

Photographs Get Moving
(potatoes and shells, too)

Aguas Varda

AGNÈS VARDA

Photographs Get Moving
(potatoes and shells, too)

September 11–November 8, 2015

Logan Center Gallery
915 E 60th St, Chicago, IL 60637
Tue–Sat 9 am–8 pm, Sun 11 am–8 pm
arts.uchicago.edu/logan/gallery

Table of Contents

<i>Stilling life and, bringing the stilled alive through motion and imagination</i> by Dominique Bluher	5
<i>Photographs Get Moving (potatoes and shells too)</i> by Agnès Varda	6
Exhibition Map & Checklist	15
<i>BO_GIRL</i> by Jessica Stockholder	16
Programming	22
<i>The Three Lives of Agnès Varda</i>	23
Colophon	24



"In Venice, in front of a painting of Gentile Bellini, *Miracle of the Cross at the Bridge of San Lorenzo*. The detail in the right of the bottom of the painting represents a fraternity. I placed myself among them, in front of them."

Stilling life and, bringing the stilled alive through motion and imagination

by Dominique Bluher

Agnès Varda puts films in her photos, and photos, potatoes, and shells in her films and video-installations. For my second collaboration with this extraordinarily inventive filmmaker, who likes to describe herself as "an old film maker who has become a young visual artist," we wanted to create a dialogue between still photography and moving pictures.

Varda's filmmaking roots are in photography. From her earliest works she has been exploring and questioning the polarity between the still and the moving, the broken and the continuous, the fleeting and the fixed or captured. Even if Varda started as a photographer and then became a filmmaker before turning into a visual artist, these three forms kept reconnecting, complementing, and intertwining as matter and as subject throughout her career. The composition of her photographs, which immobilize a body in movement, the chaptered structures of her films, which interweave multiple strands and partial views, and the arrangements of images and screens, sounds and silences are all propositions for investigations that are brought to life by an active gaze and the spectator's mind.

Life slips away but so does the living. Reflecting on portraiture, Varda once explained that portraits are impossible to make. Varda's images and compositions articulate her attentiveness to the ungraspable other, whether human, animal, or vegetal. Her snapshots of unknown walkers, her portraits of potatoes, or her tribute to her beloved cat restore their presence through the sensually abounding murmurs of textures and colors, light and obscurity.

Life is never still as long as it meets an imaginative gaze.

The exhibition features four video-installations: from Varda's very first video-installation, *Patatutopia*, first shown in 2003, when Varda was invited by curator Hans Ulrich Obrist to participate at the Venice Biennale, to her most recent *Portraits à Volets Vidéo: Marie dans le vent*, created in 2014 for a solo exhibition at Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris. The exhibition also includes a selection of her photographic work from the late 1950s made specifically for this show that focuses on people on the move (like Varda herself, I am tempted to add), and three self-portraits made at the three points of her artistic life—at the beginning of her activities as photographer, at the start of her career of a filmmaker, and as a "young" visual artist.

*Photographs Get Moving
(potatoes and shells too)*
by Agnès Varda

When the lens captures a body in movement, we escape the stiffness of a person posing and wish to transmit the feeling of life.

I chose some of these images taken in Portugal, China, and France, as photographs in movement.

On the other hand, questioning a still image, a snapshot, led me to investigate the mystery of one captured instant. What were some people doing together in the same place at the same moment? They even may not know each other, and I know nothing about them.

From watching one silent image shot in 1957, I imagined what happened at that instant and in 2007 I created a screenplay that could be true and made a short film, played a game. Any other screenplay could be possible.

As for the potatoes, the heart shaped potatoes that I love, they inspired me to film how they grow old. Even when no longer edible and totally shrunk, they show with their growing sprouts the non-stop movement of nature.

Movement is not always where you expect it to be. A frozen portrait of a woman in the wind moves more in our eyes than the moving wind mills surrounding her.

Invited by Dominique Bluher, I'm glad to have the opportunity to propose and exhibit images relative to my thoughts.



