



Sarah Jérôme - Sous la chair des roches



Exhibition from May 15 through June 20, 2015
Opening reception on Thursday May 14, from 6 to 9 pm

Invited artists : Fabien Mérelle, Lionel Sabatté & Edwart Vignot

Between the age of seven and twenty, Sarah Jérôme practises dance everyday. Over the course of stretching exercises, sequences and efforts, she manages to sculpt and model her own body. Classical dance requires a training of the body, a discipline that the artist slowly refused and abandoned. In 2008, she decides to immerse herself into drawing, painting and sculpture. The body constitutes the backbone of her plastic reflection. Ramifications bring to other territories such as time, memory, landscape and matter. Her artworks give rise to contradictory impressions. If dance represents a source of enjoyment and beauty, it also includes pain, deprivation and submission. In this case, grace is a synonym of torture.

A dichotomous relationship that Sarah Jérôme distillates in her art by undertaking frictions between seduction and repulsion, astonishment and fear, dream and nightmare, delicacy and roughness. She explores a space in-between, two states, two feelings, two moments. *Mue*, created in 2013 represents a couple whose bodies are intertwined. Made of long braided linen threads, they seem to emerge from the matter, like a vision's apparition, a souvenir both welcoming and frightening. The thick braids imprison them, they are like petrified, frozen in time. The artist here refers to our ancestors whose stories nourish not only ours, but also a collective memory. Somewhere between presence and absence, they inhabit us and withstand time. Their fascinating and ghastly look underlines the complexity of human history. The artist deepens the monstrous dimension of the body in a series of paintings titled *Les Montagnes* (The Mountains). On tracing paper sheets, spirits dry out the oil painting. The opposite materials are transformed by the drawing. The artist removes and hollows painting out to flash up feminine faces out of massive and monumental mountains.

Like rocky chrysalis containing women's bodies, the mountains are as much a shelter inside which it is possible to hide, as a prison. The bodies here are considered as constructions made of layers and stratum. Blocked in matter and ambivalence, they are in the making or immured in pain and impossibility. It also is the case for the faces sculpted in clay. *Le Champs de Pensées* (The field of thoughts) is composed of sleeping heads arranged on the floor; they are flown over by a group of ravens whose intentions are as menacing as protective. By hybridizing body, nature and memory, Sarah Jérôme revisits a symbolist register convoking magic, religion, mythologies and poetry. Her work engenders a plural vision of our history, of human relationships and of our relation to nature. Between blossoming and estrangement, the artist plumbs the human matter to extract monstrous treasures from it.

Text by Julie Crenn