

Lisa Mara Batacchi

The Time of Discretion project (2016-2020)

Statement

I'm an Italian/American artist born in Florence (IT).

With a training background in fashion design I have worked for several years as a designer for various fashion companies more significantly for Vivienne Westwood Ltd. In that period, after a trip to Thailand and Cambodia (2005, the year of the Tsunami), a sort of epiphany brought me to reconsider my aspirations in life deciding from that day onwards to privilege the visual arts and its social value.

In my projects I tend to bring to light emotional bonds between individuals and society by giving attention to the most subtle variations, to the randomness of life, to dreams, prophecies and to not aware daily actions. Following mostly an anthropological approach, I investigate and document an identity both personal and collective, relating to local or transnational issues, by constructing devices that can lead to new possible forms of interactions and thoughts.

My works, which range from writing, drawing, filming, photography, performances, installations, public art interventions, are mostly long term projects that need to grow little by little and unfold between stories where the private can become public and vice versa. Since 2007 I have sometimes used textile materials as relational tools but starting from 2013 I focused more and more deeply on the recovery of textile techniques and related hidden idealistic thoughts, cults and philosophies that are slowly but dramatically disappearing in the globalized culture of the 21st century, both between oriental and western culture. Pursuing this direction, I have established relations of cooperation with particular communities starting from Florence (IT) or with ethnic minorities in Bombay (IND) and in Guizhou Province (CH). By learning and observing from them, I have entered a "state of discretion" by practicing manual ancestral technics that necessitate of slow ritualistic gestures, hard work and a true living experience. The final works become for me as sacred messages that can be reinterpreted and liberated into the world to keep us more aware of the delicate balance between heaven/earth and humanity/cosmos.



The Time of Discretion

This work is an long term project which will be composed of Vanishing Actions, performances, installations located or inspired by areas around the world where traditions are still alive in favor of the timeless. In parallel to this, also video material and writings will be gathered becoming films and a books, both divided into different topics, as an attempt to cover idealistically, with thought, spirituality, humor, sensuality, resistance, provocation, the years to complete our century starting from re-imagining our present and predicting a fictional future.

The first chapter of The Time of Discretion, began in 2016 with the invitation to the Land Art Mongolia Biennale Finding the Axis between Sky and Earth. Before arriving in Mongolia, I have traveled in Inner Mongolia from Ordos to Hohhot, to Beijing and finally to Guizhou, a village located in South West China, a landlocked mountainous territory, home of some of the most distinctive «Chinese Ethnic Minority Groups». Among them, the Hmong tribe, well known for the craftsmanship displayed in their textiles, grow their own fibers and the Indigo plant which is necessary to prepare the dye. In their tincture tanks the women recognize sacred signs that can reunite them once they die with their ancestors and their lands of origin. I was interested to experience living with them in a remote village practicing slowness and exploring a critique of globalized culture through an ecstatic form of temporary disappearance from capitalistic world wide ideology. Pursuing this direction, establishing relations of cooperation with the community and entering a state of Discretion, I gave new meanings to the Miao traditional indigo color dye by creating a stage curtain with different shadings of blue and symbolic drawings.

Before leaving for China/Mongolia I have asked the I-Ching Oracle a question on the future of our world from now to the end of this century:

"Will human beings be able to decrease this accelerating materialism and reconnect with the natural cycles of our planet? If so, when, how?"

.

I interpreted Hexagram 40 in this way:

The world is going through a difficult time where we cannot hope for great changes, but a very strong and liberating rain will come, from which new seeds on the earth will sprout again in the future.

And its changes from Hexagram 2:

In our century the world will be able to rise again if humanity can advance with a different equilibrium. To do this, human beings must search for the creative and spiritual energy of the horse, which represents the egotistic male urge, balanced by the feminine devotion of the cow and its spatial energy which can nourish our planet.

From the I-Ching's response I saw some key elements that accompanied and guided me on my journey, looking for coincidences with certain indications of this ancient Taoist text.



still from the short film *The Time of Discretion*, 2020
HD, color, sound, 24:53 min



In Search for a Precise Shade of Blue #1, 2019
photographic collage, variable dimensions

