

## Artist Statement

"I have been a visual artist-in-residence. And still will be until my legs can carry my body, and with them, fill the desire and wish of creating, questioning beauty among life's journey into people and world."

My name is Vargas, Rita Vargas. I am Bond, James Bond. No, not yet. Well, in the beginning I thought I could change the world. In the way...I am still trying to change it. I have changed my heart with work, some people's heart too. I think it is still possible to change the world. I still want to change it. Thought I couldn't make it. Tired. Depressed. But still facing the challenge. Getting old. White hair. What makes me move are the people. What made me move were colors. Creation. Freedom. Research. Images. Feelings. Despair. Will. What made me move to Finland was a mixture of the meaning of these words and actions to full fill the wish of changing my life. Not only mine, but the life of the ones who I looked and touched somehow with a glimpse of freshness in colors provided by nature, by light, by life struggle.

At the present moment I am a researcher at the University of Jyväskylä, Faculty of Humanities, Department of Art and Culture Studies. The title of my Ph.D. Thesis is: *Visual Artists-in-residence in Finland, Japan and Portugal: Perspectives in the Creative Process (1990-2010)*. After 2 years and a half of fighting, it was possible to find support from the Foundation for Science and Technology from Portugal to continue the research. In the other hand, I am still working as a free-lance in Centre for Printmaking (Jyväskylä), where it is possible to transform theory in practice and where the cultural encounters happen in a happy and relaxed atmosphere. This is why I have chosen Finland.

I come originally from Portugal, Évora. It is a historical UNESCO city, human scale size. Hard to live there as an artist. Actually, impossible. Young artists can't afford paying a studio to work nor can live only by their art selling's. The government does not recognize this profession. The established artists are the ones who get all the support and are the ones who are chosen to exhibit. The names are always the same. Everywhere. The fighting to make a change is almost impossible. I do not want to enter in this game of fame, emptiness, futile conversations. Economy is not in its better shape. I decided to travel. To explore the world. Life is really short. I don't want to die without saying that it was worth to fight for what I really love to do: transform views of human feelings towards life into colors and shapes. Always trying to make worth living, with beauty, with power, with care and respect for the otherness.



Climbing **Mount Bandai**, more known as **Aizu-Bandai-san** (会津磐梯山), Fukushima Prefecture, until its top with the elevation of 1,819 m (5,968 ft), 2007.

Rita Vargas, Jyväskylä, 23<sup>rd</sup> January, 2012.