



SOPHIE RISTELHUEBER

PARIS PHOTO 2025

Wednesday, November 12th — Sunday, November 16th, 2025





As she has just received the prestigious 2025 Hasselblad Award, Sophie Ristelhueber is being honored by Galerie Poggi on the occasion of the new edition of Paris Photo.

At the entrance of the Grand Palais, Sophie Ristelhueber unveils a monumental installation spanning nearly forty meters, bringing together some sixty works created over the past four decades.

A major figure in photography since the 1980s, she has played a decisive role in establishing the medium within the field of contemporary art and demonstrates here, once again, her ability to expand its boundaries toward sculpture, architecture, and installation.



Exhibition view of *What the Fuck!* (solo show) at Galerie Poggi, Paris, 2024 © Photo .kit



Exhibition view of *What the Fuck!* (solo show) at Galerie Poggi, Paris, 2024 © Photo .kit

Paris Photo 2025

Sophie Ristelhueber, *No Comment*

PROGRAMME

Hasselblad Center, Gothenburg, Sweden

Saturday, October 11th, 2025 – Saturday, January 18th, 2026

Sophie Ristelhueber, *Solo Show*

Paris Photo – Grand Palais, Paris

Wednesday, November 12th – Sunday, November 16th, 2025

Sophie Ristelhueber, *No Comment*, Booth A24

Paris Photo – Grand Palais – Auditorium, Paris

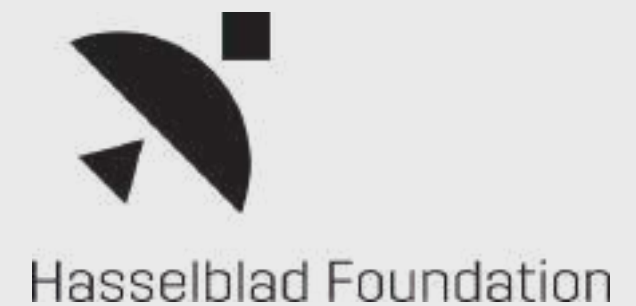
Thursday, November 13th at 2 pm

Conversation between Sophie Ristelhueber and Laure Adler

SUPPORT AND PARTNERSHIPS

This project has received exceptional support from Lazard Frères and the Hasselblad Foundation, with the generous partnership of Cadre en Seine for the framing and the kind support of Atelier Boba for the digital prints.

LAZARD



CONTACTS

Julien Garcia-Toudic

Associate Director, Head of Sales

Anne-Sophie Bocquier

Associate Director, Head of Communications & PR

Marie Lucas

Artist Liaison

Sophie Ristelhueber

Biography

For nearly four decades, Sophie Ristelhueber, winner of the prestigious 2025 Hasselblad Award, has pursued a profound exploration of territory and its history through a singular approach to ruins and the traces left by humanity in landscapes marked by war and natural upheaval.

A major figure in contemporary art, Ristelhueber has redefined the status of photography within the visual arts, aligning it with painting while extending its reach toward sculpture, architecture, and installation. Described by art historian Thomas Schlessner as a “*painter of history*,” she infuses photography with a painterly sense of time. Though she has often worked alongside photojournalists in conflict zones, her gaze transcends the immediacy of current events to engage instead with the enduring marks of history, revealing its imprint on both landscapes and bodies, and rendering visible their wounds and scars.

While photography remains her primary medium, Ristelhueber consistently subverts its conventions to create autonomous visual works. Through her attention to matter and scale, to the frame and the spatial unfolding of the image, she transforms photography into a physical and conceptual experience that bridges image, object, and space.

Several major institutions have presented solo exhibitions of Sophie Ristelhueber’s work, among them the Museum of Fine Arts (Boston, US), the Albright-Knox Art Gallery (Buffalo, US), The Power Plant (Toronto, CA), the Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume (Paris, FR), and the Fondation Giacometti (Paris, FR).

Her work has also been presented in numerous international venues, including the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) (New York, US), ZKM (Karlsruhe, GE), Tate Modern and the Imperial War Museum (London, GB), as well as in the Johannesburg and São Paulo Biennials, the Echigo-Tsumari Triennale, the Rencontres Photographiques d’Arles, and in Paris at the MNAM – Centre Pompidou, the Musée Zadkine, the Musée Rodin, and the Musée d’Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (MAMVP), among others.