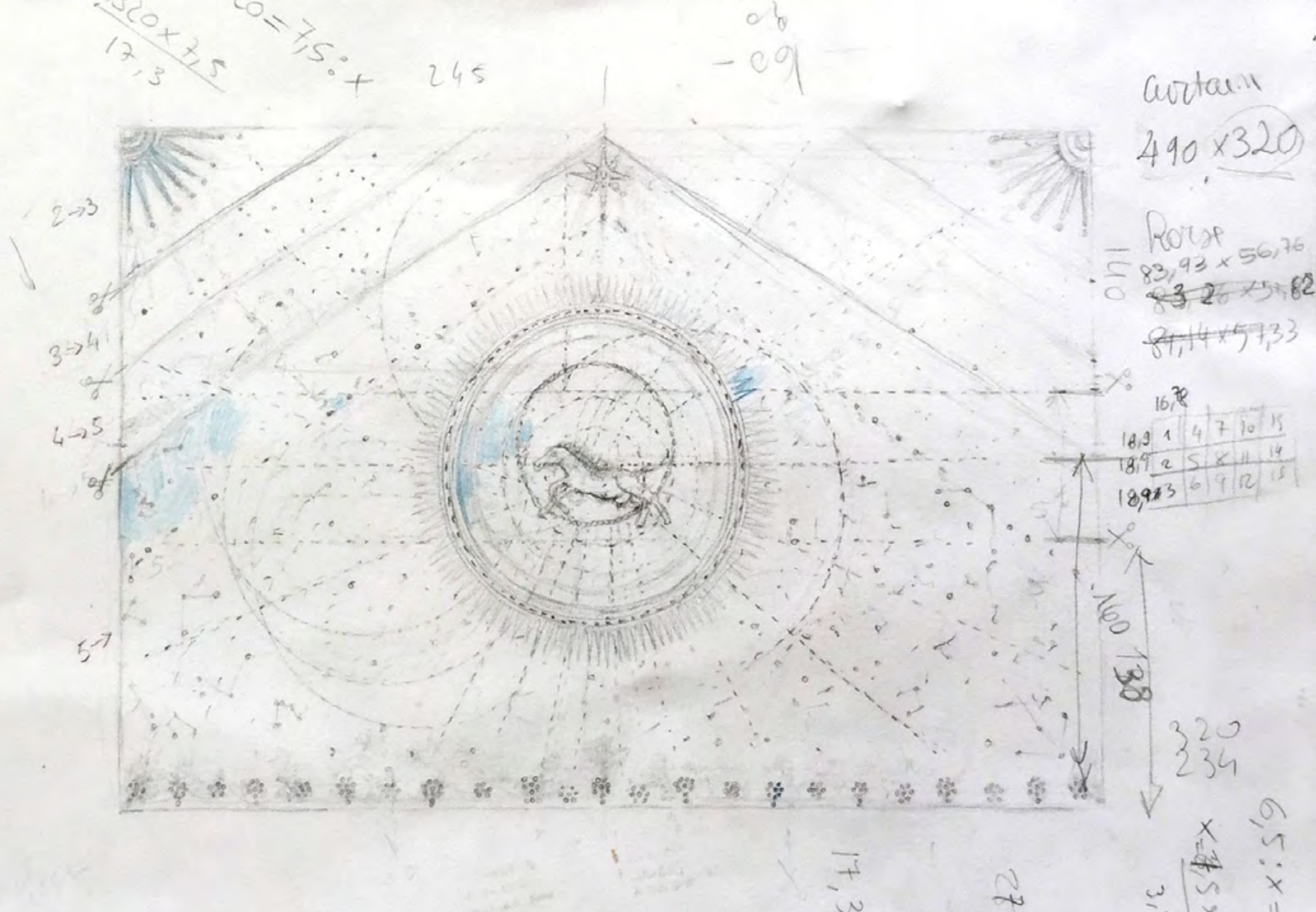


Inspired by astrologic signs from the Five Pagoda Temple, Hohhot, Inner Mongolia, China, 2016

A Possible Future, photographic print on cotton paper, 50,5 x 50,5 cm, 2016



In Search for a Precise Shade of Blue #2, 2019
photographic collage, variable dimensions



The Time of Discretion. Preparatory sketch of the stage curtain, 2016
 Pencil on acquarel paper, 36x26 cm, white wooden frame, glass.



Working together with Lala, a Hmong woman. Drawing on fabric by tracing the lines from the paper model below.



Working together with Hmong ladies tracing my pencil drawing on the fabric with hot wax.



Still from the short film *The Time of Discretion*, 2020
HD, color, sound, 24:53 min



The Time of Discretion (Curtain Paper Pattern), 2016
paper, wax traces, 300x440 cm



Still from the short film *The Time of Discretion*, 2020

HD, color, sound, 24:53 min

Immersing the curtain fabric several times to create the different shadings of blue.



In Search for a Precise Shade of Blue #3, 2019
photographic collage, variable dimensions



In Search for a Precise Shade of Blue #4, 2019
photographic collage, variable dimensions

