

GALERIE CHLOE SALGADO

Margaux Meyer, *Sous la régulation du cœur*

06 May - 10 June 2023

Ruminant, digest, swallow, ingest: each of these words designates both processes of the mind and the body. For a long time, the entrails were relegated, considered as scabrous, unworthy of artistic consideration. Margaux Meyer examines them in her own way, replacing the haruspice's stick with her brushes and cotton wool, producing a painting of the stomach, because guts don't deceive.

On one side, something swells, a crystal ball-belly and protective fingers on a pulled T-shirt. On the other, viscera remind us that ancient magicians read the oracles of the gods in them— for what omens here? In this play of contrasts between the hidden and the covered, black and white, depths and surface, Margaux Meyer gives us a lesson in poetic anatomy. An eagle, caught in flight, dominates these *bellies*, evoking a new Annunciation in its wake as it beats time.

We then look again at these stomachs, opposite each other: perhaps the heart would be located there instead, which is why “we should say ily like farts”, as the artist suggests? We now know that our belly speaks and our brain executes, reversing the hierarchy of top and bottom that previously governed our conception of organs. This is where our audacity lies (‘to feel it in the belly’), this is where emotions are tied up, where our body expresses itself to the point of contraction. The serenity that envelops the belly is matched by the tightness of the hands, the twisting of the cramped fabric. Isn't the word *affection* close, so close, to the word *affliction*? The pearly palette and the suavity of the line come together to better capture the spasm: paradoxically, one must be undone quite a bit to *grasp*.

With the painter, the work on transparency is more conducive to an enigma than to clarity, and a mystery lingers. There is no longer any background to distinguish a figure clearly, no air to enable a silhouette to breathe. Rather, her painting flourishes in fading: things assert themselves at the moment of their disappearance, in a fertile tension for the eye between abstraction and figuration. Some of her paintings appear as blocks of sensation, and depending on the focal point, one may detect a form, guided or not by the chosen title in dialogue with the work; or one may be hypnotised by the magma of the material.

Her choices of composition— in the cinema, we would speak of close-ups— contribute to this derealization. She sets aside all classical frontality to focus our attention on elements of the human body, contrary to all convention: the white of the belly takes up almost all the space, as do the groins, where the vaporousness of the line meets the roughness of the jeans. We will never know to whom they belong, the split limbs of phantom people.

Margaux Meyer prefers the vitality of gesture to the precise contour, obeying the movement like a visceral heartbeat. She maintains the indeterminate, and certain details become all the more remarkable: the navel– the first scar– appears in transparency, and another slash cuts into the knee of a pair of jeans. In her work, painting loosens its bridles in suggestions that touch the senses without ever imposing themselves, pulsing only with a form of desire.

This can be perceived in the impulse of desire that emerges from her works: desire without nudity, desire that is modest but all the more malicious: focus on the folds of the groin, the breath mingles in the ardour of kisses and the coalescence of paint. Didn't the playwright Jean-Michel Rabeux write that “only a kiss carries the words of the womb to another womb, that is, to its eternity”?¹ Painting salivates and allies beings, opening up the infinitely reopened and constantly negotiated question of connections, fusions and other points of contact.

Taking up Pierre Soulages' maxim, “what I do teaches me what I'm looking for,”² the artist fumbles around, in a trial and error, thinking by variation, spreading her attempts over several canvases to better deliver her gesture, surprising herself and us: her creative process seems to be regulated only by her gut and her heart. Her paintings emerge from the passionate and personal depths of her tastes and affinities, following the slope of intuition, the one that makes us say both *I know* and *I don't know why*.

So, under the control of the heart. Kisses, groins, bellies, cramps: all signs and parts of the body through which the “heart” is expressed– a term that designates not so much the organ as everything that makes us vibrate, the diastole and systole of our lives, and of which the bird is also a metaphor. Margaux Meyer allows herself to be traversed by a primitive, vital energy, and she orchestrates it, like a telepath through their fingers, in order to “touch us at a distance,” to use the expression that the philosopher Peter Szendy applied to music.³

Painting freezes, movement remains, and hearts continue to beat.

Ysé Sorel

Translation by Katia Porro

¹ Jean-Michel RABEUX, *Le Ventre*, Ed. Les Solitaires Intempestifs, coll. Bleue, 2002.

² Charles JULIET, *Entretien avec Pierre Soulages*, Ed. L'Echoppe, 1990.

³ Peter SZENDY, *Membres fantômes. Des corps musiciens*, Ed. de Minuit, coll. Paradoxe, 2002.