



THIERRY SECRETAN

# AN UNTOUCHED WORLD

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GALERIE  
**LWS**



Thierry Secretan, *L'empreinte*, from the serie « Azores », 2006

**ON DISPLAY FROM FEBRUARY 21 TO  
MARCH 30 AT THE GALLERY LWS,  
*AN UNTOUCHED WORLD*,  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY THIERRY SECRETAN**

### **AN UNTOUCHED WORLD**

In 2005, on his sailboat, Thierry Secretan has undertaken to photograph landscapes in complete starkness on high seas and near the coasts, in a sensory search. He has made a first series of images in Tierra del Fuego, and then a second one in the Azores.

« With this archipelago in sight, a sperm whale came out in front of my sailboat. It pricked up its huge caudal fin to the sky then disappeared in the blink of an eye, leaving a perfect circle on the water. Without this peaceful and almost oily ring slowly expanding - called footprint by biologists- I would have had doubts about seeing it. »

In a place where the last sperm whale hooked by a hand-held harpoon was lifted out of the water in 1984, the Azores are the frontier of an archaic past which remains very close at the same time. Nowadays, at the gates of the ocean, around these volcanic islands where cetacean come to procreate, the meeting is peaceful at last.

« It seems to me that I attempt to reproduce a perfect world, an untouched world. »

For Thierry Secretan, any photograph, and possibly any work of art, is an act of memory, whether for personal purposes or in a more encyclopaedic approach. Therefore, he always starts by taking an interest in his predecessors' work about the topic, the country or the place he is studying. Upon arrival in the Azores, the sperm whales' archipelago, his searches were satisfied by the many archives found in the local museums or photography shops.

Thierry Secretan is a traveller photographer whose work had been questioning for more than thirty years the various temporalities of places and human beings he had met on his way. His work takes an interest in the historical and cultural stratification of landscapes, as well as objects and signs occupying and composing them. His photography work looks into slow transitions, the existential dimension of photographed places constantly evolving whereas they seem immobile.



Thierry Secretan, *Kiosque*, from the serie « Azores », 2008



After travelling through the Azores following the sperm whales the same approach led Thierry Secretan to explore the former front line of the Great War, from the Somme to Switzerland.

« While examining photographs taken during this conflict by Victor Rey, my great-grandfather, and his only son Robert, the need for finding their combat locations became a necessity. »

In September 1914, this father and his son enlisted in together as private soldiers. They served in the same unit in Aisne, Argonne, Somme and Alsace. With a perfect complicity, they loved the same woman, Kikite, and they sent her more than a thousand letters, attaching drawings, photographs and dried flowers. Both survived the massacre, attributing this miracle to the « lucky hand » and to Kikite, the « beloved little idol ».

Since 2010, Thierry Secretan has been travelling along locations where Victor and Robert fought, in Craonne, Verdun, Souain, Le Four de Paris, Ballersdorf and Missy-aux-Bois. Then, he has taken pictures of the presence of these unchanging places, blurred and devastated by men and yet which don't seem to be willing to change, always reactivating the ground eternity.



Thierry Secretan, *Souain*, from the serie « 14-18, le temps de nous aimer », 2011



Thierry Secretan, *La Bresse*, from the serie « Azores » « 14-18, le temps de nous aimer », 2012

## THIERRY SECRETAN

After joining the Gamma agency in 1979, Thierry Secretan contributed to the launch of *Actuel* magazine the same year.

For more than twenty years, Africa has attracted him. His passion for Ghana brought him to settle in there from 1989 to 1992, years during which he carried out an important photographic and cinematographic work about the evolution of funeral rites. This work was showed in publications and exhibitions in many countries.

As of then, his photographs have focused on changes experienced by traditional societies. All this questioning can still be found in his most recent works. His photographic approach has always been dictated by an historical research and the study of existing photographic archives.

Thierry Secretan published several books, including *Açores* (Au Pont des Arts editions, Paris, 2013), *1914-1918, le temps de nous aimer* (Paris, La Martinière, 2012), *Buried Spirit* (Tokyo, Kyoichi Tsuzuki, 2000), *Castles and Forts of Ghana* (Paris, Accra, Atalante, 1999), *Going into Darkness* (London, Thames & Hudson, 1995), *Il fait sombre va-t'en !* (Paris, Hazan, 1994).