LAND ART MONGOLIA BIENNALE

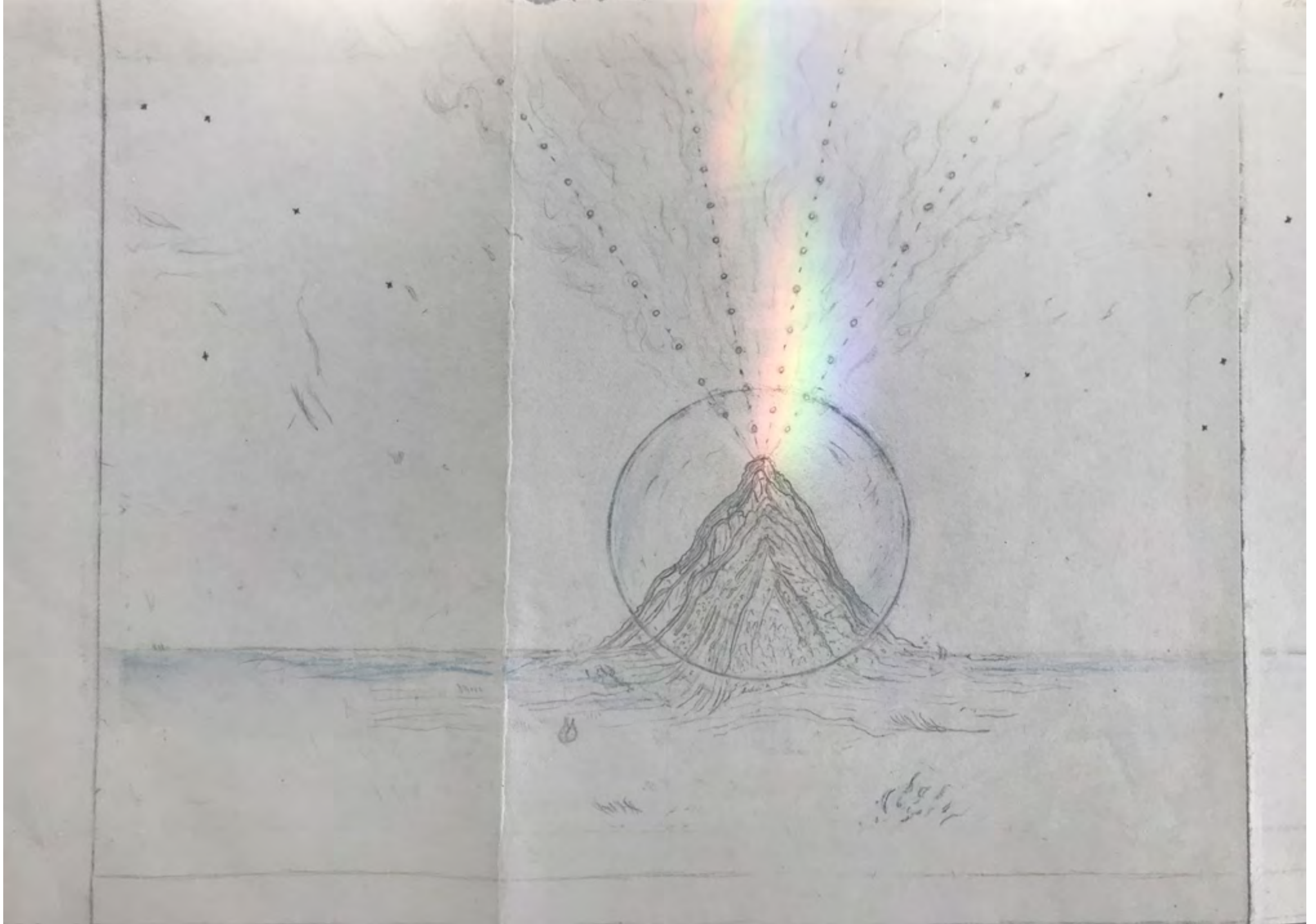
FINDING THE AXIS BETWEEN SKY AND EARTH

Curated by Valentina Gioia Levy

AUGUST 21st - SEPTEMBER 10th, 2016

At the center of the curtain there is an image of an astral animal, a mix between a male horse and a female cow which, as in the I-Ching that I previously consulted (Hexagram 40 that changes in exagram 2), is seen as a duality of coexisting qualities which have a liberating effect on human life. The horse referring to the Mongolian nomadic culture reflects on how it is progressively becoming sedentary. On the other hand, "mobility" nowadays has to recuperate "horizontality" rather than "verticality" as a chance to connect again the spiritual to the spatial, predestined, as in a prophecy, to become again.

By moving the stage curtain to specific areas of Dariganga, an area in South East of the Gobi desert, in particular opening the scenario in front of the sacredness of Altan Ovoo's area, secret suggestions have been liberated by the participants into the surrounding space appearing in a narrative and invisible way and widening out prospects and thoughts across countries, political boundaries, historical ideologies and economies.



Wishes on the Altan Ovoo, 2016
pencil drawing on paper, 29,2 x 36 cm





Following, a photographic documentation of the performance and installation.



The Time of Discretion, 2016

Photographic print on Hahnemuhle fine art baryta paper, 100x70 cm, white wooden frame, glass.

Edition of 3



The Time of Discretion, 2016
Photographic print on Hahnemuhle fine art baryta paper, 100x70 cm, white wooden frame, glass.
Edition of 3



The Time of Discretion, 2016
Photographic print on Hahnemühle fine art baryta paper, 100x70 cm, white wooden frame, glass.
Edition of 3



The Time of Discretion, 2016
Photographic print on Hahnemühle fine art baryta paper, 100x70 cm, white wooden frame, glass.
Edition of 3

The Time of Discretion. Curtain, 2016

Wooden structure (500 cm x 270 cm), 6 motorcycle mirrors, screws, cotton curtain fabric (490 cm x 320 cm), indigo color, wax, 6 cotton and silk strings each of 3 m long, 300 Chinese metal curtain hooks.





The Time of Discretion. Vanishing Acts #05

A performance by Lisa Batacchi curated by Valentina Gioia Levy, following a talk

During the 57th Venice Biennale, May 19th, 2017
Arts & Globalization Pavilion, Palazzo Rossini.

>European Cultural Centre _ Program 2017
>Arts & Globalization _ Program 2017





The Time of Discretion. Vanishing Acts #5, wax on raw silk fabric, indigo batik, 149 x 200 cm, 2017

Lisa Batacchi
The Time of Discretion

Curated by Veronica Caciolli

MAD, Murate Art District, Florence (IT)
June 7th– September 7th, 2018

The *Time of Discretion* is the first solo show by the Florentine artist Lisa Batacchi in an institutional space.

The exhibition is presented as a small, broad, metaphorical and necessary retrospective on a cycle of works developed over the last two years specifically on the subject of discretion and intended as its first chapter.

The show consists of two works made in the south of China together with the Hmong people and about twenty new works expressly produced for this occasion, including installations, tapestries, videos, photographs, documentary archives and symbolic finds.

The Time of Discretion is a transnational project in progress, which opens up complex and extremely sensitive issues that widely extend the boundaries of art. The exhibition intersects experience and representation, dramatically confronting the East and the West, advancing a dense theoretical scenario in relation to the processes of globalization.

The project begins with the participation of Lisa Batacchi at the Land Art Mongolia Biennial of 2016, whose theme to be discussed concerned the interpretation of the axis that divides the sky from the earth. To do so, the artist reached Guizhou, a mountain village in southern China where the ancient Hmong people, observe a traditional ritual daily.

In particular, they hold a specific practice, considered divinatory, that of natural indigo dyeing. A large tent created by the artist, manually, slowly and discretely, together with the Hmong women, was later carried in a procession towards the sacred mountain Altan Ovoo, for the inaugural performance of the Biennale.

