ALMINE RECH

# Claire Tabouret
# I am crying because you are not crying

## Sep 8 — Oct 6, 2018 | Paris

**Almine Rech Gallery is delighted to present "I am crying because you are not crying", Claire Tabouret's first exhibition at the gallery in Paris, the second part of which will be hosted at the Château de Boisgeloup, Gisors and will be opened to the public on October 27th - 28th and November 3rd - 4th from 11 am to 6 pm.**

Conflict is probably the term that best describes the ventures and vicissitudes of humankind over the ages: political and economic struggles, religious conflicts, cultural revolutions, but also inner, psychological conflicts. It is not by chance that wrestling, as a subject, has pervaded the entire history of representations: think of wrestlers depicted on antique vases, or the *Two Wrestlers* terracotta model attributed to Michelangelo, or the famous poster of Andy Warhol and Jean-Michel Basquiat as boxers. Grappling, competing, dancing, enfolding, embracing... who exactly are Claire Tabouret's wrestlers? They are archetypes: their bodies, far removed from classical ideals of perfection, express tension and paradox. The wrestlers attract and repel each other, reminiscent of Pina Bausch's choreographies as described by Raimund Hoghe: "A complaint of love. Remembering, moving, touching. Taking on attitudes. Baring, facing each other, slipping over the Other's body. Seeking what is lost: proximity. Not knowing what to do to allure."[1] The bodies painted by Claire Tabouret feel, dance, want to harm yet protect, thus opening up a space for the viewer's sensitivity. Her new series of works on paper and repeated theme of the couple evoke the work of Edvard Munch, such as *The Kiss* or *Love and Pain.* Their acid colours also evoke more contemporary, pop-infused synthetic painting, as with the chromatic range exposed in Andy Warhol's famous poster for *Querelle,* the controversial film adapted from Jean Genet's novel.

The works of Claire Tabouret incorporate all of this. But these are not merely reiterations of a recurrent subject – or iconography – from the history of art. The underlying ambivalence, torn between physical exertion and emotional tension, infuses her work with a sense of alienation. The wrestlers' faces – when visible – reflect their fear of losing the other and wild attempts to prevent it. Some of them are youths (*The Grip*, *In Your Arms*), teenagers eager for reciprocal bodily exploration. Their somewhat awkward attempts at wrestling arouse tenderness and are more like clumsy hugs than actual holds. And perhaps these acts of force are also a representation of domination and submission, savage impulses, defiance, personal exaltation, even a hypothetical vision of the couple.

The enfolding embraces embody our constant quest for balance between attack and defence, success and failure, aggression and acceptance, victory and defeat. Claire Tabouret's large-format paintings – along with the new sculptures, her first, created for the second part of the exhibition at Boisgeloup – are visual representations of instinctive moods, of innate, uncontrollable drives. One can easily recognize oneself in these figures, with their ability to convey subtle psychological tensions. In some pieces (notably *Indivisible Lovers*), the stained background brings an additional layer of complexity, reminiscent as it is of the inkblots used by Hermann Rorschach in his personality tests. What could be more ambiguous than a Rorschach inkblot, an antonomasia straddling the line between abstraction and figuration? *Indivisible Lovers* also introduces another key theme in Claire's poetics: love. For the artist, this always involves duality, or better still, dualism. It is a quest for balance which, like a game of chess, can suddenly lapse into domination of the other and dislocate a relationship.

The second part of Claire Tabouret's exhibition will be held in the sculpture studio at the Château de Boisgeloup, which Pablo Picasso acquired in June 1930. The artist imagined her new work – and the exhibition's title – in reaction to the overarching figure of Picasso, who also inspired the two-fold construction of the project. Marked by the *Weeping Woman* (1937), in which Dora Maar's features are twisted by pain, Claire Tabouret designed her new pictorial story like a metaphor for romantic relationships. Through the representation of bodies in various stages of a wrestling match, the figures depicted in her new work question the erotic tension in forming a couple and the tragedy of breaking up.

From one chapter to the next, "I am crying because you are not crying" bears witness to Claire Tabouret's dual identification with both the weeping woman and the painter painting the tragedy, as if announcing the emotional crisis born of an encounter/struggle with the other. And you can almost perceive a painting in tears, made of tear-colours, and conceptually not dissimilar to Bas Jan Ader's silent, painful weeping in his black and white film *I'm Too Sad to Tell You* (1971), so dear to the artist's heart. Endless pain, as endless as the wrestlers' reiterations. An obsession that Claire Tabouret takes to the extreme, with her acute awareness of how difficult it is to end the hostilities and conflicts between human beings other than through artistic representation.

[1] Raimund Hoghe, *Pina Bausch – Histoires de théâtre dansé*, Paris, 1997.

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Translated from french by Alexandre Carayon.