Ristelhueber’s works are held in numerous public collections, including the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) (New York, US), the Museum of Fine Arts (Boston, US), the Albright-Knox Art Gallery (Buffalo, US), the National Gallery of Canada (Ottawa, CA), the CNAP (Paris, FR), the MNAM – Centre Georges Pompidou (Paris, FR), the Musée d’Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (Paris, FR), the Musée de l’Armée (Paris, FR), the Victoria & Albert Museum (London, GB), the Maison Européenne de la Photographie (Paris, FR), the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (Paris, FR), the Fonds National d’Art Contemporain (FR), and several Regional Contemporary Art Funds (FRACs) in Brittany, Upper Normandy, Lower Normandy, Corsica, and Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur.

Exhibited Works Selection



Beyrouth, Photographs, 1984

Sophie Ristelhueber - Exhibited Works



Created following a trip to Beirut in 1982, this seminal series by Sophie Ristelhueber bears witness to the scars left by the Lebanese civil war and the Israeli invasion. In thirty-one black-and-white photographs, the artist captures devastated façades and wounded buildings, equating the city's ruins with marked and scarred bodies.

Both documentary and metaphorical, these images established Ristelhueber's practice as a lasting contribution to the history of contemporary photography. Now held in major public collections, the series survives today through a dozen vintage prints.

Sophie Ristelhueber

Beyrouth, photographs, 1984

Black-and-white photograph, gelatin silver print
60 x 50 cm

Arménie, 1989

Sophie Ristelhueber - Exhibited Works

In 1989, following her participation in the Datar Photographic Mission, Sophie Ristelhueber created her first color series in Armenia. Invited to document a territory devastated by a major earthquake, she continued her exploration of architectural ruins that had begun in Beirut.

Her images reveal both the fragility of human constructions and the tensions between humanity and nature — a line of inquiry she would later pursue in works such as the series *Sunset Years* (2019).



Sophie Ristelhueber

Arménie 3, 1989

Chromogenic print
50 x 60 cm

Mémoires du Lot, 1990

Sophie Ristelhueber - Exhibited Works



Commissioned by regional authorities impressed by her work for the Datar Photographic Mission, *Mémoires du Lot* marks a distinctive stage in Sophie Ristelhueber's artistic journey. With this series of four photographs, the artist moves toward a more fictional approach, constructing an almost allegorical representation of life.

Through a deliberately staged studio setting, she explores four universal themes – humanity, the animal realm, the landscape, and territory – which, while intellectually conceived, retain the compelling force of photographic “truths.” The images originate from diverse sources: the Negev Desert, the Jardin des Plantes in Paris, and photographs taken at her home with a friend, weaving together a hybrid visual narrative.

The series is accompanied by a small book conceived in parallel by the artist, in which an excerpt from the prologue to *Ecclesiastes* situates the work within a timeless reflection on the cycle of life and the continuity of human events. This interplay between fiction and document, construction and testimony, lends *Mémoires du Lot* a poetic and universal dimension that resonates throughout Ristelhueber's oeuvre.

Sophie Ristelhueber

Mémoires du Lot II, 1990

Black-and-white photograph, gelatin silver print
159 × 126 cm

Dhaulagiri, 1990



Sophie Ristelhueber - Exhibited Works

At the end of the 1980s, Sophie Ristelhueber undertook a several-week expedition in the Himalayas. Confronted with the vastness of the landscape, she realized, in her own words, that she could “no longer represent things directly.”

French Pass was later created in her Paris studio from stones collected at the mountain pass of the same name. Through the arrangement of these fragments, marked by fissures and veins, the work extends her exploration of traces and scars while expressing an increasing awareness of the limits of the camera in representing reality.

