

LAURE PROUVOST

Sam Belinfante & Pierre Droulers **PERFORM 19**

The Are Waiting For You

**P E R
F O R M 1 9
A T I K**

WED 13, THU 14/03 21:00

PERFORMANCE

1H | IN ENGLISH

LOCATION: KAAITHEATER

MA GRAND-MÈRE ARRIVERA À POIL SUR SCÈNE EN HÉLICOPTÈRE

Laure Prouvost en conversation avec Guy Duplat (La Libre, 12/02/19).

Avec Laure Prouvost, on plonge d'emblée dans la poésie et l'humour décalé, très british ou très belge. Née à Croix près de Lille, il y a 41 ans, après des études à Tournai, elle est partie à Londres qui la révèle comme artiste. Elle y reçoit le prestigieux Turner Prize. Multilingue, elle vit et travaille à Anvers, à deux pas du Muhka, qui organise sa première rétrospective, sur 20 ans de carrière. Elle déménagera bientôt avec son mari et sa fille à Molenbeek. Elle représentera la France à la prochaine Biennale de Venise. "Il y aura aussi de la performance à Venise. Les visiteurs rentreront par le soussol. Pas facile en effet de rentrer en France, surtout en ce moment, souritelle.

Et ils seront accueillis par des gens rencontrés dans mon périple à travers la France qui donnera une vidéo montrée à Venise : un instituteur, un artiste de rue, etc. Comme il fera chaud, ils les accueilleront tout le long de la Biennale avec un système vaporisateur en verre de Murano! J'ai souvent amené du vivant dans mes expos. À Anvers, il y avait une chèvre qui courait dans les salles."

Elle a toujours aimé combiner sculptures, performances et vidéos pour construire des récits remplis d'associations inattendues avec beaucoup de liberté laissée au hasard, à l'inconscient, aux erreurs et à l'oubli. Dans ses films, elle s'adresse aussi directement à nous par des ordres écrits ("pour qu'on désapprenne la propagande qui nous agresse", dit elle), nous associant ainsi de manière sensorielle à ses fantaisies.

Droulers, "mon petit cousin"

Dans Performatik, pour *They Are Waiting*

For You, elle part de son film *Dit Learn* (jeu de mots pour "désapprendre") dans lequel une succession rapide d'objets du quotidien, d'images et de textes, nous stimule à donner de nouvelles significations à tout et où elle apparaît masquée.

"Je performe beaucoup dans mes vidéos, mais on ne voit jamais mon visage qui reste masqué. Ma voix, par contre, est là. Sans le visage, elle permet plus à l'imagination de travailler." Cette performance d'une heure, une nouveauté pour elle, a été réalisée à la demande du Walker Art Center de Minneapolis avec, sur scène, des danseurs et des chanteurs et l'aide de l'artiste Sam Belinfante et du chorégraphe français Pierre Droulers, "c'est mon petit cousin, nous sommes tous les deux de Lille" et Bram, le fils de Droulers a réalisé un film sur Laure Prouvost. "Au début, on donne avec le film le vocabulaire, comme de dire que la clémentine signifie l'amour, un cactus, une brosse à dent, un oeuf cassé, l'attente. Puis le spectacle donnera des phrases sur ce vocabulaire. Tout un show, un 'festacle' comme je disais petite, avec ma grandmère à poil qui va atterrir sur scène, en hélicoptère", rit elle.

Elle adore inventer des histoires imaginaires pour que "le spectateur trouve lui-même du sens à son environnement et utilise son imagination. Je joue avec l'idée d'être emporté dans des lieux dont on ne pourra peut-être pas revenir." Les chanteurs et danseurs réagissant aux actions de la vidéo. Laure Prouvost adore les labyrinthes, habiter les frontières, caresser les ambiguïtés, mélanger les langues, emporter les spectateurs pour leur faire découvrir autre chose: "Si on avait tout compris au monde, ce serait si déprimant. Il faut réinventer et ouvrir sur d'autres points de vue. Et ne pas se prendre au sérieux pour être libre de voir le monde avec surprise."

C O - P R O D U C E D B Y K A A I T H E A T E R

LAURE PROUVOST, THE ARTIST REPRESENTING FRANCE IN THE VENICE BIENNALE, WANTS YOU TO KNOW SHE'S A BIG-TIME LIAR

article by Kate Brown (artnet news, 7/02/2019)

Before you begin reading, an important note: Laure Prouvost may not be telling us the truth.

The French provocateur is an art-world trickster, one who spins meaning, turns it on its head, and does so in funny, unconventional ways. At times, she can be shocking. Even Page Six was paying attention when, during an acceptance speech at an awards ceremony last November, she told a crowd that her grandmother used to tie herself naked to airplanes and float through the sky. Seemingly caught off-guard, New Museum artistic director Massimiliano Gioni had to reassure attendees that, for Prouvost, fiction and reality are blurred.

This year, the artist is representing her home country of France at the Venice Biennale, becoming only the third female artist to do so. But today is a busy day too, as she opens a solo exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Antwerp, her largest solo outing to date, and a survey of the past 15 years of her work (on view to the public from tomorrow, February 8, until May 19).

From there, the marathon continues: in March, she will perform at Performatik 19, the Brussels biennial for performance art. This performance was made at Walker Art Centre in Minneapolis, with dancers and singers on stage, and in collaboration with artist Sam Belinfante and French choreographer Pierre Droulers. She is also preparing installations and performances in London, which will take over advertising posters, screens, and city maps around the city. She will also have works at Heathrow and Stratford airports and will commission a performance for the London Underground, which she's been working on with a choir for months.

The truth is that it's a busy time.