"A triptych in celebration of the most modest vegetable in the world: the potato. *Patatutopia* was imagined after the shooting of *The Gleaners and I* as an homage to forgotten, shriveled, and re-sprouting potatoes. I had filmed many potatoes, and I was lucky to come across many heart-shaped potatoes. I kept them and looked at them for a long time. I kept them in my basement, and I enjoyed looking at them. I want the visitors to this installation to be overcome with emotion and joy in front of this most banal and modest vegetable of all, and to share my utopian thought that the beauty of the world concentrated in these old potatoes can help us live with the chaos."



"These potatoes that I saw aging, I observed them, and photographed them at different stages of their rotting. Real beauties."



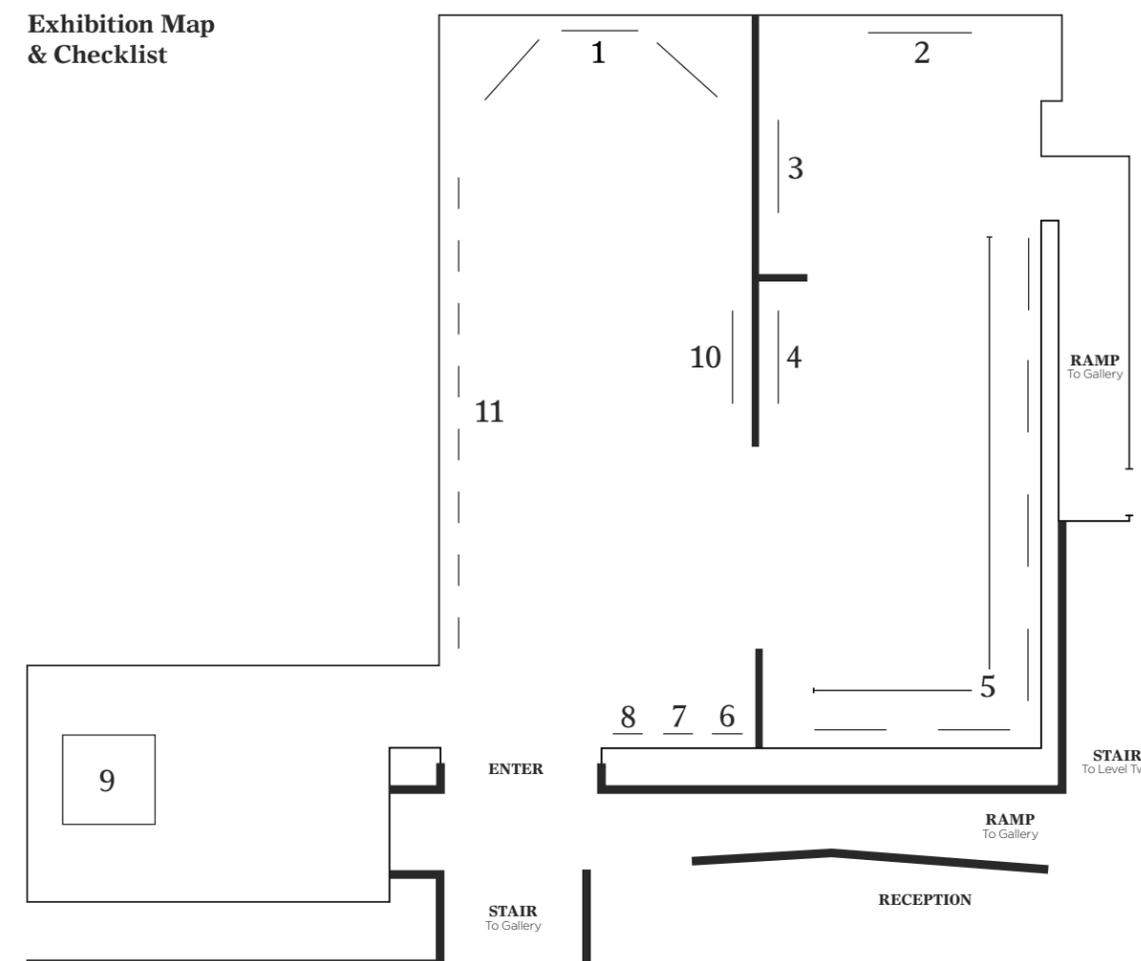


"Here lies Zgougou, a beloved cat. On her tomb—a little tumulus along a wall of dried branches—appear images, then little by little shells, and crêpe-paper flowers. Seen from higher above, the tomb disappears behind a pine and then gets lost in the middle of an island. This little tiny cat, seen from a satellite, is like each of us, an invisible dot."