The horse-cow represented there, shows a symbology derived from a Chinese oracle of the classical tradition, questioned preliminarily by the artist, whose sentences are governed by a logic of randomness, through the repeated tossing of coins. A randomness clearly understood as not accidental but secretly determined, also deliberately regulates the progressive behavior of Lisa Batacchi.

A subsequent experience with this people allowed her to dye another fabric, which still draws on the meanings expressed in the fortieth and in the second hexagram of the I-Ching (The liberation - The receptive).

Alongside these, there are further twenty multimedia works, produced for this exhibition and shown in preview for the Le Murate space.

The collaboration with different types of mastery, activity that characterizes one of the directions of the project, has been extended by the artist to the local area, first in the city of Florence, where through the ancient looms of the Fondazione Arte della Seta Lisio, she has been able to realize five cotton tapestries.

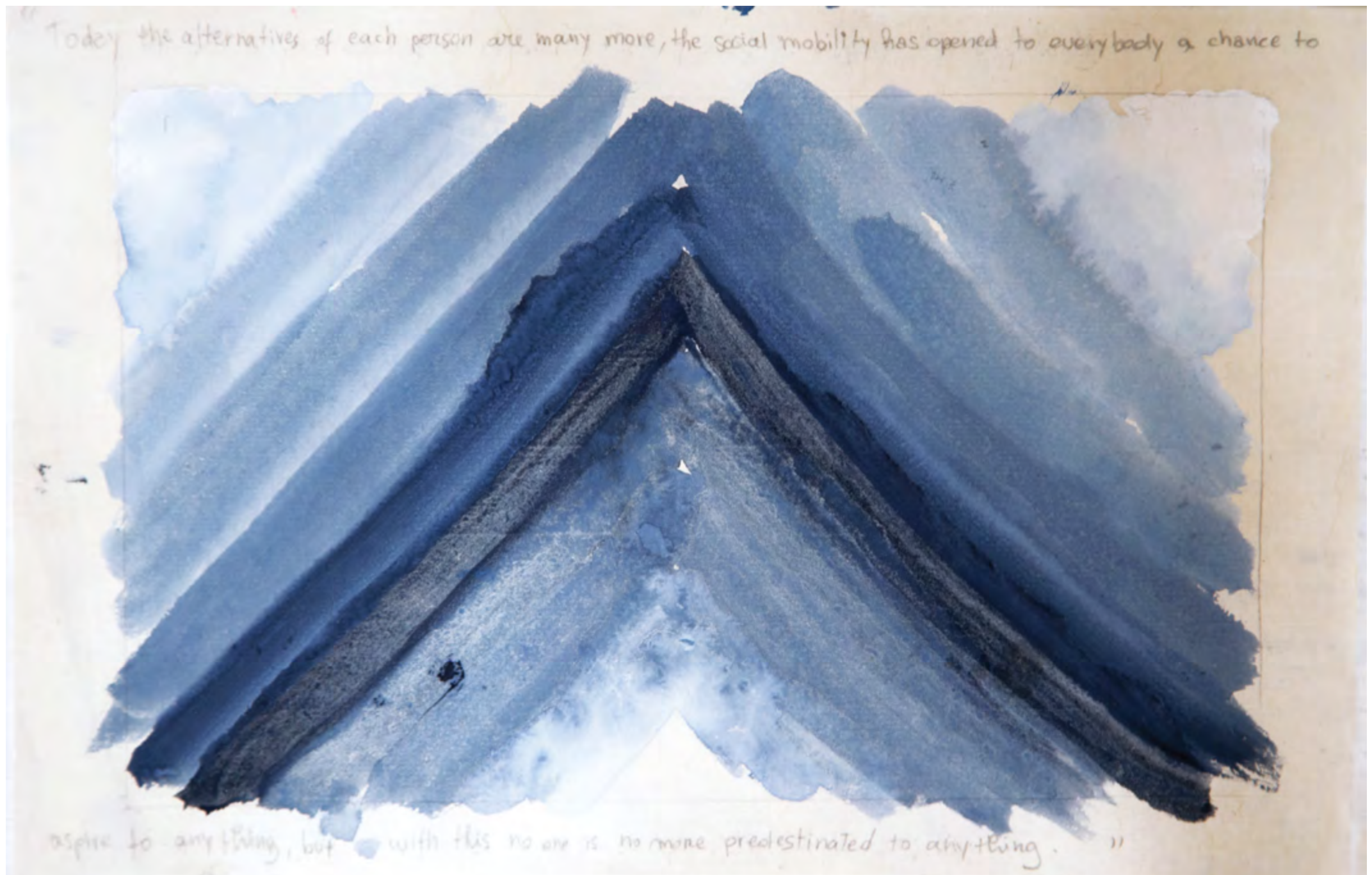
A Toli, an amulet usually worn and used by Mongolian shamans, has instead been reproduced on a large scale, for performative as well as exhibition purposes, in partnership with the la Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna di Pisa.

The exhibition is also enriched by two photographic series that document the performance for the Land Art Mongolia Biennial and Elisir of Return, which represent the beauty, the persistence of tradition and the fragility of a world partially isolated, on the threshold of globalization but still magically possible.

Besides a collection of objects such as books, sketches and ritual objects which constitute the material archive both of the trip and the exhibition, Travel Notes (a selection of videos recorded in 2016-2017) retraces landscapes, the relational and cultural stages of Mongolia, Inner Mongolia and southern China, in which poetry, imagery and narration just overlap.

The occasion of the exhibition offers a very interesting and punctual multitude of issues: mutual interference or impermeability between different cultures, the status of some ethnic minorities, the results of globalization, the roles of industrial and manual production, the theories on degrowth, the power or misery of memory.

