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CONTACT: LISA PEARSON publisher@sigliopress.com SIGLIO 2432 MEDLOW AVE, LA, CA 90041 P: 310-857-6935

# SOPHIE CALLE: SUITE VÉNITIENNE

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*Suite Vénitienne* is Sophie Calle's first artist's book, long out-of-print and highly coveted, now newly redesigned by Siglio in collaboration with Calle to be the definitive English-language edition. Originally published in 1983, *Suite Vénitienne* is the crucible of her inimitable and provocative fusion of investigatory methods, fictional constructs, the plundering of real life and the artful composition of self.

*For months I followed strangers on the street. For the pleasure of following them, not because they particularly interested me. I photographed them without their knowledge, took note of their movements, then finally lost sight of them and forgot them. At the end of January 1980, on the streets of Paris, I followed a man whom I lost sight of a few minutes later in the crowd. That very evening, quite by chance, he was introduced to me at an opening. During the course of our conversation, he told me he was planning an imminent trip to Venice. I decided to follow him.* —from *Suite Vénitienne* by Sophie Calle

Calle notates—in diaristic, time-stamped entries—her search for and surveillance of Henri B. while also carefully observing her own emotions. As she wanders throughout Venice, intentionally losing herself in the labyrinthine streets, the city becomes a repository of her desires. She must remind herself that while it feels like she's in love, she is not; that his elusivity may be more appealing than actually knowing him; and that the gap between her own thoughts and his—which she cannot know—is wide.

Her investigation is both methodical (calling every hotel, visiting the police station) and arbitrary (sometimes following a stranger—a flower delivery boy, for instance—hoping someone might lead her to *him*). She sometimes tells the truth (when she enlists Venetian friends of her own friends who lend a phone, a look-out point, and make inquiries on her behalf). And sometimes she does not, inventing stories to entice strangers to come to her aid.

Once she does find and follow him, “what we see,” as Larry Rinder writes in his essay “Sophie Calle and the Practice of Doubt,” “is not the object in closer view but the measure of the distance in between.” Henri B., as he wanders and photographs Venice often in the company of another woman, is still an enigma whom Calle observes from the semi-obscurity of the shadows where she hides in disguise. Once he confronts her—after she has ventured too close—Henri B. tells her that it's her unmasked eyes that have given her away.

Siglio's beautiful, new iteration of *Suite Vénitienne* is printed on Japanese paper with a die-cut hard cover and gilded edges, in an intimate size that allows readers to devour this compelling and crucial work.

**SOPHIE CALLE** is an internationally renowned artist whose controversial works use a range of media—photography, film, writing, performance, installation—as she explores the tensions between the observed, the reported, the secret, and the unsaid. Her 2007 Venice Biennale French Pavillion installation *Please Take Care of Yourself* has been exhibited worldwide to great acclaim, most recently installed at The Pulitzer Foundation in St. Louis. The Whitechapel Gallery in London organized a retrospective in 2009, and her work has been show at major museums such as Musée d'art Moderne de la Ville de Paris and Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; De Appel, Amsterdam; The Museum of Modern Art and The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Hayward Gallery and Serpentine Gallery, London; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; among others. Her most recent U.S. exhibition was the acclaimed *Rachel, Monique* at the Episcopal Church of the Heavenly Rest in Manhattan in 2014. She lives and works in Paris.

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