photographic scene. His works are held by the most prestigious public and private collections such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (USA), the MNAM - Centre Pompidou in Paris (France), or the Bibliothèque François Mitterrand in Paris (France).

He benefited from a major solo exhibition at the Josef Albers Museum Quadrat in Bottrop (Germany) from July to November 2021.

Patrick Faigenbaum has had important solo exhibitions such as in 2017, Barcelona Besòs View in La Virreina Centre de la Imatge (Barcelona, Spain); in 2015, the traveling exhibition Kolkata/Calcutta, at the Fondation Cartier-Bresson (Paris, France), at the Galerie Nathalie Obadia (Paris, France) and at the Aperture Foundation (New York, USA); in 2014 at the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Chambéry (France); in 2013, the traveling exhibition Patrick Faigenbaum at the Vancouver Art Gallery (Vancouver, Canada) and at the Académie de France at the Villa Medici (Rome, Italy); in 2012, Paris – Proche et Lointain at the Musée de la Vie Romantique (Paris, France) and Noir et Blanc – 1973-2008 at the Point du Jour (Cherbourg-en-Cotentin, France); in 2008, at the Kunstmuseum de Bochum (Germany), at the Mishkan Le'Omanut - Museum of Art (Ein Harod, Israel), at the Musée de Grenoble (France) and at the Artothèque de Caen (France); in 2005 at the Musée du Louvre (Paris, France); in 1989, the traveling exhibition Tableaux romains, at the Musée d'Art Contemporain de Nîmes (France), at La Garenne Lemot (Clisson, France) and at the DRAC de Nantes (France) and also Vies parallèles at the Musée départemental de Rochechouart (Rochechouart, France); in 1988, the traveling exhibition Roman Portraits at the Art Institute of Chicago (Chicago, USA) and at the Museum of Art (Dallas, USA); in 1984, at the MNAM - Centre Georges Pompidou (Paris, France).

His work has been showcased in major exhibitions held in prestigious institutions like in 2019 at the Collection Lambert (Avignon, France); in 2018, at the CAFA Art Museum (Beijing, China); in 2015 at the Institut d'Art Contemporain de Villeurbanne (France); in 2013 at the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire de la ville de Cognac (France); in 2001 at the Palais des Beaux-Arts de Bruxelles (Belgique); in 2008, at the MACBA (Barcelona, Spain); in 1986, at the Palais de Tokyo (Paris, France).

Patrick Faigenbaum has been represented by la Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Brussels, since 2008.

Paris Saint-Honoré

Mickalene Thomas

Beyond the Pleasure Principle

October 7 - December 18, 2021

Wang Keping

Métamorphoses

January 12 - March 12 2022

Paris Cloître Saint-Merri

Laura Henno

Radical Devotion

November 8 - December 31, 2021

Sarkis

7 jours 7 nuits

January 5- January 12 2022

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Photographies, 1974 - 2020

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Bruxelles

Shahpour Pouyan

Methinks these be devils three

November 6 - December 18, 2021

Agnès Varda

Calder, Richier, Schlegel, Székely par Agnès Varda

January 14 - March 5 2022

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