Eventually, the exhibition intends therefore to act as a context of sharing and discussing topics that oscillate between utopia and awareness, wishing to trigger a necessary and choral rethinking of time, ethics and politics.



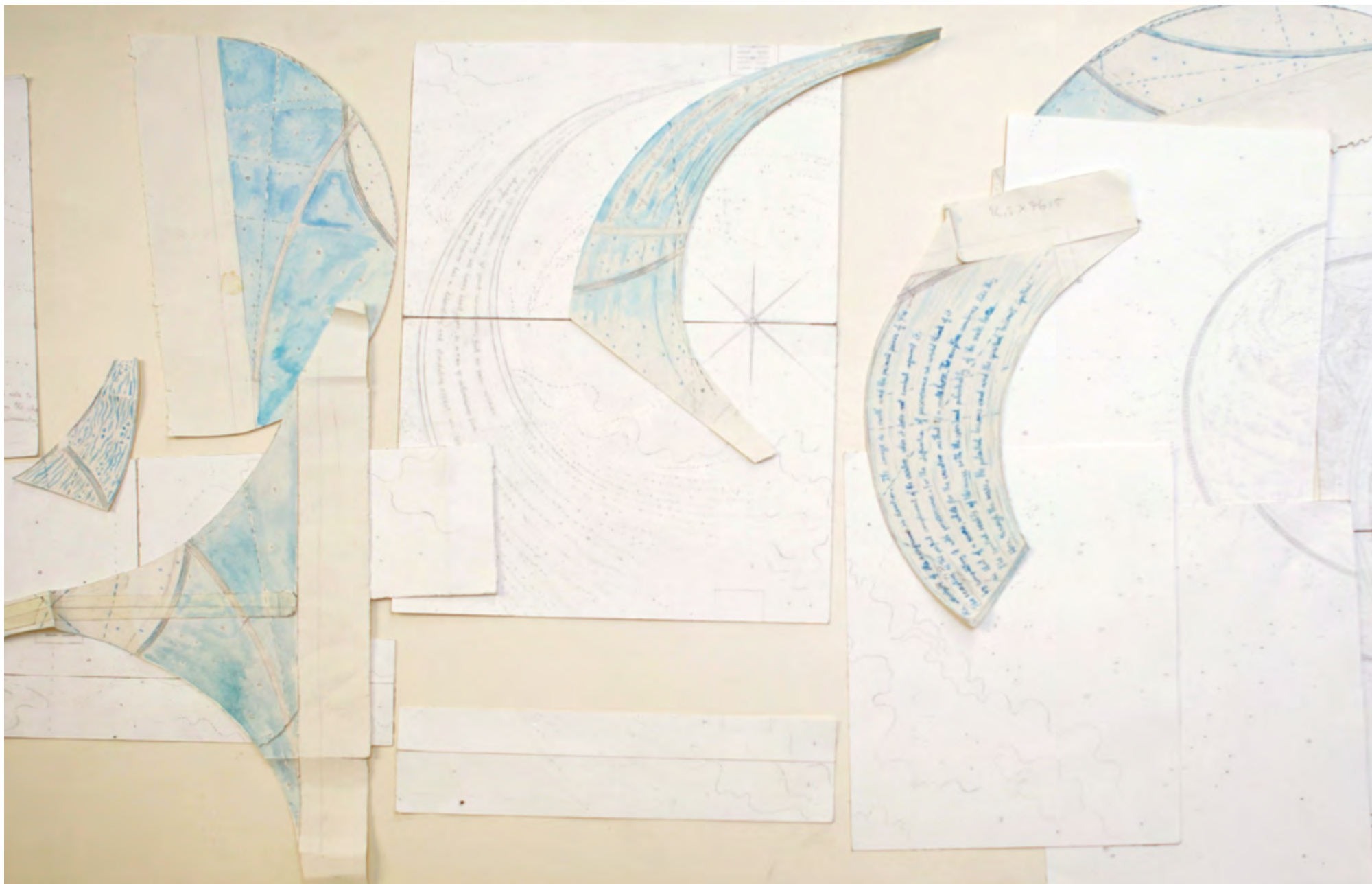
The Time of Discretion. Blue shading studies, watercolor and pencil on rice paper, 19 x 28,8 cm, 2016



