

## THE WORLD IN MY MOUTH

a solo show by **Nefeli Papadimouli**  
Curated by Violette Morisseau

October 21st – November 18th 2023

The result of a gentle observation, *The World in My Mouth* unfolds along two intrinsically linked axes: the vision of Orion, your child, and your own vision. On the ground floor, you explore the changes brought about by motherhood, an inexorable experience of fusion. You talk about the ability to open up a part of yourself to your child, and by extension, to other forms of life. In the lower level, you lead us into an intimate reversal in which Orion introduces us to the world through his eyes, the sounds he transmits and the gestures he teaches us.

The 'cocoon' sculptures on which the exhibition opens, suspended or hung, seem like outgrowths of the walls. They have the dual effect of being able to carry and protect a body –either human, mineral or plant – against itself. Skin-to-skin contact creates a symbiotic relationship: the wearer's body is instinctively covered in scales, adorned with coppery and undulating exoskeletons. In a form of transference, through the contact of the skins, a little of one passes into the body of the other.

As we descend the stairs, Orion's babbling begins to be heard. At his age, he has the ability to identify and memorise an infinite number of sounds, from every mouth and every culture. Although this skill fades with time and situated learning, these vocalisations are those of a universal song, potentially containing all the languages of the world.

With new-borns, the integration of knowledge is inseparable from moments of sleep: it is during the first phase of sleep, which is often agitated, that the new information gathered during the periods of wakefulness is processed and memorised. This is when a universal phenomenon occurs: the infant's face displays a succession of innate emotions: joy, surprise, fear, disgust, sadness and anger. Its body moves in sudden, jerky movements, with limbs twitching and relaxing. You observed this sort of spasmodic dance in Orion, and asked the choreographer Theo Pendle to interpret it. Lying on his back, an unsuspected horizon of movement opens up to the dancer: from micro-gestures to convulsions, this is the dance of a body that memorises the world.

In the adjoining room, a soft space where bodies can move without injury, you've hung a number of sculptures, remarkable for their haptic qualities. These are works to be looked at lying on your back, to be touched, sculptures to be bitten. Here you return to your lifelong obsession with transitional objects, defined by Winnicott as essential supports for the child's emotional projections. These objects help them to become aware of their individuality and to see others as the outside world rather than parts of themselves.

You, whose practice constantly tests the elasticity of the distances between individuals in order to reposition them in the world, have decided to put us in the place of a new-born baby. A soft, cuddly world, where things are understood with the mouth. Orion tenderly shows us the way to swallowing the world and assimilating it.

Violette Morisseau  
Translated by Emmelene Landon