Exhibition Map & Checklist



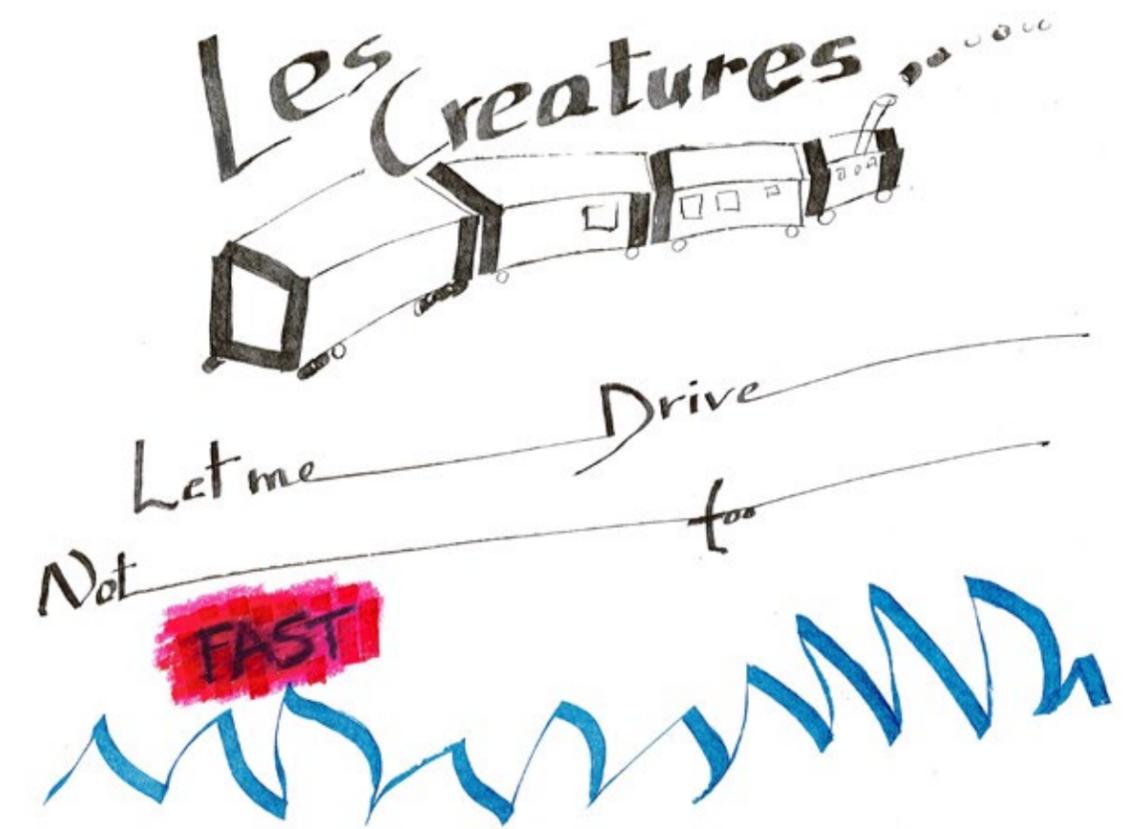
Agnès Varda: Photographs Get Moving (potatoes and shells, too)