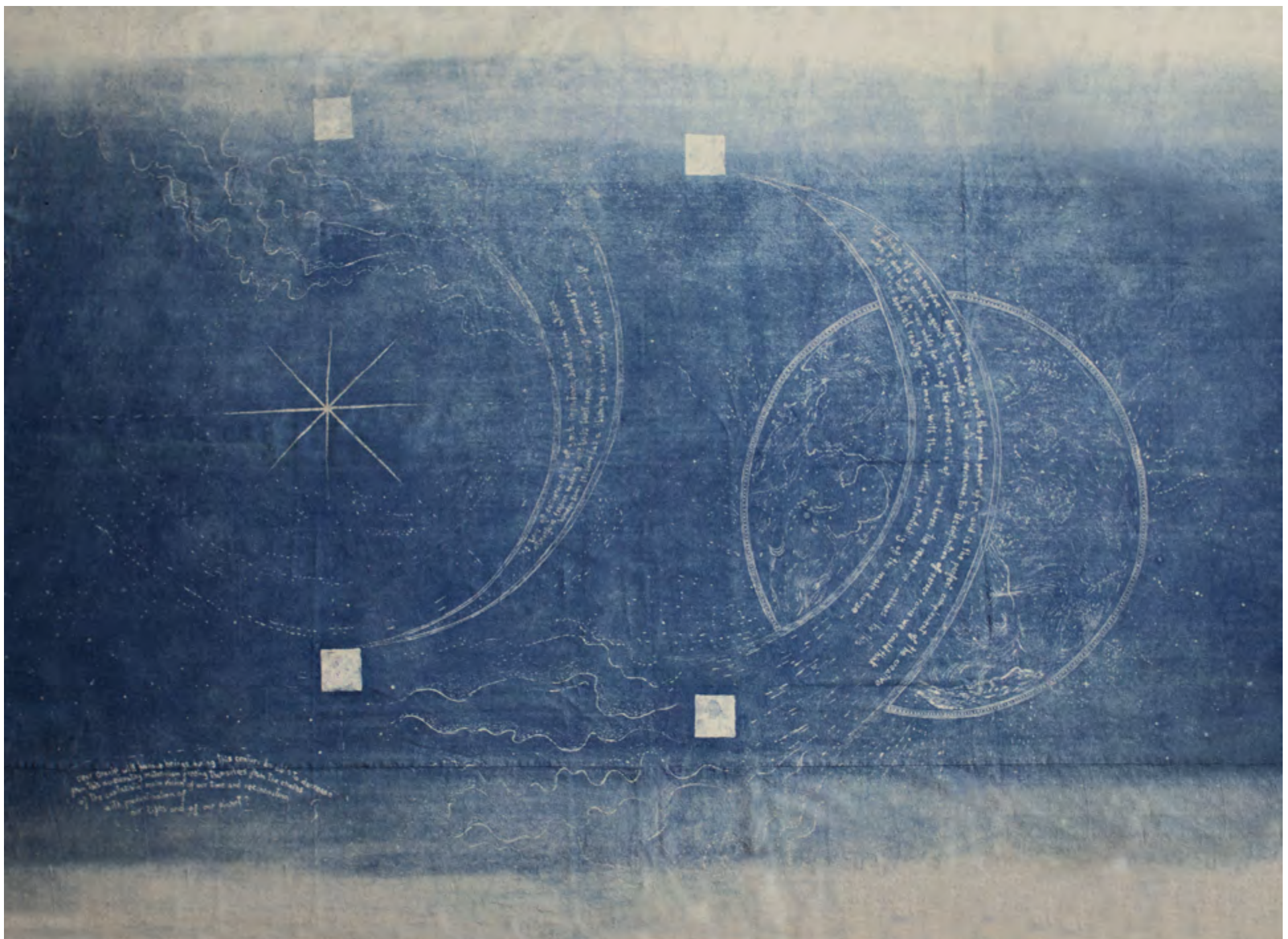
Elisir of Return (installation), 2018

Miao cut out papers with shapes of birds and flowers.

Site specific intallation, Murate Art District, Florence, Italy



Preface sketches, pencil and water color on paper, installation variable, 2017



Preface, wax on raw silk fabric, indigo batik, 149 x 200 cm, 2017

CROSSING DESTINIES

5 tapestries made artigianally by the artist using the Takemura antic weaving machine during a residency of one month at Fondazione Lisio Arte della Seta in Florence (IT) as a co-production for the solo show *The Time of Discretion. Chapter One* at Murate Art District curated by Veronica Caciolli.

This series is inspired by the Hmong belief that, when indigo solution sits on fabric, a brilliant blue froth builds on its surface. This is a sign that their ancestors are protecting them and will recognize them, once they die, to lead them back to their place of origin from where they can then reunite to the center of all beginning and ending, the Polar star.

These images are taken from macro details photographs caught when the fabric has a reaction to the indigo solution as something to look into as a magic sphere where future landscapes open up to us as undescribable flux of energies.



Crossing destinies, series of 5 tapestries artigianally made by the artist, edition of 1. Each 62 x 60 cm, 2018

natural indigo batik cotton thread dyed in Guizhou (CH) and weaved with the Takemura Jacquard loom at Fondazione Lisio Arte della seta in Florence (IT)



