

ANN
VERONICA
JANSSENS

September 3rd – October 8th, 2016

Life is an experimental journey undertaken involuntarily. It is a journey of the spirit through the material world and, since it is the spirit that travels, it is in the spirit that is experienced. That is why there exist contemplative souls who have lived more intensely, more widely, more tumultuously than others who have lived their lives purely externally. The end result is what matters. What one felt was what one experienced.
Fernando Pessoa

Consciousness needs force, unity, and independence. The works of Ann Veronica Janssens elude this desire for mastery and invite each of us into the troubled waters of psycho-sensorial journeys through space and light. After the coloured, immersive mists of *Fantasy* in 2013, the galerie kamel mennour is pleased to present Janssens' second solo show. This time, a triptych of iridescent glass panes has been set against the walls of the gallery on the Rue du Pont de Lodi. They are entrances into a subtle world where diffractions, reflections, and iridescences stimulate the intimate, unconscious magma of our thoughts. They trigger a series of sensations, colours, and perceptive associations like those running to infinity over the circle of gilt brass lying on the floor (*Sans titre*, 2013). The circle traces out a border that each of us is invited to illuminate in our innermost being (sacred-profane, in-play-out-of-play, same-other...).

Further on in the second space, under glass, Ann Veronica Janssens has, with a swipe of her heel, dispersed a little heap of sequins into a glimmering, iridescent lake. The fragments flash out in myriad directions. *Pégase* produces an infinity of emotions, even inspirations, continuing to modify under the changing aspect of the lights. Indeed Janssens' dig of her heel frees up inspiration in the same way the mythological winged horse gave birth to the spring of the nine muses with a blow of its hoof... And all the senses are solicited. A audio headphone pair will let you hear the work *Untitled (sons infinis)* that Janssens made in collaboration with Michel François in 2009: a hollow, multiplied sound, superimposed over a series of descending octaves. Hearing pulls the body into an infinite falling motion. This auditory illusion produces a visceral sense of vertigo, like a labyrinth of temporal dissonance. Sound and light waves mix vibrations.

As is often the case with Janssens, the exhibition is created as the visitor walks through it. She introduces her space and exists according to each visitor's experimentation. She requires sight as much as the body. Janssens has put in place the conditions for a hypnotic moment. Not a spectacular lulling to sleep but a diffuse feeling, like the state between sleeping and waking, when the familiar folds of the bedroom curtains take on strange and intriguing forms. She causes us to penetrate into the complex phenomenon of our perception, where sensation, memory, and fantasy combine to carve out new forms of existence and thought. Of course these will end up getting fixed. Consciousness, with its will to power, will endlessly redraw the boundaries, build up evidence, and mark out enclosures. But Janssens' works will always come to fluidise these topographies of certitude, experimenting with the permeability of contexts, whether architectural, social, cultural, or political...

The world is not defined once and for all, for the real cannot be accessed outside of the dimension of fantasy, and hence the imaginary. Ann Veronica Janssens thinks sculpture as a place of perception. Consequently, the tools and the palette of her works are an evolving configuration: they depend on the sensation, the experience, and the singularity of each viewer. Sculpture is not the object of perception—it is perception that sculpts.

The solo show of Ann Veronica Janssens is accessible from Tuesday to Sunday, 11:00 am to 7:00 pm, at 47 rue Saint-André des Arts, Paris 6.

For further information, please contact Emma-Charlotte Gobry-Laurencin, Marie-Sophie Eiché and Jessy Mansuy-Leydier by phone: +33 1 56 24 03 63 or by email: galerie@kamelmennour.com.

With this, Janssen extends Carl Andre's founding gesture from 1967 when the American minimalist created his radical work, *144 Pieces of Zinc*, with the zinc sheets arranged on the floor in rows of twelve. With this piece, Andre posed the principle of sculpture as situation, as a place from which to look at space and environment. He said himself that he had broadened the movement of Constantin Brancusi's *Colonne sans fin* (1918-1938) by thinking it horizontally. No longer directed towards the sky but rather placed on the earth. Ann Veronica Janssens has unfolded Andre's initial opening by introducing the work as the possibility of exploring oneself. Colour plays a primordial role here. Paul Cézanne's experience is close by: 'Colour is the place where our brain and the universe meet'.² The glass panes of *CL2 Blue Shadow*, *CL2GN35 Orange*, *CL9GN35 Sunset Bright Green* create a multitude of iridescent reflections that shift with one's point of view. They enliven perception with a palette of flamboyant colours. They are reflections from the first glimmers of the history of art when, on the cave walls, shadows danced until they became painted forms. They also mirror future horizons, where light, at once wave and particle, dematerialises reality, bringing about innumerable connections.

If light is essentially a spiritual element, Ann Veronica Janssens is not engaged in such a quest. Her explorations of the world are closer to those of the three princes of the kingdom of Serendip.³ Like theirs, they are the fruit of a plurality of discoveries, all born from chance, whether this is in the artist's studio or in the world around her. The journey is unpredictable. You are required to get underway to 'awaken powers dormant in ordinary vision'.⁴ The world is there, Ann Veronica Janssens' works invite us to discover it.

Annabelle Gugnon

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1. Fernando Pessoa, *The Book of Disquiet*, Trans. Margaret Jull Costa, Serpent's Tail, 2010, p. 74.

2. Joaquim Gasquet, *Cézanne*, Encre Marine, 2002.

3. Louis de Mailly, *Les Aventures des trois princes de Serendip*, Thierry Marchaisse, 2011.

4. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, 'Eye and Mind' [L'Œil et l'Esprit], in *The Primacy of Perception*, Ed. James M. Edie, Trans. Carleton Dallery, Northwestern University Press, 1964.

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Born in Folkestone (United Kingdom) in 1956, Ann Veronica lives and works in Brussels (Belgium).

Her work has been shown in numerous solo exhibitions: at the Nasher Sculpture Center de Dallas, at the Wiels - Centre d'Art Contemporain, Brussels, at the Espai d'art contemporani de Castelló, at the Museum Morsbroich, Leverkusen, at the Neue Nationale Gallery, Berlin, at the Kunstverein München, at the Musée d'Orsay, Paris, at the CCA Wattis Institute, San Francisco, at the Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, at the Kunsthalle Bern, at the [mac], Marseille, and at the S.M.A.K., Ghent.

Since 1985, she has also participated in major group exhibitions: at the Palais de Tokyo, Paris, at the Centre Pompidou-Metz, at the MOCA, Los Angeles, at the Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery, Toronto, at the Generali Foundation, Vienna, at the Chisenhale Gallery and at the Hayward Gallery, London, at the Witte de With and at the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, at the Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, at the Centre Pompidou and at the Galeries Nationales du Grand Palais, Paris; and taken part in various international biennales: Manifesta in Saint Petersburg, the Biennales of Sydney, Istanbul, São Paulo and Seoul. Alongside Michel François, she represented Belgium at the 1999 Venice Biennale.

Ann Veronica Janssens collaborates regularly with choreographers (Piere Droulers and Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker). In 2009, with Nathalie Ergino, she initiated the 'Laboratoire Espace Cerveau' at the IAC in Villeurbanne (France).