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TERRITOIRE FRAGILE *ou la vulnérabilité des corps*



Through her *Territoire fragile ou la vulnérabilité des corps* (*Fragile Territory or Bodies' Vulnerability*), the photographer France Dubois plays on the relationship between the body and the invisible in order better to raise the issue of the suffering that she undergoes, feels and represents.

An ode to a deeply distressing beauty and an undeniable poetry whose mystery makes up its charm, her photographs bear witness to the pain of a body and to its sensations under tension. The Brussels-based photographer thus succeeds in conveying, sensitively and delicately, the indiscernible aspect of the tormented body and the grazed soul in a world of vulnerable

flesh, psychic fissures and ephemeral lulls. With undreamed-of depth. The shots are pure, beautiful and so proximate that they catch the eye instantly and resonate within us.

The painful touch of the invisible

No stigmata, no trace of invisible substance. Of a touching delicacy; reality is never coarse. The remarkable progression of the body felt as a fragile territory is situated at the heart of a turmoil that exceeds the force of elementary signs. What we surmise, then, from one photograph to the next is the heterogeneity of the proposal, since she intends simultaneously to design and to suggest, to shed a decisive light and to uphold an enigma.

Taking photographs consists of dealing with a visible world, a direct and insistent presence, to which is allied an invisible world, an out-of-the-frame that renders the frame more complex. By means of an interior *journey*, this project offers us a look at the encounter with mystery where the invisible pain comes from the matter of the night, invisible, in the manner of the body cloaked in black. Everything comes down to the same obvious fact, that of an inside that is protected from the outside by nothing. The body's fragility breaks out at a distant proximity, as though, even as it delivers itself up in an extreme nudity, it were absent in an elusive depth. But suffering, at the heart of the series, is not only burying and solitude. These images, "*guided by the need to feel alive, to set off in search of the invisible and of moments of healing*", sometimes take on mystical allures exuded by the forms at the call of the soothing.

Perceived now as a place of refuge and symbolic protection, art photography seems to carry France Dubois into a world accessible to her alone, a true interior laboratory. For abandoning oneself to photography, responding to an ostensible need, allows a letting-go. Is that not one of the benefits of art: to offer a way out? This allegorical perception never ceases to accompany the photographer as she draws, on the way, on a new vitality that assures her the rebirth of her strength.

By Lindsay Roels, art critic