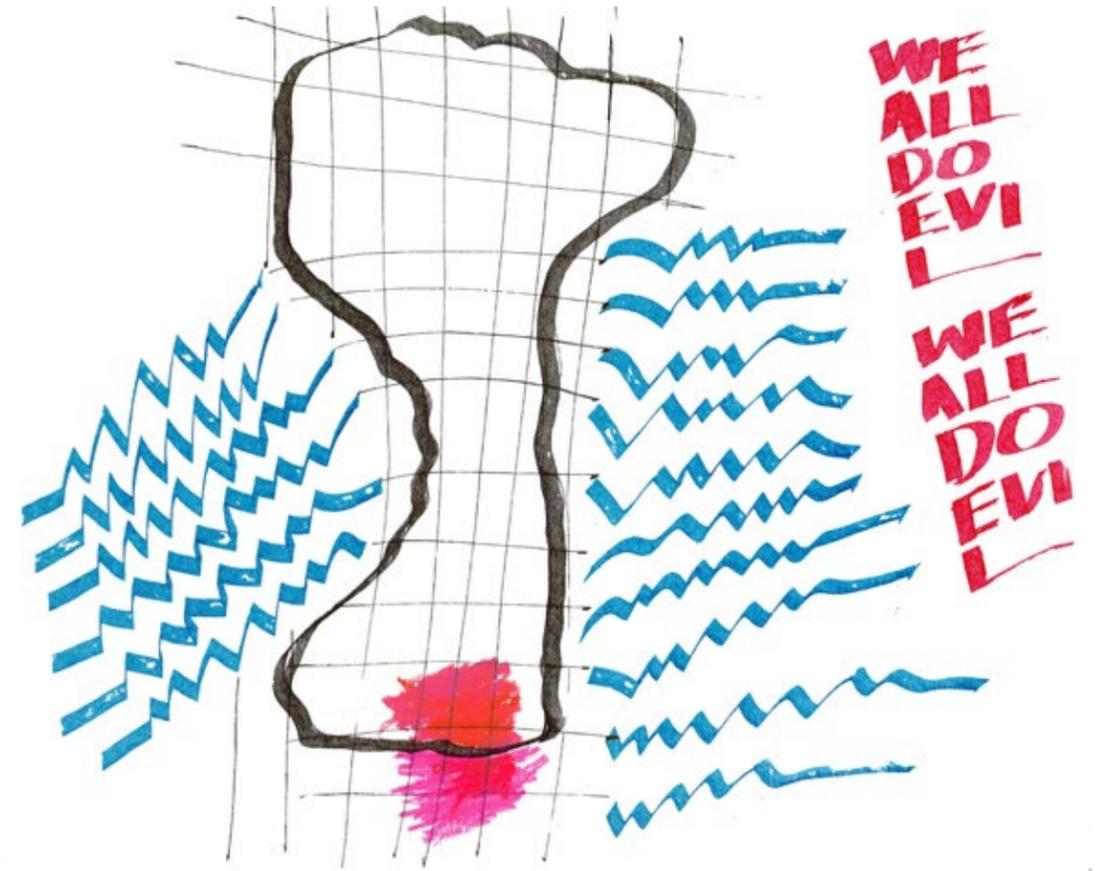
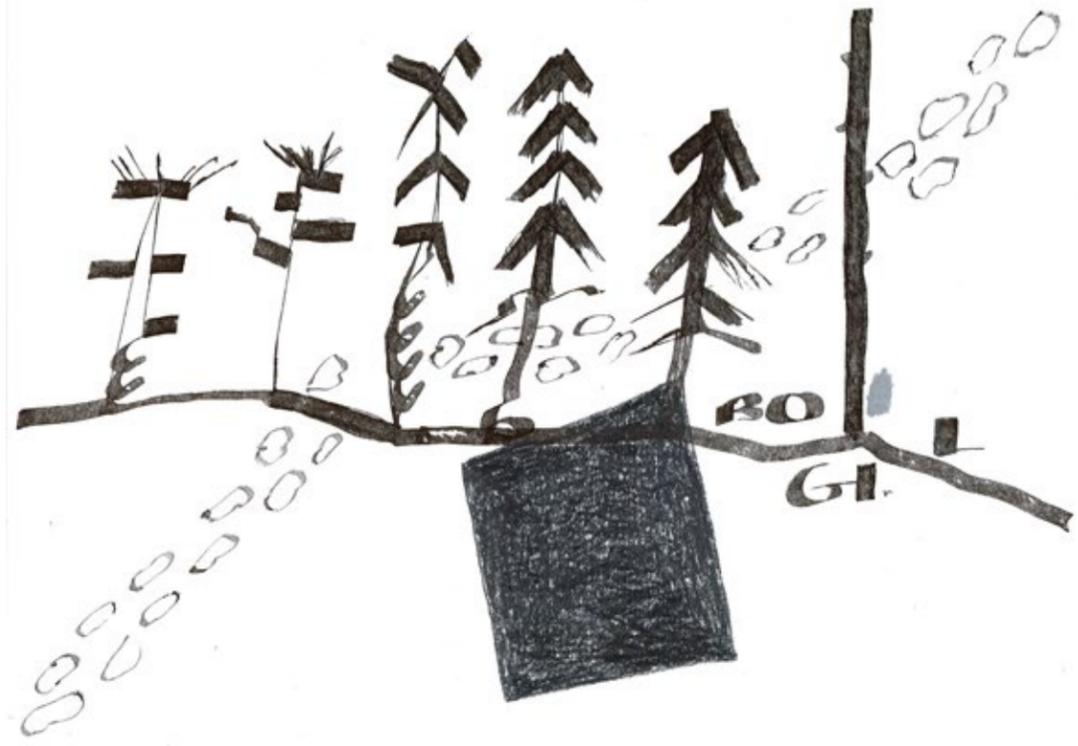
- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 <i>Patatutopia</i> , 2003
three-screen video installation
with sound, 6:26 min., potatoes | 7 <i>Agnès Varda In Venice in front
of a Bellini Painting</i> , 1962
photograph, silver print on
Baryte paper |
| 2 <i>Marie in the Wind</i> , 2014
single-channel video, 3:50 min.;
silver photograph, digital print | 8 <i>Fractured Self-Portrait</i> , 2009
photograph, digital print |
| 3 <i>The People on the Terrace</i> , 2007
single-channel video, 2:33 min. | 9 <i>Zgougou's tomb</i> , 2006
two-channel video installation
with sound, 3:40 min, sand, plants;
<i>Winds and Brass (with strings)</i>
by Steve Reich |
| 4 <i>Corbusier's Terrace</i> , 1956
silver photograph, digital print | 10 <i>The Potato Chimney</i> , 2003
digital print |
| 5 <i>Walking Pictures</i> , 1956–58
silver photographs, digital print | 11 <i>Heart Potatoes Series</i> , 2002
digital print |
| 6 <i>Self-Portrait</i> , 1949
photograph, silver print on
Baryte paper | |