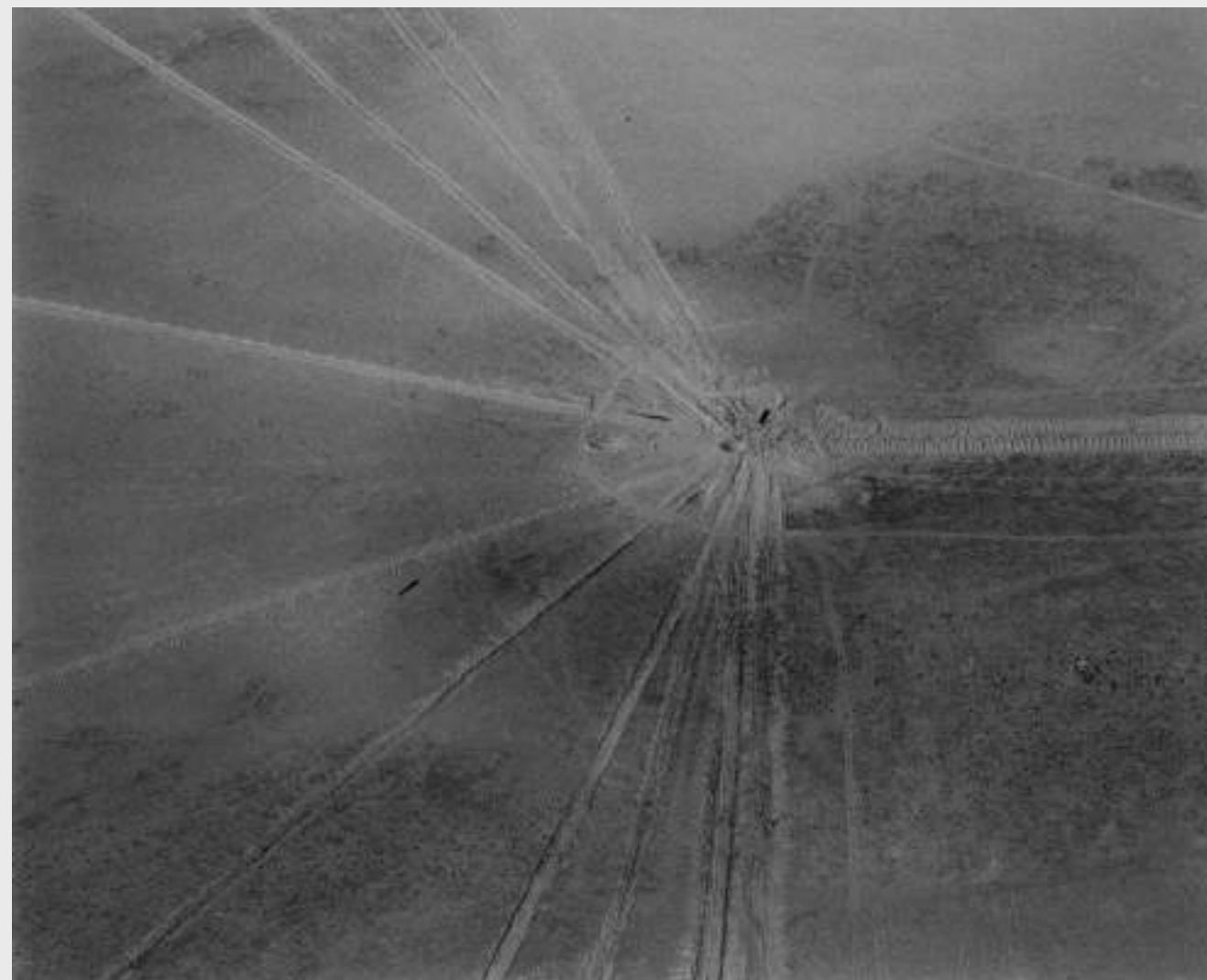
Double Bind I is one of only two photographs taken during that journey: a blurred image of the tail end of an avalanche. Presented as a diptych — one white (snow) and the other black (rock) — it reflects the artist’s uncertainty about what is seen and the ambivalence that runs through her practice.

Sophie Ristelhueber

French Pass, 1990

Gelatin silver print mounted on aluminum
131,7 x 108 cm

Fait, 1992



Sophie Ristelhueber - Exhibited Works

The series *Fait* is one of Sophie Ristelhueber's most emblematic works. It comprises seventy-one color and black-and-white photographs taken over and within the Kuwaiti desert shortly after the First Gulf War. From a small surveillance plane and a helicopter, she photographed the scars left across the desert, as well as personal belongings and other human traces discovered while traversing the terrain. The shift in scale between aerial and ground views gives the series a disorienting visual rhythm.

Far removed from war reportage — saturated as it was by the media imagery of 1991 — Ristelhueber captures the wounds inflicted upon the landscape, endowing them with an almost abstract and universal dimension. Each photograph is presented in a gilded frame that casts a subtle glow around the image, like a halo — both reverent and unsettling.

