

Press release

Laure Prouvost | *My Arms Will Renew*

09.09.-29.10.2022

Opening: Thursday, 8 September, 12-10 pm

*“I want to go back to child-lands;
let me go to a soft country of waters.
Let me grow old in great meadows
telling story after story to the river.
Let a fountain be my mother
and I’ll go out at noon to seek her,
filling pitchers from the cliffside
with fresh, keen, living water.”
Water (fragment) by Gabriela Mistral
translated by Ursula K. Le Guin*

*“fr-fr-from the depths of my heart to the depths of the sea
I will draw you to the deep
Where you never dreamed to sleep”*

carlier | gebauer is pleased to announce *My Arms Will Renew*, the first solo exhibition with the French artist Laure Prouvost in the Madrid gallery.

Laure Prouvost’s work entices us to slip into the cracks that form between fiction and reality, to dive into a sea of stories, passing over the threshold into an alternate and sensual environment.

In *My Arms Will Renew*, Prouvost, with a subtle political gesture, presents stories that put forward other ways of being and experiencing the world. From the continuous and joyful celebration of play, to being alive and to putting life at the center, she reclaims the power of motherhood and activates our memories as marine animals that resurface as a way of reconnecting with nature and the planet.

We are surrounded and protected by liquids in which we spend the first months of our fledgling existence. *“Our eyes, thoughts, breath and heartbeat depend on water“¹* and its imminent scarcity shows how severe and urgent the climate crisis has become, as well as a future in which it will be difficult to survive. *“It is a curious situation that the sea, from which life first arose, should now be threatened by the activities of one form of that life. But the sea, though changed in a sinister way, will continue to exist; the threat is rather to life itself.”²*

The liquid state alludes to movement, malleability, weightlessness; it suggests the undefined. It is also the terrain of ambiguity; a fertile territory upon which the artist works through words, language games, whose semantic gaps set out bridges that are made between the unconscious and emotions, between rationality and culture. Prouvost invites us to dig deep, to go through the spatio-temporal layers of our culture and plunge into a pre-verbal state, a space where words and the meanings attributed to them do not yet exist. Diverse materials are used to weave tales and proposes escapist strategies that connect us to the surrealist tradition while implementing a fantastic course on the translation of sensations, emotions, memories, desires and experiences. Time melts away and linearity is abandoned. The objects float in a circular movement through which they leave and enter the world, in and out of dreams, in an out of images; they become language in order to tread the same trajectory anew.

Alongside a new series of large-scale paintings, the exhibition shows Murano glass sculptures of singing fish that emerge from the sea, that mysterious place that populates our imagination and our minds.

In *Esmé Blue*, a series of paintings based on her recent film *Four For See Beauties* (2022)³, we can distinguish diverse shapes merging together in a fluid, marine background. The arms of starfish and the tentacles of octopuses intertwine with the emerging form of a baby. The sea that contains you, the womb that gestates you.

The octopus appears frequently in Prouvost's work. This cephalopod mollusc has a striking characteristic, and this is that its sensory and cerebral organs are located in its tentacles. The octopus thinks by feeling and feels by thinking. And it is through these arms we are offered the possibility of renewal. An amalgam of arms that support, that reclaim tenderness in opposition to violence, and use care as a way to combat destruction. We have told and heard the stories of the heroes and wars so many times that it has become our point of reference. This is why it is more important than ever to tell other stories about other natures with other subjects and meanings. We need to tell stories "*full of beginnings without ends, of initiations, of losses, of transformations and translations, and far more tricks than conflicts, far fewer triumphs than snares and delusions.*"⁴

The gallery space has been converted into a landscape in which several narrative lines are interwoven through the relationship established by the different objects and paintings that populate it. We melt into a warm, weightless and humid embrace where the neocortex is silenced, and oxytocin is triggered. We return to the point of origin where waters rocked us, to the nebulous infancy of the sea, to our mothers' wombs. We are offered a hand that invites us to go deeper, where darkness reigns, where we orient ourselves with our senses and intuition; a journey where we unlearn. We come back to a primordial chaos where meanings are detached from things, and language recovers its malleable capacity to cast spells.

Laure Prouvost's upcoming solo exhibition, *In The Depth Heat Leaks*, at La Casa Encendida, Madrid, curated by João Laia, will open on 7 October 2022.

Text by Cristina Anglada

¹ *Cinco Elementos*. Yayo Herrero. p. 19

² *The sea around us*. Rachel Carson p. 12

³ co-produced by La Casa Encendida, Madrid and the Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma | Finnish National Gallery, Helsinki.

⁴ *The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction*. Ursula K. Le Guin.