BO_GIRL

by Jessica Stockholder

Four drawings by Jessica Stockholder inspired by *Les Créatures / The Creatures* (1965), in anticipation of the restoration of the film.







Programming

Thursday, Oct 8, 5pm and 7pm

Agnès de-ci de-là Varda / Agnès Varda: From Here to There (2012)
Logan Center Screening Room

Friday, Oct 9

5–9pm: Gallery Opening Reception
Logan Center Gallery

7pm: Artist Talk
Logan Center Performance Hall

Saturday, Oct 10

Events held in Logan Center Screening Room.

2pm: *Playing Colors*, including *Du côté de la côte / The Riviera*,
—*Today's Eden* (1958), *Le Bonheur / Happiness* (1965)

4pm: *Women Reply*, including *Réponse de femmes (Notre corps,*
notre sexe) / Women Reply (1975), *L'une chante l'autre pas /*
One Sings, the Other Doesn't (1976)

7pm and 9:30pm: *Sans toit ni loi / Vagabond* (1985)

Sunday, Oct. 11

Events held in Logan Center Performance Hall.

12pm–1pm: Jessica Stockholder and Agnès Varda in conversation

2pm: *Still Photography and Moving Pictures*, including
Salut les Cubains / Hello Cubans (1963), selections from
Une minute pour une image / One Minute For One Image (1983),
Ulysse (1982)

4pm: *Mise-en-scène As Installation / Installation As Mise-en-scène*,
including *7P., cuis., s. de b... (à saisir) / 7 rooms, kitchen,*
bathroom (grab it) (1984), *Jane B. par Agnès V. / Jane B. by*
Agnès V. (1987)

Monday, Oct. 12, 7pm

Les Glaneurs et la Glaneuse / The Gleaners and I (2000)
Black Cinema House, 7200 S Kimbark Ave.

Wednesday, Oct. 14, 7:30pm

Cléo de 5 à 7 / Cléo From Five To Seven (1961)
Music Box Theater, 3733 N Southport Ave.