A photograph often bears witness to something that has already occurred; when the subject is war, violence, or conflict, the image becomes a material testimony. A statement. A fact.

Sophie Ristelhueber

From left to right, from top to bottom : *Fait* #68, *Fait* #45, *Fait* #52, *Fait* #30, 1992

Color photograph, chromogenic print mounted on aluminum, with gilded waxed frame
100 x 127 x 5 cm

Every One, 1994



Sophie Ristelhueber - Exhibited Works

In 1991, as the conflict between Serbs and Croats began, Sophie Ristelhueber questioned the role of the artist in the face of the violence of history. She initiated the series *Every One*, composed of fourteen black-and-white photographs of surgical sutures.

Taken in a Paris hospital, these images symbolically evoke the wounds of war. Printed at the scale of large paintings, they confer monumentality upon the traces inscribed on the body. Of the fourteen images reproduced in the artist's book of the same name, seven were printed in 1994 as unique large-format works.

Sophie Ristelhueber

From left to right : *Every One #1* et *Every One #13*, 1994

Unique black-and-white gelatin silver print mounted on aluminum
270 x 180 cm

Dead Set, 2001

Sophie Ristelhueber - Exhibited Works



In the autumn of 1999, Sophie Ristelhueber traveled to Syria while awaiting her visa for Iraq. There, she created a series of eleven color photographs depicting a dialogue between the ruins of Palmyra's ancient Roman colonnades and contemporary construction projects abandoned for lack of funding.

“I photograph things that are real but no longer exist,” the artist explains.



Sophie Ristelhueber

From left to right, from top to bottom : *Dead Set* #3, *Dead Set* #2, *Dead Set* #5, *Dead Set* #7, 2001.

Pigment print mounted on aluminum
90 x 135 cm

WB, 2005



Sophie Ristelhueber - Exhibited Works

Sophie Ristelhueber traveled twice to the West Bank — in November 2003 and again between February and March 2004 — in search of the allegorical forms of separation. She chose to photograph the obstacles erected on roads by the Israeli forces to prevent Palestinians from moving freely within their own territory.

Through the fifty-four color photographs that make up the series, the artist documents roads torn open or blocked by piles of stones — a fractured land.

Sophie Ristelhueber

WB #22, 2005

Color chromogenic print mounted on aluminum, framed
120 x 150 cm

Stitches, 2005



Sophie Ristelhueber - Exhibited Works

Stitches is an installation composed of eleven photographs and twelve cross-stitch embroideries. The black-and-white photographs, taken in Palestinian cities during Sophie Ristelhueber's two trips to the West Bank in November 2003 and February–March 2004, focus on the damaged surfaces of the ground. These urban landscapes, whose close-ups recall lunar terrains or the scars left in Hiroshima, convey a sense of emptiness and desolation.

These still lifes of asphalt and concrete are accompanied by words taken from speeches by George W. Bush, which the artist has patiently rendered in cross-stitch on small canvases — using a traditionally feminine and outdated technique as a deliberate form of provocation.

Sophie Ristelhueber

Stitches #5, 2005

Black-and-white photograph, gelatin silver print mounted on aluminum and framed under glass
60 x 90 cm

Eleven Blowups, 2006



Sophie Ristelhueber - Exhibited Works

Using video footage shot in Iraq between 2003 and 2006 by Reuters correspondents, Sophie Ristelhueber extracts still images that she then reworks digitally. In doing so, she reconstructs scenes in which documentary and imaginary elements overlap, also incorporating fragments from her earlier works.

This body of work brings together images from different territories — Turkmenistan (1997), Syria (1999), Iraq (2000), and the West Bank (2003–2004) — bearing witness to the enduring traces left by conflict. Here, the artist continues her reflection on history as a form of chaos, a haunting that traces back to her experience in Beirut in 1982.

Sophie Ristelhueber
Eleven Blowups X, 2006

Color chromogenic print mounted on aluminum, framed
110 x 133 cm

Untitled (Versailles), 2011

Sophie Ristelhueber - Exhibited Works



Untitled (Versailles), created in the underground passages of the Latona Fountain at Versailles, brings to light the intricate network of pipes that feeds the palace's fountains. It is a strange descent into the bowels of an architectural creature, revealing that the proud order visible on the surface has for centuries depended on the hidden chaos of its lead plumbing system.

