

Catharsis
Press Release

Following on from her success at Musée Guimet in 2017, Prune Nourry is taking possession of the Galerie Templon space on Rue Grenier Saint Lazare for the first time with *Catharsis*. Opening on 7th September, the solo show is made up of a series of new sculptures interacting with extracts from her first feature-length documentary, *Serendipity*.

The *Catharsis* exhibition marks a turning point in the artist's creative process. For over twelve years, Prune Nourry has been developing powerful and thoughtful multidisciplinary work, exploring the body by questioning gender and hybridisation. She has tended to keep her subject at a distance, remaining as objective as a researcher or anthropologist. Having recently overcome breast cancer, over the course of her treatment the artist felt she was becoming the subject of her own work, a sculpture in the hands of the doctors. With *Catharsis*, armed with her sculptor's tools, Prune Nourry reappropriates her body and her femininity, forging an intimate tie between her past explorations and her current life experience.

The sculptures in the exhibition are all marked by their evocation of *ex-votos*, the popular offerings in the form of an object, limb or organ which represent the feelings of women and men confronted with fear, infertility and sickness, their gratitude for past cures and hopes for future cures. This concept of transferring an emotion to an object can be found in all ages and cultures. To create the pieces for *Catharsis*, Prune Nourry worked with archaeologists, sociologists and artisans, drawing inspiration from the different shapes and materials used to make these objects.

The exhibition presents several clips from the film *Serendipity* in which the artist explores the strange connection between her past work and her illness. The film bears witness to her journey, transforming her medical treatment into an epic artistic voyage.

The Amazon appears in the last sequence of *Serendipity*, a monumental four-metre concrete sculpture with glass eyes, inspired by an ancient marble statue at the Metropolitan Museum of Art representing an injured amazon. Prune Nourry created the sculpture as a cathartic act in her fight against cancer. Inspired by *ex-voto* traditions, particularly the Japanese *mizuko kuyo*, the piece is entirely covered in thousands of incense sticks. During a public performance in the heart of Manhattan, the incense went up in smoke, symbolising healing. In the *Catharsis* show, a miniature bronze sculpture, echoing the monumental sculpture, commemorates this act.

The *In Vitro* pieces made from laboratory glass and dated 2010 illustrate the serendipity at play in Prune Nourry's work. These pieces and the intriguing *River Woman*, created for Glasstress 2019 as part of the Venice Biennale, are contemporary *ex-votos* where the desire for fertility takes the form of test tubes from medically assisted reproduction centres.

Catharsis allows viewers to share in the hope for the body's homeostasis and a balanced soul.