A New Dictionary for a New World

Speaking on the phone from her studio, Prouvost sounds reasonably relaxed about her stack of tasks. "Ideas are welcome," she says.

Born in Croix in northeastern France, Prouvost studied at Central St Martins and Goldsmiths College in London. Soon after finishing at Goldsmiths in 2010, she began to garner attention for her unique braiding of poetic humor with intimate—and maybe untrue—references to her own life. She currently works in Antwerp and, according to the press release for her Venice

show, is also based in a caravan in the Croatian desert (though a quick Google search for the term brings up Croatian desserts first).

For her work, which stretches across performance, installation, and video, she won the Max Mara art prize for women in 2011 and the Turner Prize in 2013. She has had shows at the Palais de Tokyo, the Serpentine Sackler Gallery in London, and Witte de With in Rotterdam.

"We need to question everything in history," Prouvost tells artnet news. Asked about her feelings on the current political upheavals in Europe, she sounds a note of optimism. "It's an interesting moment. There are a lot of ideas and desires that we can hold on to, but there is a lot we can question and also re-invent."

In that vein, for her show in Antwerp, which is called *AM-BIG-YOU-US LEGSICON*, she has released a dictionary-as-catalog that reads like a surrealist encyclopedia. For each word she includes in the publication (cheekily called *LEGSICON*), she has invited different authors to come up with new definitions, genders, and histories for the words.

Her practice can be traced back to this way of thinking. Boobs, which is one of the words in the dictionary, often crop up in her work, in sculptures and paintings and elsewhere ("All the very breast, Laure Prouvost," she signs off in the book's introduction). Most recently, breasts also figured largely in her show *Ring, Sing and Drink for Trespassing* at the Palais de Tokyo, as a fountains spraying water in hilarious arcs through many nipples.

Another word, grandad, recalls her acclaimed video work *Wantee* (2013), based on a fictional narrative of her fictional grandfather. (The video helped her secure the Turner Prize.) *Wantee* will join other greatest hits, such as *DIT LEARN*—a rapid succession of words and images that breaks apart old meanings—in Antwerp. In addition, new works, layered together in a perfectly tangled mess of references, are also on view. The museum is calling it a "total environment."

Prouvost says elements reappear throughout the exhibition in surprising ways. "It's interesting to connect all these works; it can be quite intense," she says. "It can be about building a sequence, but it can be also about building a labyrinth."

What Prouvost Is Planning for Venice

Octopus, another word in the dictionary, signals things to come. From what is known of her French pavilion project, and based on Prouvost's preparatory images, the octopus will completely surround the building.

"I like this metaphor," she says "The octopus is the oldest mind or brain of this planet. With her arms, she's touching and thinking many things at one time. And could it be where we all come from? The only thing the octopus doesn't have is memory, so she cannot evolve so much. She cannot pass down knowledge." With a laugh, she adds: "I also often forget things, so I can connect to that."

The project's title, *DEEP SEE BLUE SURROUNDING YOU / VOIS CE BLEU PROFOND TE FONDRE*, was announced in January. The core of the pavilion will include a fictional film based on a meandering road trip from the Parisian suburbs to the floating city of Venice, and will feature twelve characters, including a rapper, a dancer, a flutist, a priest, a karate master, and a magician.

"The film is in a way the head of my octopus," Prouvost writes in a conversation with the pavilion's curator, Martha Kirszenbaum. "The installation is alive because of the film [...] I would like for each spectator to feel himself/herself becoming a tentacle of the project."

To help finance it all, Prouvost has created a limited edition of 100 embroidered silk tapestries, which are available for €4,000 (\$4,535). The works feature a mistranslation of a popular French expression, "On va vous raconter des salades" (we will tell you lies), which foreshadows some of the trickery to be expected in Venice. To follow up on her Antwerp show's lexicon, Prouvost will produce an atlas, which will likely rework the world's geography.

"My grandma has been making the tapestries," Prouvost tells me. "She takes time to make them, and she knows a few 'salads' as well," she laughs, punning on a French slang word for lies. "We are happy to have her in the family and get creative together."

On the gallery website, I noticed a slightly different story, referring to a Belgian "specialist" who has been making the tapestries. I decided not to ask. Creative ambiguity, again, is Prouvost's goal.

Asked if there are any other words floating around in her mind for her Venice project, the artist answers that "extremities" is a metaphor she is channeling into the show. What exactly it means in Prouvost's lexicon is anyone's guess. And knowing Prouvost's propensity to surprise us, it may be "breast" to just forget what you know.

CREDITS

DANCE Jack Magai, Terry Hempfling | **PERCUSSION** Eli Keszler | **SINGERS** Clemmie Franks, Catherine Carter, Josephine Stephenson | **LIGHT DESIGN** Luc Schaltin | **PROPS MANAGER** Nelson Polfliet | **TECHNIQUE** Chris Segers, Frank Vandezande | **INTERN TECHNIQUE** Lies Van Loock | **THIS PERFORMANCE IS A RE-INTERPRETATION** of a theatrical performance work co-commissioned by the Walker Art Centre Minneapolis & EMPAC New York | **IN THE FRAMEWORK OF EXTRA**, with the support of the Institut Français and the Cultural Service of the French Embassy in Belgium



EXIT - **BRAM DROULERS**

in the Kaaitheater foyer

EXIT is a documentary that captioned the creation of *They Are Waiting For You*, at Empac (USA). The film shows the physical and spiritual voyage of the artist during the creation of her project. We see Prouvost dreaming, doubting, communicating, and finding solutions, surrounded by her Metal Men, her mandarines and her collection of masks.

52 MIN | **DIRECTOR** Bram Droulers