ALMINE RECH

Une Chambre à Soi

Sep 14 — Nov 12, 2024 | Château la Coste, Le Puy-Sainte-Réparade, France

Château La Coste is pleased to present 'Une Chambre à Soi', a group exhibition curated by Margaux Plessy, bringing together more than fifteen emerging international artists in dialogue with four women artists who are figures in the history of art. On show in La Galerie de Richard Rogers from 14 September to 12 November 2024, this immersive exhibition will tell the story of a night, from sunset to sunrise. Visitors will be immersed in the warm, intimate world of a bedroom, moving from dusk to dawn to the rhythm of the works specially created for the exhibition.

A lover of literature and poetry, Margaux Plessy has borrowed the title of the exhibition from Virginia Woolf's essay *A Room of One's Own*, which evokes the themes of intimacy, secrecy and the possibility of the imaginary. Drawing also on her personal experience of insomnia, she has invited a group of French and international artists to create new works that express their interpretations of dreams, nightmares and restlessness, exploring sleep, or the lack of it, as a driver of creativity. This tightrope walk is accompanied by a story made up entirely of words, extracts and ideas borrowed from the greatest authors of French literature, collected and arranged like a centon by Magaux Plessy.

The exhibition begins with an invitation to close one's eyes and ends with an invitation to open them again. In the interim of a solitary night, visitors will have had a simple and unique nocturnal experience, through paintings, sculptures and tapestries. In the middle of the room, Dorothy Cross's marble sculpture of two pillows with an ear resting lightly on them and Kiki Smith's silver bird *Crescent Bird* (2015) set a tone of mystery and intrigue for the night ahead. As the sun sets, Claudia Keep's luminous oil paintings create a relaxing mood alongside Tracey Emin's elongated poetic figure *Thinking More of You* (2012) and Nathanaëlle Herbelin's steamy *Blue Window* (2023).

Visitors are gently swept away by the dreams of Alex Foxton, Joshua Raz and Simon Martin before waking up in the restless frustration of insomnia. Four works from Louise Bourgeois's *What Is the Shape of This Problem?* series (1999) reflect the racing thoughts and excessive reflections provoked by this state of half-consciousness. As the minutes tick by, the fear of tomorrow intensifies, and the feelings of weakness and powerlessness are reflected in Victoire Inchauspé's bronze bouquet of wilted sunflowers slumped against a wall. Genesis Belanger's porcelain washbasin and bathroom cabinet *Scrub, Spritz, Splash* (2019) offer a slight respite, alongside Inès Longevial's series of surreal drawings of hybrid animal, human and plant figures on toilet paper. Another awakening leads visitors into the kitchen, to Bianca Bondi's exquisite installation of meals made entirely from salt.

Vivid, nightmarish imagery in shades of blue engulfs visitors as they enter the most emotional moment of the exhibition. Julian Farade's frightening bestial figure, Gardien de mes nuits (2019), triggers physical reactions that might be associated with a nocturnal terror: it pursues or threatens the viewer in an immersion of blue, with no possibility of escape. Constance Lafonta's *Sursaut* (2023) sums up the sensation of being alarmed, while Marcella Barceló evokes a more sinister feeling in the painting *La jument de nuit* (2024), depicting a solitary naked figure being watched or followed by a menacing black horse. The blurred boundaries between reality and imagination and the intense emotions of fear, sadness and panic continue to be explored in new works by Adrian Geller, Djabril Boukenaissi and Xie Lei, created especially for the exhibition.

Finally, visitors are relieved by the arrival of dawn, signalled by *La Ciudad de Oro* by Bolivian artist Kenia Almaraz Murillo, a luminous halo over a variety of delicately woven threads in shades of gold, yellow and amber. Colour is also the common thread running through the practice of Etel Adnan, whose etchings incite us to serenity and comfort, alongside new works and drawings full of emotion by Christine Safa. Nathanaëlle Herbelin's nude figure *David* (2020) smokes a cigarette in the haze of sunrise, analysing the events of the previous night and calming his anxiety. Sophie Calle's *Ainsi de suite* says 'Here lies secrets' over a monotonous sea, bringing a night so ordinary and yet so rich in events full circle.