Crossing Destinies
installation view at Murate Art District, Firenze



Crossing Destinies #1, 2018

series of 5 tapestries. Each 60x62 cm, cotton thread, natural indigo dye



Crossing Destinies #2, 2018

series of 5 tapestries. Each 60x62 cm, cotton thread, natural indigo dye



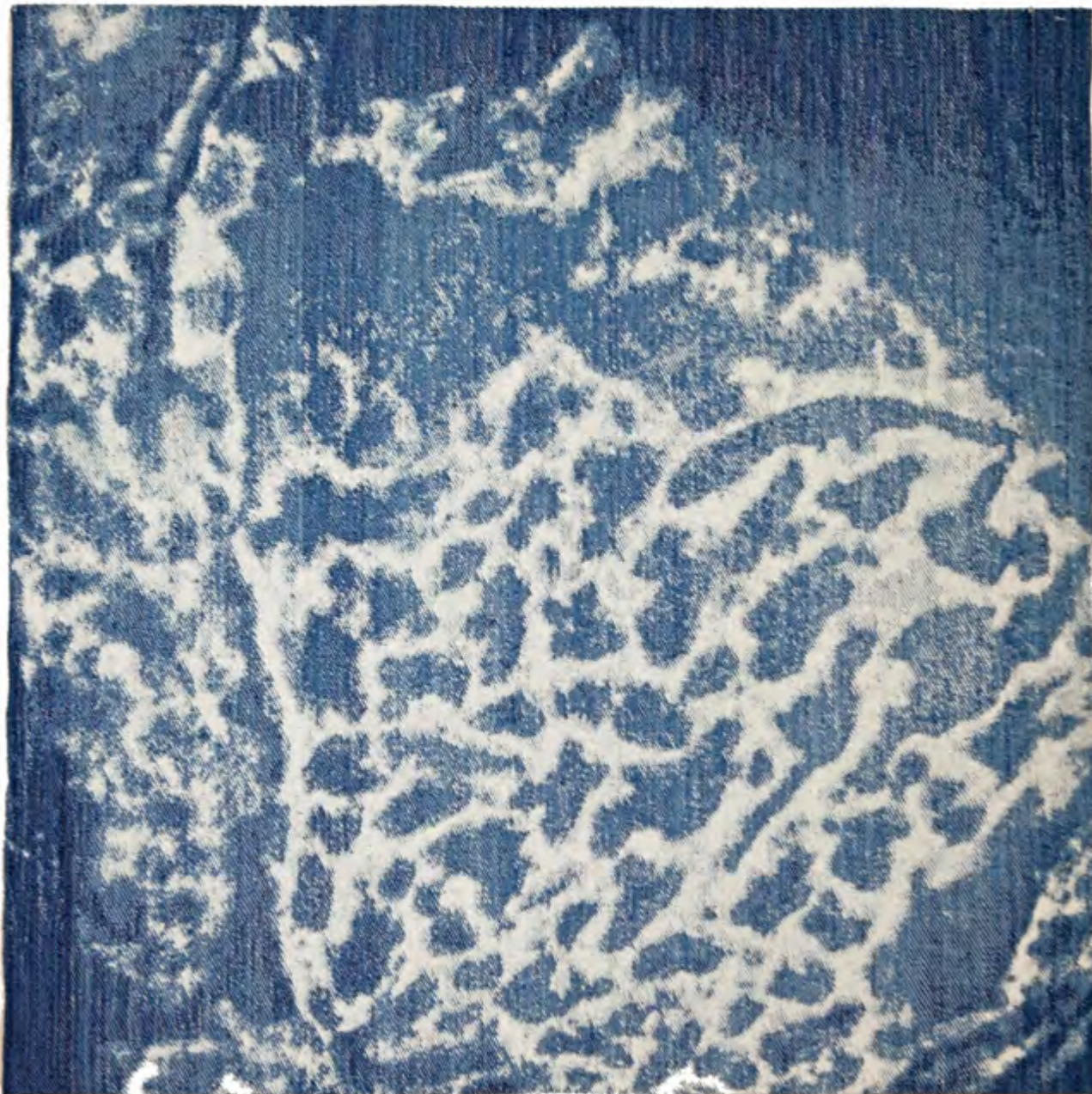
Crossing Destinies #3, 2018

series of 5 tapestries. Each 60x62 cm, cotton thread, natural indigo dye



Crossing Destinies #4, 2018

series of 5 tapestries. Each 60x62 cm, cotton thread, natural indigo dye



Crossing Destinies #5, 2018

series of 5 tapestries. Each 60x62 cm, cotton thread, natural indigo dye

TOLI

Produced with the support of PERCRO Perceptual Robotics Laboratory, Sant'ANNA, PISA, for the solo show at Le Murate curated by Veronica Caciolli
In South East Asia there is a belief that materials reflecting light can hunt away bad spirits.

Usually the Hmong women wear tin-silver elements as ornaments, instead Mongolian sciamans rather use round reflecting amulets. In this case I decided to create a very big amulet starting from an Asian kitchen panel found in Hong Kong which, composed with additional 27 panels, becomes a common shield for people to protect themselves. This object will be used both as sculpture and as a device for performances in the private/public space.



Toli, 2018
tin, 28 peaces, wood, ø 280 cm
site specific installation, Le Murate PAC, Florence, Italy



Toli, 2018
tin, 28 peaces, wood, ø 280 cm
site specific installation, Le Murate PAC, Florence, Italy



The Time of Discretion (Procession), 2016-2018
Photographic print on Hahnemühle fine art baryta paper, series of four, 70x100 cm, framed. Edition of 3



The Time of Discretion (Procession), 2016-2018
Photographic print on Hahnemühle fine art baryta paper, series of four, 70x100 cm, framed. Edition of 3

ELISIR OF RETURN

Elisir of Return consists in two photographic series. The first one captures a process of economic and cultural exploitation practiced by the Miao people from Xijiang towards tourists, through the explicit invitation to the fast and cheap hiring of their traditional clothes and ornaments: "authentic traditions, the pure products, are everywhere yielding to promiscuity and aimlessness" (Clifford 1988). Nevertheless, the other series shows the cohabitation within the same province, of a lifestyle still rooted in agricultural rhythms and local customs. This work as a whole rises then a question about the future, poised at the moment between Lévi-Strauss melancholic despondency and the faith in survival of the indigenous cultures through their hybrid reinvention.

Veronica Caciolli (ed. by), *The Worlds of Others*, in Lisa Mara Batacchi. *The Time of Discretion*, Silvana Editoriale 2019



Elisir of Return #1, 2017/2018
photographic print on fine art baryta hahnemuehle
23,7x15,8 cm



Elisir of Return, 2017/2018

photographic prints on fine art baryta hahnemuehle, series of six, 40x53 cm, framed



Elisir of Return, photographic print on fine art baryta hahnemuehle 325gsm-100%cellulose bright white high gloss, wooden frame, glass, 53x40 cm, 2017-2018. Edition of 3



Elisir of Return, photographic print on fine art baryta hahnemuehle 325gsm-100%cellulose bright white high gloss, wooden frame, glass, 53x40 cm, 2017-2018. Edition of 3



Eisir of Return, photographic prints on fine art baryta hahnemuehle 325gsm-100%cellulose bright white high gloss, wooden frame, glass, 53x40 cm, 2017-2018. Edition of 3



Elisir of Return, photographic print on fine art baryta hahnemuehle 325gsm-100%cellulose bright white high gloss, wooden frame, glass, 53x40 cm, 2017-2018. Edition of 3



Elisir of Return, 2017/2018

photographic prints on fine art baryta hahnemuehle, series of six, 40x53 cm, framed; photographic print on fine art baryta hahnemuehle, pins, 23,7x15,8 cm