Here, Sophie Ristelhueber explores another terrain. She opens a new front — one that lies beneath our feet. We enter an unsuspected territory, akin to a body. The tones are grey, ochre, and earthy. The viewer follows the contours as if undertaking a functional exploration.

The ambivalence of the subject is striking, as is the artist's recurring vocabulary of traces, scars, and boundaries. These images bear witness to the erosion of time and of life itself. Everything intermingles — our physical encounter with the images and the inner vision they awaken.



Sophie Ristelhueber

From left to right, from top to bottom : *Untitled (Versailles) #3, #1, #2*, 2011

Color photograph, pigment print, framed and glazed
100 x 150 cm

Track, 2012



Sophie Ristelhueber - Exhibited Works

With the series *Track*, Sophie Ristelhueber revisits black-and-white landscape photographs she had taken in 1984 as part of the *Datar Photographic Mission*. By covering these images almost entirely with layers of paint, she transforms their surface and heightens their material presence.

This gesture gives the landscape a mineral and archaic dimension, as if it had been brought back to an original, formless, and earthy state. Yet, far from erasing all traces, the artist reveals the fragility of the world and the imprint of human actions – inscribed upon surfaces as marks of finitude.

According to critic Jacinto Lageira (2012), this “mineralization of the visible” attests both to a return to matter and to the persistence of a drive toward ruin.

Sophie Ristelhueber

Track #1, 2012

Pigment inkjet print after a gelatin silver print enhanced with acrylic
109,5 x 131,5 cm

Pont Allenby, 2016

Sophie Ristelhueber - Exhibited Works



In 2004, during a trip to the West Bank to produce the *WB* series, Sophie Ristelhueber approached the Allenby Bridge, a strategic crossing point between Jordan, the West Bank, and Israel. There, she furtively captured an image: a palm tree glimpsed through a metal fence. Slumped upon itself, the tree becomes a metaphor for abandonment and for human fragility in the face of conflict.

As Pierre Wat wrote in 2016 : “This tree, a modern allegory of Liberty expiring amid the ruins of human wars, stands as the image of nature’s affliction once humankind has deserted it.”

Sophie Ristelhueber

Pont Allenby #2, 2016

Pigment print on matte Fine Art paper
130 x 90 cm

Sunset Years, 2019



Sophie Ristelhueber - Exhibited Works

In the series *Sunset Years*, Sophie Ristelhueber brings into dialogue six aerial views of the Dead Sea with six close-up views of Parisian asphalt. The lunar surface of the Dead Sea, strangely punctuated by crater-like formations rimmed with wrinkle-shaped lines, bears witness to the pumping of its waters, which, as they recede, carve out these cavities.

Alongside this earth that seems to “swallow itself”, on the verge of disappearing from within, are presented, in the same tableau format, close-up images of Parisian sidewalks.

