

# Audrey Armand travels back in time

Françoise Kunze – L'Union – February 2011

**Reim's artist, photographer and video-artist Audrey Armand publishes a new artist's book. *Miracle-Oracle* recounts a moment of pure emotion she experienced while searching for her childhood memories in ex-Yugoslavia. But not where she expected it.**

Audrey Armand, photographer, fine-artist and video-artist, is one of those artists who captures your attention by surprise and then holds on to you by the emotions. One remembers her installation in the chapel of the former Jesuit College in Reims, headquarters of the Champagne-Ardenne Frac, who have supported this young and atypical local artist from the beginning. An exhibition that provoked a great number of reactions. Emotions of course, and even tears in front of the two small white children's beds, those of her youth, planted in a pile of chalk scattered with red roses. In the background, the voice of her Polish grandmother singing a lullaby from her country: haunting, like those childhood memories that serve either as a springboard or an obstacle for the rest of your life. The thin frail voice of her grandmother chanting « Dobra Noc, Moja Kochana », « Good night, my love ». It is these memories that Audrey brings back to life over and over again, ghosts of the past, clouds that pass, that gather over our lives, float and come apart constantly, diffract the light, let the sun through, to in the end open up onto the sky, warmth and hope. We rediscover these clouds with Audrey who continues her search for her past with the publication of a new artist's book: « *Miracle-Oracle* ».

## **THE APPARITIONS OF MEDJUGORJE**

This time, she wanted to go even further in her exploration of the process of psychological construction which makes us what we are. From these layers of images, sounds, and words superposed in memory, from time to time one escapes unexpectedly, giving you an irrepressible desire to relive an emotion of the past in order to be able to move forward.

**« *When I was a child, we would go with my parents to a small Yugoslavian village today in Bosnia. In Medjugorje, it is said that the Virgin appeared and we went there several times, mingling with the pilgrims in the very special atmosphere of festivity and devotion. I took the plane for Dubrovnik hoping to bring back a series of photos and relive the emotions I had experienced when I was a little girl. I thought I would find myself in this same context to photograph the Medjugorje sun. I was supposed to go for three weeks, I stayed only three days, submerged by solitude and fear, incapable of taking the slightest photo. All I did was the trip there and back by coach to find myself on the port of Dubrovnik with my return ticket to France in my pocket. There, the sky covered over and then opened up and I took out my camera. Suddenly, I had what I wanted and I made this book.* » « *Look at the sun, it turns upon itself...My childhood was bathed in the supernatural. Like the flowers of paradise that I was told came from the sky and that I intend to use in a future work.* »** These black clouds that opened up onto the sun of her childhood are for the artist the miracle of an unexpected oracle that took place where she happened to be. Almost an animated book if you rifle through it, like the wind of destiny that pushes the clouds along and in the end breaks them apart.

# Life is a miracle

Amandine Lefèvre - Vendredi Hebdo – February 2011

**Audrey Armand, an artist from Reims, has created a profound, touching and poetic book « Miracle-Oracle », by gazing upon the sky, the heavens and her own past...**

It's the story of a journey to Bosnia on the traces of her past. « I had wanted to put this project into effect for 10 years, I had always had the idea and it's title buried inside me ». Thus Audrey Armand took the bus to go to Bosnia, but instead of staying the 3 weeks initially planned, she was only to stay one night. Come to seek the sun, all she found was darkness. She left again the next day, finding the whole experience difficult from both an emotional and geopolitical point of view, then arrived in Croatia at Dubrovnik. Equipped with five films, over one hour she took photographs of the sun and the clouds. Instinctively, she knew that she had reached the conclusion of a project that had been ripening for 10 years... **« I'm French of Polish origin, and this is present in my artwork. As a little girl. I often went to Bosnia and then in between time the war took place »**. The Yugoslavian village she passed through in her childhood is Medjugorje, place of the apparition of the Virgin; the artist questioned just what this place evoked for her. **« I come from a background where the supernatural is part of everyday life. I have long grown away from faith, but the poetry that surrounds the Marian apparitions has always been a source of inspiration to me »**. Since 2001, in France, she had been taking a number of photographs of the sky which were similar to the skies observed in Yugoslavia. In the book, the photos deliver a universal message, that the text completes with a personal vision. Thanks to this work, everyone can take a small part of the artist's universe away with them. She didn't choose the sky for aesthetic reasons, but because of the way it questions her desire to turn a page in her life, re-confronting her past. Respectful work that leaves a place for the personal beliefs of each. This return to origins is conceived like a poem evoking the evolution of just one cloud, between shadow and light, like a landscape-soul that expresses an inner experience.