Elisir of Return #2, 2017/2018
photographic prints on fine art baryta hahnemuehle, series of six, 40x53 cm, framed



Elisir of Return #3, 2017/2018

photographic prints on fine art baryta hahnemuehle, series of six, 40x53 cm, framed

The Time of Discretion

Short Film

Link and password on request

YEAR 2020

LENGH 25"18'

WRITTEN, DIRECTED, SELF PRODUCTED Lisa Mara Batacchi

PHOTOGRAPHY, CAMERA, LIVE SOUNDS Lisa Mara Batacchi

MUSICS Sajincho Namtöylak, Stefano Maurizi

MUSICIANS Sajincho Namtöylak, Stefano Maurizi, Mirco Mariottini

EDITING Barbara De Mori

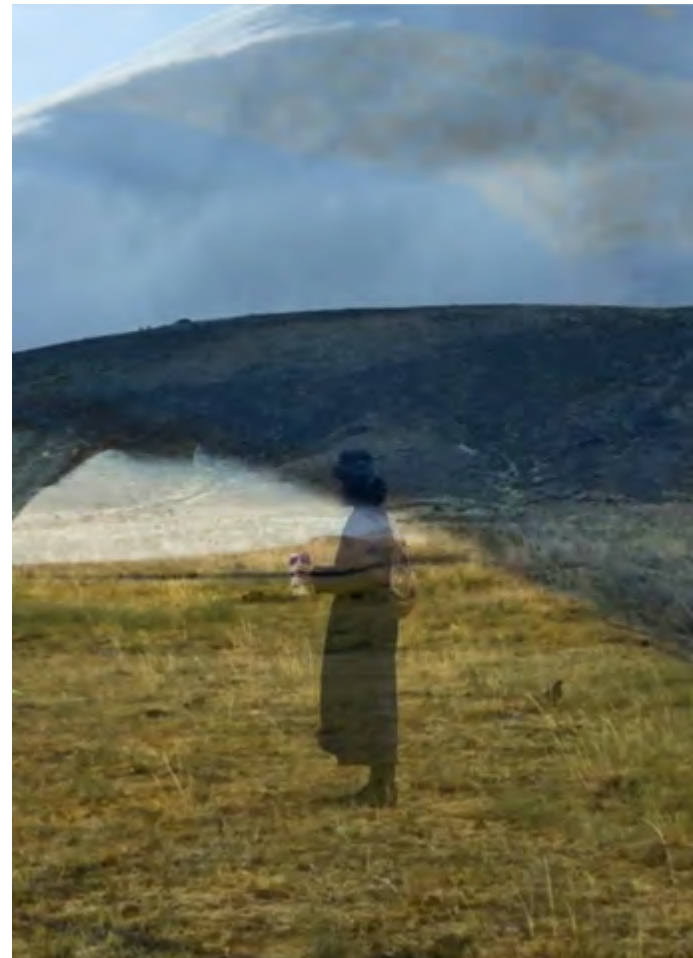
RE-RECORDING MIXER Michele Gualdrini

COLORIST Nazzareno Neri

VOICE Lisa Mara Batacchi

LANGUAGE English

Political, social and economical changes of the 21st century call forth new responses and Lisa Mara Batacchi's hybrid documentary arises from the necessity of a visual artist to recover ancient textile rituals and a timeless dimension of conviviality which are gradually but inexorably disappearing. The story starts from an invitation to participate to an Art Biennial in the South East of the Gobi desert entitled "Catching the Axis. In between the Sky and the Earth". In search of a precise natural shade of blue, the journey starts in Inner Mongolia then leading to South West China. Here, while preparing her art piece, she will enestablish relations of cooperation with the Hmong ethnic minority ladies learning the ancient sacred art of dyeing with indigo. Guided by the book of changes (I-Ching) consulted before departure, in this short film Batacchi uses an experimental approach mixing travel moments, visions and thoughts together with music components, to give voice to invisible communications between individuals and the surrounding space and by exploring at the same time an ecstatic form of temporary disappearance from the globalized culture of our millenium.





Today the “new missionaries of materialism”
are making the diversity of this great world give up,



I was leading to Mongolia, a land that once
was the whole of the Old world.



The Time of Discretion, 2020
stills from the short film, HD, color, sound, 24:53 min

Lisa Mara Batacchi

The Time of Discretion

The Book

In *The Time of Discretion* photos, drawings, stills, new collages and stories cross experience and representation, cadenced by a dense theoretical scenario offered by the different contributions in the catalogue.

CURATED BY Veronica Cacioli

TEXTS BY Lisa Mara Batacchi, Sumesh Sharma, Federico Campagna, Valentina Gioia Levy,

Xiaomei Wang, Veronica Cacioli

PUBLISHER Silvana Editoriale

DIMENSIONS 19 x 23,5 cm

PAGES 152

ILLUSTRATIONS 70

LANGUAGE English

YEAR 2020

ISBN 9788836645558



Lisa Mara Batacchi

The Time of Discretion

Selected Links:

<https://www.murateartdistrict.it/673-2/>

<https://www.moussepublishing.com/?product=/global-identities/>

<http://www.musecontemporanee.com/2017/06/10/lisa-batacchi/>

<https://www.tribune.com/attualita/2016/10/biennale-land-art-mongolia-lisa-batacchi/>

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/56a4f30c5dc6de5c9600ec63/t/583d82282e69cf1be57e9d7e/1480426033455/Biennale+in+Mongolia_+intervista+a+Valentina+Gioia+Levy+di+Luisa+Galdo.pdf

https://issuu.com/landartmongolia/docs/lam360_katalog2016