

Press release

Gaëlle Chotard

Frémissements

January 29 - March 19, 2022

Opening Saturday, January 29, 3pm - 8pm

After the storm...

These organic, light forms, woven with metallic wires and newly grafted to volumes of immaculate white plaster, are the result of Gaëlle Chotard's patient knitting. This meticulous act plunges the artist into a state of introspection and gives birth to the rebounded silhouette of an ancestral Venus while further on, some intertwined boats appear, signs of our ambivalent condition : fertile and creative, but also precarious, adrift, caught in the ebb and flow of a world in perpetual becoming, as if shipwrecked "in the viral storm"¹ that continually shakes us up.

Such fine work can also be found in Gaëlle Chotard's drawings, where color is now invited, in response to an elegant series of Chinese ink. The rusty tones of raw carcasses, torn apart by the hurricane, lie in the deep green-blue of the underwater abyss. The layers of colorful watercolor which has been "drunk" by the paper proposes diaphanous and compact strata, like the waters of the oceans where iridescent forms and frail filaments unfold. Their infra-thin features, sometimes ethereal and sometimes abundant, float like a strand of a mermaid's hair, a dancing jellyfish or red seaweed, soon caught in the ochre mesh of the sculpted copper nets. Here, we get lost in a "mental landscape", composed of fragments and archipelagos that have been formed through the pen and the hook which the artist handles... or according to the ramblings of our imagination.

Elliptical images

We willingly lend ourselves to the game of mimicry and projection : what can we discover in the perforated forms and the swirling traces that Gaëlle Chotard offers us? What do we recognize in them despite the "omissions" or the "ontological incompleteness"² that seem to strike her creations? "I attach importance to the feeling that a work is not completely finished or that it suggests a continuation" she says... But more than a question of imitation, I think that Gaëlle Chotard's work touches on an essential point where art opens up (dare we say it!) to a "metaphysics". Because these ellipses and dissolutions, which make up the very heart of the works and of the exhibition space conceived by Gaëlle, weave a dialectic between "emptiness and fullness"³, in a movement of "relaxation and tension"⁴, of breathing and acceleration. They bring us back to what Taoist thought calls the "primordial breath" ("Qi") circulating in the universe (the "Great Whole"), and linking the beings that inhabit it. They also refer to what the philosopher Henri Bergson calls "the vital impulse" or "the creative impulse" that runs through every mound of matter (which at first glance seems inanimate) as well as the uninterrupted flow of our consciousness driven by a multitude of intermingled thoughts and states of mind. The world is indeed a meshwork of "flexible realities"⁵.

¹ Slavoj Žižek, *Dans la tempête virale*, Actes Sud, Paris, 2020.

² Hans Jonas, *Le Phénomène de la Vie*, Essay VII "The Production of Images and Human Freedom", De Boeck University, Brussels, 2000.

³ François Cheng, *Le Vide et le Plein*, Éditions du Seuil, Paris, 1991.

⁴ Henri Bergson, *L'Évolution créatrice*, PUF, Paris, 2013.

⁵ Henri Bergson, *Matière et mémoire*, PUF, Paris, 2012.

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From the vital breath to the lyrical pulse

Gaëlle Chotard's meshwork and tracings thus appear to me as the expression of a fertile force or an intimate vibration that shows, in turn, the surge that takes hold of the artist when she finds herself in a position to create - Gaëlle talks here about the painter Agnès Martin, concentrated in front of her canvas, waiting for the right moment to rise and execute a "perfect" line on the surface of the painting. These lines of ink and copper wire (the material that Joseph Beuys called the perfect "energy conductor") do not merely capture the honeycomb structure of things or suggest their sensitive envelope. Rather, they emanate from a vibration, a palpitation: let's say from the presentiment of life - that is to say, the beat or the "internal vitality"⁶ that moves each being according to its own tempo. "I wanted to draw the consciousness of existence and the flow of time. As one feels one's pulse"⁷ declares the poet Henri Michaux, whose inks under the influence of mescaline also state this trembling in the heart of things. For if Mona Hatoum underlines "the importance of listening to matter and its properties"⁸, it is above all, for Gaëlle Chotard, a question of expressing the unique pulsation which trembles in each being sliding down the ladder of life. Her work thus vibrates like the undulation of a sizzling arpeggio, spinning on an old vinyl... like the quivering of a string which tickles the soul of an audience overcome with emotion: the very definition of lyricism, as a restoration of our vital breath.

François Salmeron

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Gaëlle Chotard - born in 1973 in Montpellier, lives and works in Nogent-sur-Marne.

She graduated from the Beaux-arts de Paris in 1998. She has participated in numerous group exhibitions, including the Carré d'art in Nîmes, the Domaine Pommery in Reims, the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Lille, and the Villa Bernasconi, Grand-Lancy/Geneva. She has produced *in situ* works for the Château de Rambouillet and for the Musée des Arts décoratifs in Paris as part of the exhibition "Dans la ligne de mire". In 2017, she exhibited at the Espar in Le Mans, the Villa Tamaris with "Interstices" and the Chapelle du Génêteil which published *Gaëlle Chotard, Dessins 2007-2017* on a proposal by Bertrand Godot.

In 2018, she was selected in a duo with curator Valentine Meyer for a solo exhibition at Drawing Lab.

Gaëlle Chotard's works are present in the collections of the Cnap - Fonds national d'art contemporain and the Frac Normandie Rouen.

Frémissements is her fifth exhibition at the Galerie Papillon.

⁶ François Cheng, *Le Vide et le Plein*, Éditions du Seuil, Paris, 1991.

⁷ Henri Michaux, *L'espace du dedans*, Gallimard, Paris, 1998.

⁸ Valentine Meyer, "Gaëlle Chotard, les fils de la vie", *Open Ring*, April 11, 2020.