

**Malak El Zanaty Varichon & Mona Varichon**  
***Matrices & multiples, Time is not only a killer...***

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The Vanity  
1650 North Indiana Street  
Los Angeles CA 90039

**Malak:** I take 3, 4 photos of the same scene, instead of making a film. It's very silly, it's just like time passing. Asha mentioned this to Mona, he said, "that's what your mother does."  
I do have a click with birds, even crows. And I'm still reading *The birds' conference*, an immense fable, a "birds' chat" of the 12th century written by a Persian poet, Farid al-Din Attar.  
I have another series I really like, a more interior one with plants that grow and die. It's part of what I call in French my "natures mutantes<sup>1</sup>."  
Irises are very beautiful, how they die, the envelopes of the buds remain, like parchment paper. What's left is like a skin, a sculpture of the after, a special imprint.  
I didn't think anyone else could be interested in all this apart from me in my house.

He [Asha] also liked my little assemblages. That's all I do. I chose three, around birds too. At the same time they have to do with walking here and there. I walk a lot.  
Sometimes things come to me in English, I try to think of Asha: "Wandering," "about life," and... I was hesitating between "life" and "time." It's just about my daily life after all.  
On another hand, I had read a text by John Giorno, or rather, I had heard "life is a killer," written it down and forgotten. A few months later I wrote "time is a killer" which I thought was by John Giorno.  
A mutating still-life which will tell you a story...

Three stones I'm going to show —I still have a lot of work to do with them— came from the Northern and Southern Atlantic, from Dakar and from the English channel, actually. But where does the sea end?  
I've got an egg, a baby chick and a bird, on shell bases. I want to make paper molds of them. More or less when I started working at the Pompidou, there was a big show around Brancusi called "The bird hidden in the stone." In his country, Romania, there was an old tale about a bird called the *maiastra*, a bird with magical powers, that speaks several languages and can help humans communicate.  
Me, I have my Brancusi at home.  
These are my stone birds, picked on the beaches of Normandie and Dakar. That's it. It's very small. And now they're migrating to Los Angeles to discover the Pacific Ocean, because I persuaded them to. Thanks to Naoki, the "big bird" who brought them to the Vanity.  
Is everything a question of timing and time?  
I really wonder what Asha thinks of all this now.

*As told to Rosanna Puyol and Mona Varichon*

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<sup>1</sup> French for "mutating still-life."

**Mona:** The Photop's was invented by my father in 1991, in the hopes of reviving his framing business. It is a postcard-size paper frame, has a transparent front and one side left open to allow a picture to be slid in, and it closes with an adhesive flap. It works as an ornamental frame, a protective cover, and a mailable envelope, with a postcard template on the back. The concept never took off as my father had hoped, so my family and I were left with a lifelong supply of little paper frames.

All of the photographs and scanned book pages shown in these Photop's were produced in my Los Angeles backhouse studio in the spring and summer of 2019. Before moving back to France, I decided to scan the covers, dedications and inscriptions of my entire book collection. I made a selection of the scans and photographs in Paris this fall 2021, in response to my mother's works for this exhibition.

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Malak El Zanaty Varichon (born 1952 in Giza, Egypt) lives and works in Paris. Since 1990, she has been leading art workshops with the non-profit Art-Éveil in kindergarten and elementary schools in Paris and its surrounding areas, for adults, disabled or socially marginalized audiences, and at the Atelier des Enfants of the Centre Georges Pompidou. Over time and its detours, she has been developing her own artistic practice within the folds of her professional and family life. She recently had her first solo exhibition at Cocotte in Treignac, France.

Mona Varichon (born 1989 in Paris, France) is an artist and translator based in Paris and New York. She runs the independent press Varichon & Cie, which will soon publish a French translation of *Licorice Candies* by Argentinian author Cecilia Pavón, and a French-English reissue of *Reflections from a cinematic cesspool*, the memoirs of American experimental filmmakers George and Mike Kuchar. Recent showings of her work include Les Chichas de la pensée in Pantin, France, Les Urbaines in Lausanne, Switzerland and the Capc musée d'art contemporain in Bordeaux, France.