Thursday, Oct. 15, 6 pm

Les Plages d'Agnès / The Beaches of Agnès (2008)
Logan Center Performance Hall



The Three Lives of Agnès Varda

Photographer

In the 1950s Agnès Varda (b. 1928) became an accredited photographer for the Avignon Festival, and later at the National Popular Theater at the Palais de Chaillot in Paris. She also worked as a photojournalist in China, Cuba, Portugal, and Germany.

Filmmaker

In 1954, Varda set up the production company Ciné-Tamaris to make her first feature film, *La Pointe courte*, which was an important precursor to the French New Wave. Among her best-known works are: *Cléo From Five To Seven* (1961), *Happiness* (1964), *Vagabond* (1985), and *The Gleaners and I* (2000). Her latest feature length film, *The Beaches of Agnès* premiered at the Venice Film Festival in September 2009. From 2010 to 2011, Varda directed the documentary series *Agnès Varda: From Here to There* for the French-German TV channel ARTE. In 2014, she received a lifetime achievement award from the European Film Academy for her contribution to the world of film. In 2015, Varda was awarded an honorary Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival.

Visual artist

In 2003, Varda was invited by curator Hans Ulrich Obrist to show at the Venice Biennial's 50th International Art Exhibition. Since then, her photography, installation, and video work have been exhibited internationally. She has had solo shows at the Foundation Cartier for Contemporary Art, Paris; the Stedelijk Museum, Ghent; the China Central Academy of Fine Arts Museum, Beijing; the Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo, Sevilla; and at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, among others.

Colophon

This publication is produced on the occasion of the exhibition *Agnès Varda: Photographs Get Moving (potatoes and shells, too)*, held between September 11th and November 8th, 2015 at the Logan Center Gallery, Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts, University of Chicago. The exhibition is part of *CinéVardaExpo* organized by Dominique Bluher, Lecturer and Director of M.A. Studies in the Department of Cinema and Media Studies; Leigh Fagin, Associate Director of University Arts Engagement; Julia Gibbs, Assistant Director of the Film Studies Center; Camille Morgan, Logan Center Exhibitions Curatorial Coordinator; and Yesomi Umolu, Logan Center Exhibitions Curator.

CinéVardaExpo is presented by Logan Center Exhibitions, Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts, Department of Cinema and Media Studies, and Film Studies Center. Additional support provided by the France Chicago Center, University of Chicago Arts Council, Chuck Roven Fund, Cultural Services of the French Embassy in New York, DOVA-Open Practice Committee, Franke Institute for the Humanities, Institut français in Paris, the Center for International Studies Norman Wait Harris Memorial Fund, Ng Family Visiting Artist Fund, Department of Romance Languages and Literatures, and the Center for the Study of Gender and Sexuality's Counter Cinema/Media Project.

Curator
Dominique Bluher

Essayists
Agnès Varda; Dominique Bluher

Visual essay
Jessica Stockholder, Arist, Professor, and Chair,
Department of Visual Arts

Editor
Dominique Bluher

Design
David Giordano

Images: Courtesy the artist, and Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form, or by any means, electronic, mechanical, or otherwise without prior permission in writing from the publisher.

© The artists, authors, Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris, and Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts, University of Chicago

Logan Center Exhibitions
Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts
University of Chicago
915 E 60th Street, Chicago, IL 60637
arts.uchicago.edu/logan/gallery

Thank you to everyone who helped to make this exhibition possible: Agnès Varda; Julia Fabry (Agnès Varda's assistant); Jessica Stockholder; Rosalie Varda, Cécila Rose, Stéphanie Scanvic (Ciné-Tamaris); David Rodowick; Marcus Warren, Benjamin Chandler, Yesomi Umolu, and all the dedicated preparators; Bill Michel; Leigh Fagin, and the staff of the Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts; Julia Gibbs and the Film Studies Center; Jennifer Wild and the Center for the Study of Gender and Sexuality's Counter Cinema/Media Project; Judy Hoffman (Chuck Roven Fund); James Chandler (Department of Cinema and Media Studies); the Franke Institute for the Humanities; Dan Bretsche (France Chicago Center); Mathieu Fournet (Cultural Services of the French Embassy in New York), and the Institut français in Paris.



