

NATHALIE PERRIN
TRAVERSÉES

A poetic look at two curious furies: Bas Jan Ader in the North Atlantic and Percy Shelley in the Mediterranean Sea.

One day in Lausanne, I was reading an article about the Dutch artist Bas Jan Ader, who disappeared at sea during a performance in 1975. The performance was called *In Search of the Miraculous*, and the journalist had interviewed the artist's brother and wife, exposing the possibility that he had passed off his suicide as a performance, on the pretext of trying to be the first to cross the Atlantic in a small sailing boat, the Ocean Wave. He left with spare sails, notebooks and a recorder.

Ader's crossing instantly reminded me of an English poet, who a century earlier had built a small boat, the Ariel, to cross the Gulf of Livorno. His name was Percy Shelley, a great figure of Romanticism and in a way the father-in-law of Frankenstein. He lasted three hours in the storm before sinking. His body was found some time later with a book of John Keats' poems in a jacket pocket.

Whether Bas Jan Ader was a suicidal melancholic or a curious artist, no one can really answer the question, and is there any point? However, this strange search finally led me to interview ocean and sailing professionals. These interviews, far removed from art historical discourses, tell of the shape of Ader's boat, the route he chose to cross the Atlantic, the shape of the waves, the swell, the persistent fogs and the whale accidents.

In short, a possible picture of the last settings of a furiously curious artist, sailing a thousand miles from any inhabited land.

Nathalie Perrin

Nathalie Perrin (born in Geneva in 1989), graduated from ECAL and the University of Neuchâtel. She was awarded a residency in Cairo (2014), the Alice Bailly grant (2015) and the Prix de la Ville de Nyon (2016). Her exhibitions include *Fortune Carrée* at the MCGM gallery in Lausanne (2015), *Darladirladada* at the Duflon Racz gallery in Bern (2018), *La fragilité des créatures à sang chaud* at the Heinzer Reszler gallery in Lausanne (2019), Solo Show at Art Genève (2020), *Traversées I* at the CHUV in Lausanne (2021). She participated in the group exhibitions *L'art se livre* at the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Le Locle (2014), *Ungestalt* at the Kunsthalle in Basel (2017), *Pour Elle* at the Manoir in Martigny

(2018), *Des Seins à dessein* at the Espace Arlaud in Lausanne (2020), *Scrivere disegnano* at the Centre d'Art Contemporain in Geneva (2020). In 2021, she will publish a first essay with Art&Fiction: "*Rimbaud, Rambo, Ramuz. L'étrange destin de quelques maisons d'écrivains*".