

## HERO OF THE WEEK: NATACHA, CREATOR OF THE CROWN LETTER

**In this edition of 'Hero of the Week', we're highlighting Natacha, an artist and film maker, who, after feeling the dampening effects of lockdown on her creative practice decided to set up an online community where women from all over the world can share their art and reflect on lockdown.**

**Could you tell me a little bit about yourself and your background?**

I am an artist and filmmaker. I mostly have worked with installations, sound and videos. I have been travelling a lot and questioning in a very general way the question of catastrophe. I have been looking for ways to show the different phases of the process, first, numbness, then a slow coming back through life, a renaissance, a reinvention. I have been working in Japan about natural catastrophes, before and after Fukushima. I presented some of these works in 2014 at the Jeu de Paume gallery in Paris. I also directed a documentary about the art historian Aby Warburg. This focused on the effect war had on his mental health and his miraculous recovery after learning about the Hopi Tribe at a hospital in Switzerland.

**What drove you to create 'The Crown Letter'?**

After the lockdown in France which started on the 17th March, I had the first impression that I

would be able to get lots of work done in the studio, making the most of my newfound free time. I soon realised that this was not the case. The global pressure of anxiety and death, the loss of any public space to exchange, and the profound absence of another's gaze, someone who has sense of reality separate to your own, was altogether too oppressive to allow creativity. I realised that, more than ever, creation is synonym to sharing.

**Why did you carve out the space for female artists specifically?**

Being both a female and an artist presents complications, of which I am personally aware having raised a child by myself. To be a female creator is to be in perpetual conflict between public and private life.

When lockdown occurred, some of my first thoughts were of my female artist friends. How would they cope with running a household and organising family activities whilst trying to do work? Most of all, what concerned me was the lack of space for themselves and their art during and after lockdown.

**How did you ensure that your platform was global?**

I felt that I would greatly miss, and be missed by, the artist community I have built up during my

lifetime. I thought that the only available public space would be internet, and it would be the only tool able to cross boundaries of time, space and language. I thought to map out those marvellous voices from all around the world. Another motivation, was allowing all artists, even those less well known, to be seen and heard on the platform.

### **What was been a favourite submission of yours?**

I like so many of them, they are all very touching and surprising. I love the idea that we have only simple tools to react to what is going on. For example, Catherine Radosa planted some seeds, writing "OFF" that will grow in time. Andrea Blum is making a tour of her barren district in NYC, Ruth Maclennan and Claire-Jeanne Jezequel talk about the memory of their father. Traumas are coming back with traumas and some artists from Argentina, like Julieta Hanono, will weave their recent diary with memories of the dictatorship. I would love to quote all the works, without classification, as they all express simple but strong feelings and questions.



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### **What are your hopes for the growth of the platform?**

I would love to have contributions from female artists living in the lockdown from countries like China, Africa or anywhere else. Each situation is always singular, wherever you are. The platform is at its very beginning and I had to learn step by step with tutorials how to build up the web site. It will slowly improve and some other artists are beginning to help me through the technical issues. We must get some more skills to open the contributions. We also share as a community all the media coverage: I do not want to be the one who leads at all.



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### **How important do you feel art is as a vehicle for expression during lockdown?**

Since the lockdown, the media all over the world has been overwhelmed by news about the disease, the economical crisis, fear. Museums and galleries have spoken of catastrophic economical issues, all doors have been closed. So where are we meant to find space to dream? It is of course terrifying, but we must find out a way to express freely our imagination and subjectivity. We need to plant the seeds of a renaissance. The Crown Letter is also an archive that we will see in the future as a testimony, but also as a healing process.



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