

Amparo Fernández. Water 9. 2019. Digital printing. Edition of 5 copies. Photography Amparo Fernández.

EXHIBITIONS

# The lotus flower as a symbol of rebirth

by **Conxita Oliver** Apr. 20, 2021

**The gallery El quadern robot presents the first solo exhibition by biologist and photographer Amparo Fernández with a work that consisted of recording the evolution of the growth of the lotus flower, from its birth in the mud at the bottom of a pond, until its flowering over the water. From a commission as a documentary reportage in the Gardens of Mossèn Cinto Verdaguer in the park of Montjuic, she traces the sequences of this process through a series consisting of more than forty black and white photographs, from which twenty-one have been selected for the sample.**

**Amparo Fernández. Lotus flower**  
El quadern robot  
Còrsega, 267, main 2<sup>a</sup> b  
Barcelona  
Until May 29, 2021

In Homer's Odyssey is where the lotophagous are first mentioned, during Ulysses' journey to Ithaca. A strong storm diverted the ship to an island near North Africa where its inhabitants received them very kindly and offered to eat the lotus fruit as a welcome sign. The effect of their consumption made them forget to return to the ship until Ulysses managed to rescue the men and return them. Throughout this story, Homer appeals to the symbolism of the lotus flower to describe a human desire: the possibility of erasing the past and start again.



Amparo Fernández. Water-air 4. 2019. Digital printing. Edition of 5 copies. Photography Amparo Fernández.

The lotus flower has the ability to survive in harsh environments, in dark and swampy areas and its rhizomatous roots manage to make their way through the mud to reach the surface. The lotus is characterized by its large bluish green leaves and beautiful flowers that grow solitary at the end of long stems. To sprout it needs light and a deep habitation in which its roots can develop. White, pink, blue, yellow or bicolor, its flowers are also of considerable size and remain tall on high strands. Despite the hostile environment in which he rules, he flourishes in search of clarity and therefore has a close relationship with spiritual elevation and purity. The lotus flower is considered a sacred plant in China and India, so it has been attributed many meanings and symbolisms. It refers to the triumph of the spirit over the senses, means wisdom and knowledge, and is related to the perfection of the soul and mind, a state of total purity and immaculate nature. Hence, it is often associated with the complex life processes that human beings face.



View of the exhibition Lotus Flower by Amparo Fernández. Courtesy El quadern robot

The Lotus Flower series, presented by the biologist and photographer Amparo Fernández (Barcelona, 1962), is her first solo exhibition, after dedicating herself to documentary photography and scientific reporting. For a few years she was responsible for the photographic space of the Can Basté Civic Center, and she worked as an assistant to photographer Humberto Rivas who taught her to look at what goes unnoticed. It is a silent work that travels along the margins and explores the life and harmony of nature, the exquisite and enigmatic balance of the universe. A scientific and meticulous project that explores the course of the flowering of the flower, from its birth in the mud at the bottom of a pond, to its flowering above the water. So she submerged the camera to capture the underground mystery until it exploded on the surface. The result is quite abstract and suggestive images that invite us to enjoy the natural tempo and invite us to reflection. A work that bases its interest on the dematerialization of forms until they become evanescent and fluid spots that move away from the real reference to affect the subjective and the unknown. The biological struggle of germination turns images into nebulous forms that allude to the currents of natural energies in constant metamorphosis and continuous growth. The look of the microvision and of the detail shows the microorganisms, happening through the richness of the vegetation until arriving at the aqueous epidermis in contact with the air and warns us that the greater error is the one to separate the nature of the human life, because the devastation of the ecosystem is, inevitably, the destruction of humanity.

At a time like the present in which silence, pause and introspection must be perceived as spaces for meditation, questioning and deepening, Amparo Fernández offers us an opportunity to delve into a photographic exercise in which the the passage of time becomes a personal, unique and unrepeatable practice and learning. A strong symbolic charge, which establishes a spiritual parallel with human life.



View of the exhibition Lotus flower by Amparo Fernández. Courtesy El quadern robot

The seven-year trajectory of El quadern robot Gallery has shown that its goal is to follow paths of research and discovery. Since the beginning, its Director, Anna Belsa, has focused on presenting artists with their own voices and unexplored and risky speeches. After being part of the team of the Galería Joan Prats in Barcelona since 1987, on April 3, 2014 she opened her space in a main floor of a modernist house in the Eixample of Barcelona. Her philosophy is oriented towards proposals with solid values and firmly rooted in its environment with a task of proximity.



**Conxita Oliver**

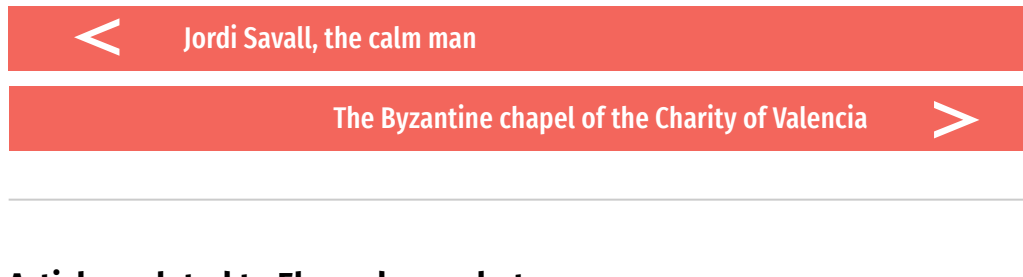
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Legree in Art History from the University of Barcelona (UB). Member of the International Association of Art Critics (AICA) and the Catalan Association of Art Critics (ACCA). He has developed art criticism in the newspaper Avui (1982-2007 and 2010-2011), in the radio stations Catalunya Cultura (1999-2002) and Ona Catalana (2000-2004). He continues to perform this task in specialized magazines and media. She has been the Director of Arts Santa Mònica (Barcelona, 2013-2014). She has coordinated and curated more than a hundred exhibitions and is the author of books and monographs on contemporary art.



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