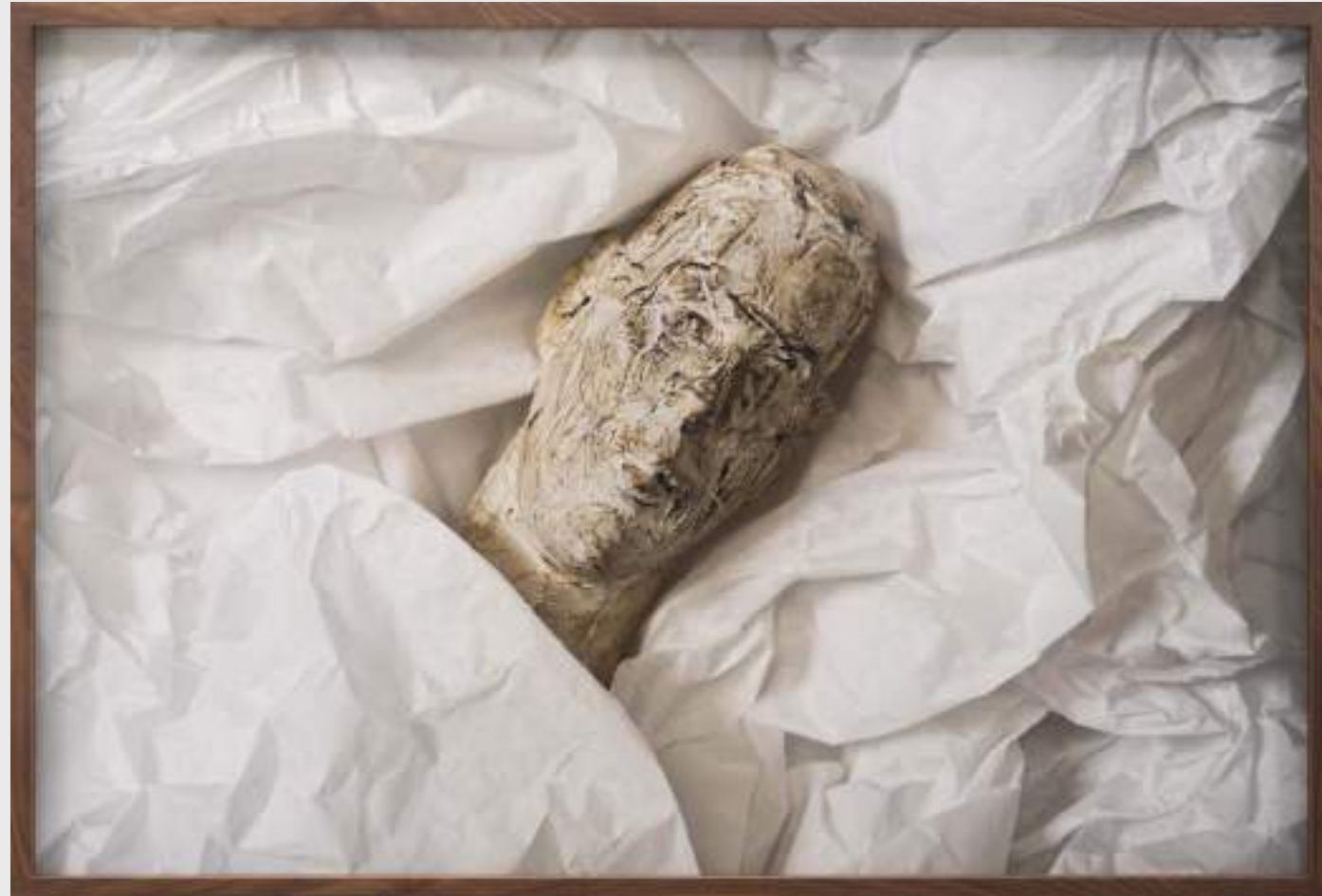
Covered in layers of bitumen, these surfaces sometimes blister under the heat. As Pierre Wat writes: “There is this word – ‘*bubons*’ – that sounds like a warning. Something underneath is at work, like a plague animating the surface of the world with one last movement : (...) the recto and verso of a single wounded surface.”

Sophie Ristelhueber

From left to right, from top to bottom : *Sunset Years* #11, #4, #2, #9, 2019

Pigment print on 340 gsm Baryta Prestige Fine Art paper
120 x 158 x 5 cm

Alberto Giacometti, Heads, 2022



Sophie Ristelhueber - Exhibited Works

On the occasion of the exhibition *Legacy* at the Fondation Giacometti, Sophie Ristelhueber brought previously unseen early works and new productions into dialogue with pieces by Alberto Giacometti, exploring the traces of family memory inscribed in places and objects of remembrance.

In response to a selection of Giacometti's works, Ristelhueber focused particularly on their intimate dimension: the family portraits and, within his sculptural practice, the plaster casts rather than the bronzes.

In the Foundation's storage rooms, she photographed Giacometti's small sculpted heads, placing them on sheets of tissue paper like on pillows. This unusual position for a sculpture — much like for a human being — invites a renewed gaze upon these faces. Their display evokes the figure of the recumbent effigy.

Sophie Ristelhueber

From left to right, from top to bottom : *Colonel Roy Tanguy/1946*, *Tête d'homme/1950*, *Tête d'homme/1950*, *Tête de Diego/1965*, 2022

Print on Canson Baryta Matt paper
56 x 85 cm

The Edge of Awareness, 1996-2020



Sophie Ristelhueber - Exhibited Works

The Edge of Awareness, created in 1996, was inspired by Sophie Ristelhueber's first trip to Sarajevo in 1994, at the height of the civil war. The work was first presented in 1998 in the eponymous exhibition organized by Adelina von Fürstenberg for the World Health Organization, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the United Nations in Geneva. It was later shown in New York, Boston, São Paulo, New Delhi, and Milan.

