

ELISE PEROI

Close to the sun (*Proche du soleil*)

11.09 - 10.10.2020



. OPENING

. A SUNDAY AT THE GALLERY

Thursday, September 10th, 5pm-8.30pm

Sunday, September 13th, 1pm-7pm

Lowood shook lose its tresses; it became all green, all flowery; its great elm, ash, and oak skeletons were restored to majestic life; woodland plants sprang up profusely in its recesses; unnumbered varieties of moss filled its hollows, and it made a strange ground-sunshine out of the wealth of its wild primrose plants: I have seen their pale gold gleam in overshadowed spots like scatterings of the sweetest lustre.

Excerpt of *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë

Following one right after the other, Galerie Maria Lund is hosting the shows of two young women artists whose creative explorations respectively imply textile and ceramics.

***Close to the sun (Proche du soleil)*, a solo exhibition of French artist Elise Peroi (11.09-10.10.2020), will be followed by another solo show – *rv in the open air (rv à l'air libre)* – dedicated to Danish artist Pernille Pontoppidan Pedersen (16.10-28.11.2020). Both in their early thirties, the two artists innovate with power and poetry.**

Elise Peroi transcends weaving to aspire to a form of total art that includes performance. As for Pernille Pontoppidan Pedersen, she sculpts with a creative audacity where the primitive and the sophisticated combine.

Weaving is a thousand-year-old activity which is defined by a slow conversation between a static structure – the warp – and the repeated movements of the shuttle, the tool carrying the thread that inscribes the weft as it comes and goes. Weaving takes shape in the same way soil is cultivated, through thorough tilling, furrow after furrow. Its symbolism has been at the foundations of many mythologies: most often to evoke the fragile life thread held in the fatal hand of some divinity. For Elise Peroi, the metaphorical dimension of such a practice is as important as the material creation. Bringing a woven artwork to existence is a whole, the body of the artist blends in the process. The matter spreads in space through performance, dance, sound and narratives... or simply through the volume given to it to open its "lungs", expand its territory. Nature is one of the artist's favoured subject matters and its materials are often directly integrated in her works (tree trunks, grass).

Elise Peroi has been deeply influenced by the works of landscaper Gilles Clément regarding cooperating with nature (*Do as much as possible "with" and as little as possible "against"*). She is equally interested in the thoughts of Michel Foucault on *Heterotopia*, these other places and lands, where dreams, fantasies and transitional states can thrive. The garden – paradise created par Mankind – is one of those unique places. It inspired Persian carpets – each carpet becoming a little mobile world of its own – and they have in turn been the starting point of the artist's recent work. She uses the *tufting* technique, which allows the threads to sprout from the surface as growths reaching for sunlight.

The sun, vital force, lies at the heart of many artworks by Elise Peroi. It is treated as a subject matter in itself, – lights and greenery beam from the palpating center of a lozenge – or through the myth of Icarus,

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who was betrayed by his wax wings when, exhilarated by his flight, he came too close to the celestial body... The artist has notably revisited Pieter Brueghel the Elder's interpretation that only shows the legs of Icarus buried in the sea under a powerful sun and in front of a completely indifferent world, which continues his earthly toil. The artist has approached the myth under a playful angle, first imagining Icarus launching from a skateboard ramp; she finally went for the swing, which enables to approach the sun as it goes up (that thrilling sensation from childhood), quickly followed by the going down where dream encounters humility. The imaginary and narration are very present here, as in the rest of Elise Peroi's work. As she conceived and created them, the artist tells herself stories that translate into her work. Faced with these surfaces with multiple parcels, the viewer, in turn, develops his/her own narration. This is the case with *Mal peignéé (Badly combed)*, a delicate artwork where the linen structure regularly makes way for thinned out grass stems, which inflorescence goes beyond the limits of the weave. The threads of the cut weft left raw, as hair in the wind, form the lower part of the work. Here the regular stripes right beyond meet a beautiful sensual mess.

The etymology of the word textile – from the Latin *texere* – reveals an interesting link. From its first signification (I century BCE) *shelter; hide, cover, protect* – actions relating to architecture – the meaning evolved to also signify *weave, thread, braid, interlace* one century later. Elise Peroi wanted to convey this double meaning in her work. Thus, architectures made of metallic stems replace the frame of the weaving loom to keep the tension and the volume of her works as many are “bellowed”: the even threads are woven together, the odd threads as well, and all of them are assembled on both sides by a knitting point, creating an opening between the two layers. Consequently, one can look inside the artworks that undulate on light structures, creating a sophisticated equilibrium between whole and void. A breath can pass through and bring life to the artwork.

background

Elise Peroi (born in Nantes in 1990) grew up in France and subsequently moved to **Brussels** to study at the **Académie Royale des Beaux-Arts** from where she graduated with a Masters in textile design in 2015. Since then has been living in the Belgian capital where she has her studio.

In 2018, her work was featured in **a personal exhibition at the Fashion and Lace Museum in Brussels**. The artist has been part of numerous group shows in France, Belgium and Italy since 2015 and is regularly invited for residencies for her woven work as well as for her performances (Fondation privée *Carrefour des arts*, Brussels; *La Serre – arts vivant*, Montreal; *Fédération Wallonie Bruxelles, Comacina Island*, Italy; etc.). **With the support of the Halles de Schaerbeek since 2016, she develops textile performances that feed from weaving. Her collaboration with Hong-Kong dancer and choreographer Mui Cheuk-yin led to performances in Brussels as well as Hong-Kong.**

Elise Peroi was awarded the **Prix d'excellence de la ville de Bruxelles** in 2015, the **Young Belgium Talents Prize** of The Affordable Art Fair Brussels in 2017 and the **Prix de la fondation Charles Oulmont** (Paris) in 2018. **Le Botanique (Brussels) will dedicate a solo exhibition to Elise Peroi in 2021. *Close to the sun (Proche du soleil)*, is her first solo show at the galerie Maria Lund.**

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