

WRITTEN ON THE BODY

After Nyne meets

Agnes Pezeu



— **French** artist Agnès Pezeu traces charcoal outlines of models enacting various scenes before drizzling paint over the canvas to further delineate the silhouettes.

The fluidity and palpable lightness of Pezeu's canvases convey a sense of intangibility, yet they give transient, fleeting moments of time permanence. Their delicacy, however, is balanced by a dynamism deriving from the strong sense of movement emanating from each figure. This duality is further explored by the absence of the model no longer physically present on the canvas, yet forever present in the lines of paint.

Pezeu has painted frescos in numerous French cities in addition to completing private commissions. Her work is held in private collections throughout Paris, Lyon, Milan, Rome, Seoul, Tokyo, Istanbul, New York, Montreal, London and Madrid.

Ahead of her solo exhibition at After Nyne Gallery in February 2019, After Nyne talks to Agnes to find out about her works and inspirations

How would you describe your work to people who are not familiar with it?

In my work I intend to seize the essence of the other's body in order to tell stories : Indeed, my creative process consists in lying down human or animal bodies onto the canvas and taking the outline of them with my charcoal pen. By outlining the model's body, I take his imprint, his ener-

gy, his senses. In this encounter with the model I seek especially to capture a moment of life, an energy, an impulse. Figuration interests me less than the actual performative actions shared with the model. Once the body is removed from the canvas, I start to paint with dripping. This technique freed from the paintbrush allows me to paint with large energetic and fluid gestures: With my body, I paint the body of the other. The materiality of the model's body progressively transforms into marks, whirls, abstraction as it is drowning into the materiality of paint. It is through that transformation that I tell a story.

What inspired you to make a career in art?

I never thought of making a career in art as for me being an artist is not a profession but a lifestyle. Very soon in my childhood I felt the urgency



AGNES PEZEU, Portraits Juin 2018

to be an artist. Living in the South of France, I sought freedom and risk by practicing extreme outdoors sports. I was fascinated by the power of the body in its physical dimension, aesthetics and erotics.

Who were your greatest inspirations?

Many others. "L'autre, pièce maîtresse de mon univers." wrote Michel Tournier when he speaks about Robinson Crusoe. It is a sentence I would like to make my own.

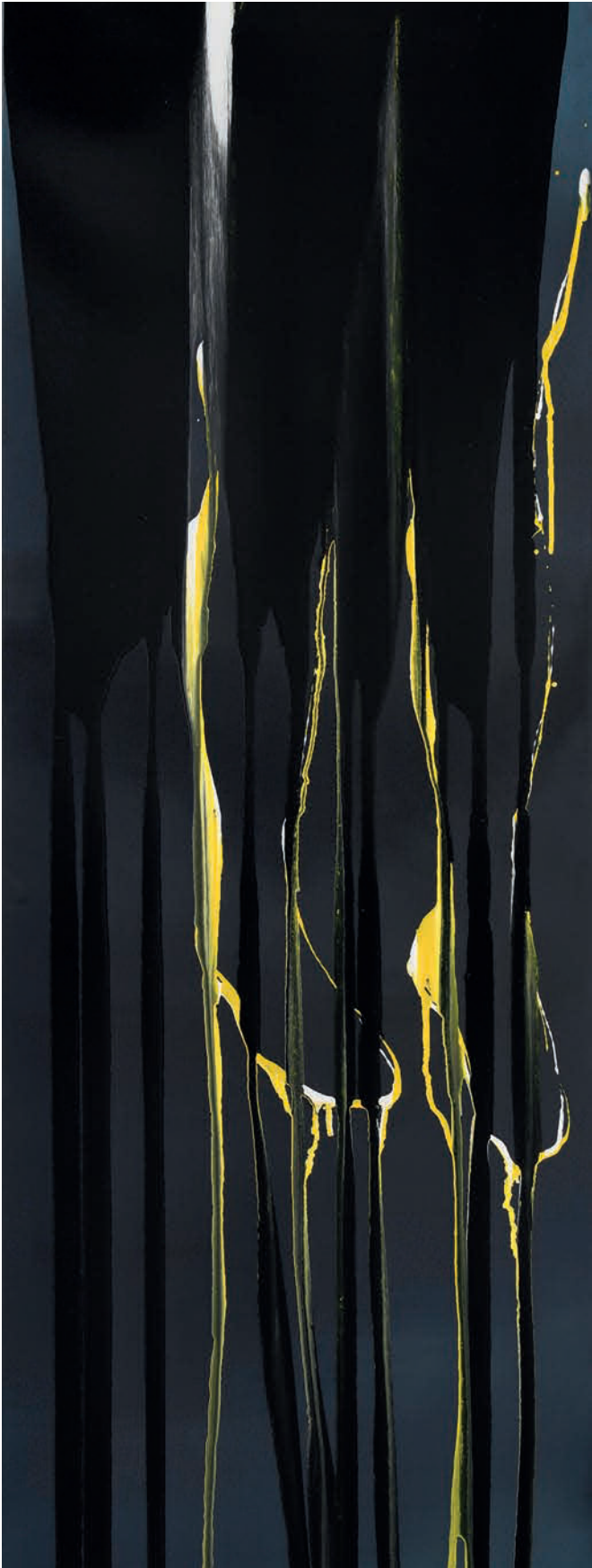
Which artists do you admire most?

I am fascinated by how Caravaggio utilizes compositions and lights to enlighten the bodies, senses and vibrant souls in his paintings. Eugene Delacroix's paintings strike me as well as they carry a movement that makes the bodies alive. And lastly, Niki De St Phalle as well as Paula Rego are inspiring to me as they are women artists who empowered their works and expressed ideas through the body's depiction.

Which have been your favourites out of all of the works you've created?

Two works have been important to me: The first one was called 'Le grand chaperon rouge'. I made this artwork when I had my first solo show in New York. During a performance at the private view I asked someone in the audience to come and settle down on the canvas. I asked her to take the position of the Red Little Riding Hood as imagined in Perrault's tale and I took her outline. Then, I did the same thing with my gallerist's massive dog to signify the presence of the wolf described in Perrault's tale. After this performance, I painted those bodies with the





dripping technique. This moment had an incredible intensity that you could really feel in the finished piece.

The second work that I think is really relevant to me, was a painting of an ostrich I made at the Jardin des Plantes in Paris. It is a 130-kilogram animal with a huge body, prehistoric legs with scales and a long neck. I laid the animal on my canvas and took his outline. Then, I made this work with a black paint dripping, trying to translate what I felt: lightness, softness (feathers) and power.

Tell us what 2019 holds for you

A solo show we are preparing at the After Nyne Gallery next February. Then, an exhibition in Paris of videos and painting I made with the Jardin des Plantes in Paris. I have been working on this project for 4 years. Finally, a presentation of bronze sculptures that I will show for the first time in Paris, March 2019

OPPOSITE PAGE
AGNES PEZEU

LEFT
AGNES PEZEU