The mattress—an improvised attempt to plug a hole caused by a bomb — symbolizes a medical gesture through its very form, which recalls that of a bandage. Yet the fragility of this remedy starkly contrasts with the scale of the tragedy it seeks, but fails, to mend. The gaping hole in the wall evokes the city's tragic fate and the ruins left by its devastating siege, whose scars continue to mark both its architecture and the memory of its inhabitants.

Sophie Ristelhueber

The Edge of Awareness, 1996-2020

Gelatin silver print on RC paper
124,5 x 154,5 encadré

Grands Paysages, 2022



Sophie Ristelhueber - Exhibited Works

With the series *Grands Paysages* (2022), Sophie Ristelhueber explores the elegiac dimension of the landscape, both as a tool of representation and as a metaphor for humanity’s relationship with the world. She juxtaposes spectacular views of wooded valleys, rendered in a subtle range of greys, with vivid red inscriptions drawn from the words of artists and writers such as Giacometti, Tolstoy, and Bach.

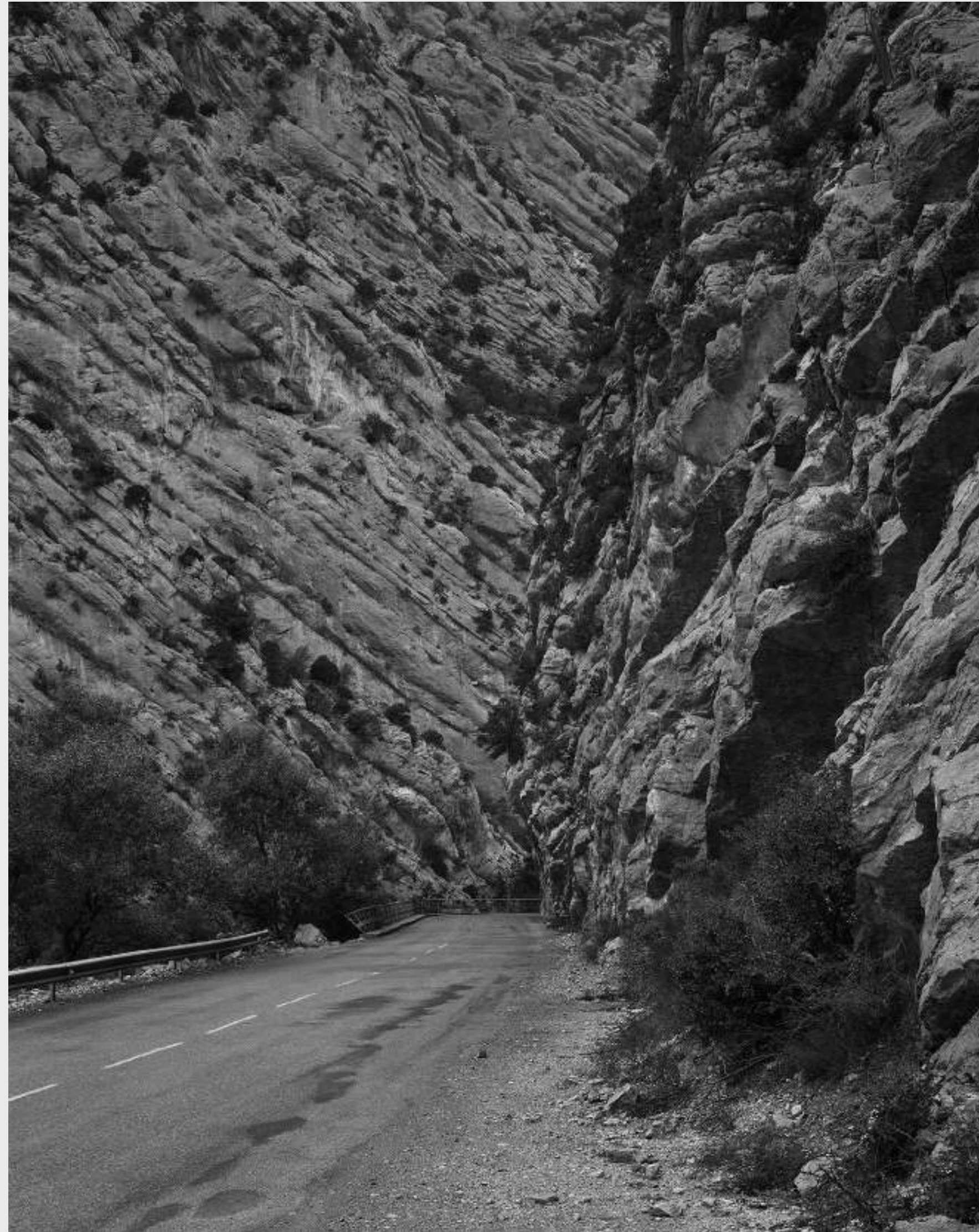
In *Grand Paysage #2*, for example, appears a sentence by Giacometti from *Paris sans fin* : “There, on the ground, like warships on the grey sea.” The text imprints itself onto the depth of the landscape — absorbed and transfigured by what Ristelhueber calls a “*reverie*.”

As Hugo Daniel wrote in 2022 : “The landscape in Ristelhueber’s work is fundamentally elegiac. It serves both as a tool and a metaphor for humanity’s relationship with the world.”

Sophie Ristelhueber
Grand Paysage (II), 2022

Pigment print on paper
125 x 167 cm

La Faille, 2024



Sophie Ristelhueber - Exhibited Works

As is often the case in Sophie Ristelhueber’s work, her images remain latent for many years between the moment they are “captured” and the moment the artist decides to give them form in a specific way.

Although the photograph was taken in 1986, during the *Datar Photographic Mission*, when the artist chose to focus on mid-mountain landscapes, the work only found its purpose and definitive form forty years later, on the occasion of the iconoclastic exhibition *What the Fuck!* presented at Galerie Poggi in 2024. It greeted visitors by placing them quite literally in front of a wall—both architectural and geological.

As Vinciane Despret notes in her text on the exhibition, this work layers vertiginous temporalities: the multimillennial strata of geology and the fragile human constructions that trace the edges of this “fault line.” Photographed in the Prealps, between Digne and Grenoble, this mountain—one that could easily be mistaken for a range in the Middle East or Central Asia — becomes emblematic of humanity’s situation in relation to the environment in which it has entrapped itself, inviting us to find the fault line that might allow us to escape the contemporary condition.

Sophie Ristelhueber

La Faille, 2024

Black-and-white photograph, pigment print on Canson Baryta Prestige II paper, framed under anti-reflective glass
189 x 150 cm

Palmæ, 2024

Sophie Ristelhueber - Exhibited Works



These portraits of palm trees from the area surrounding the Dead Sea bear witness to a *work in progress*, suspended in response to the events of the world.

Of these palm trees, Vinciane Despret writes in her introduction to the exhibition “*What the Fuck!*”: “They are not lying on the ground, yet it is toward the ground that they lean — as if, in a last scorched surge of life, they offered us a glimpse and a feeling of a soberly tormented acquiescence and a quiet resistance.”

Sophie Ristelhueber

Palmæ #11, 2024

Color photograph, pigment print
66.5 x 100 cm

What the Fuck !, 2024

Sophie Ristelhueber - Exhibited Works



Known for her war landscapes, Sophie Ristelhueber introduced animal figures into her work for the first time in 2024. These five large black-and-white photographs of animals were taken by the artist over the years since the 1980s, awaiting the right conditions to emerge as works in their own right. The subject – unusual for the artist – combined with the expletive in the title, appears defiant : a challenge, an expression of resistance, perhaps even a call to revolt.

Ristelhueber, who rarely includes living figures in her work, presents them here as animal portraits.

Is this an iconoclastic gesture ? A questioning of the relevance of art in a world on fire ?

Sophie Ristelhueber

What the Fuck! #3, 2024

Black-and-white photograph, expert Piezography pigment print (carbon ink) on Hahnemühle German Etching paper
100 x 150 cm

|Paris Photo |

PREVIEW (UPON INVITATION ONLY)

Wednesday, November 12th, 2025

11 am - 9 pm

PUBLIC OPENINGS

Thursday, November 13th, 2025 : 1 pm – 8 pm

Friday, November 14th, 2025: 1 pm – 8 pm

Saturday, November 15th, 2025 : 1 pm – 8 pm

Sunday, November 16th, 2025 : 1 pm – 7 pm

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