

Stéphanie Brossard
Notre Dame Des Laves

28 July - 12 August
Curated by Ben Broome
FRIEZE, No.9 Cork Street

Notre Dame Des Laves exhibits the work of Stéphanie Brossard for the first time in the UK at Frieze, No.9 Cork Street. Curated by Ben Broome, two large format installations are exhibited, both concerning the anthropology and ecology of the artist's home, La Réunion. *Glissement de terrain* and *Rendez-vous* are informed by the omnipresence of disaster for residents of La Réunion with the threat of hurricanes and volcanic eruptions punctuating daily life. Through these works, Brossard addresses the violence of displacement and upheaval that arises when the natural world collides with the socio-economic conditions of the French colony.

The exhibition's title *Notre Dame Des Laves* (translated literally as "Our Lady of the Lava") pays homage to a church of the same name which, in 1977, was miraculously spared when the lava flow from the eruption of *Piton de la Fournaise* split to flow around the church. Brossard is interested in the mutations the church experienced in the wake of this mystical event - the physical mutation of the landscape vs the cultural mutation. The church, no longer functional as a place of christian worship, evolved into a democratised meeting place for Réunionese people of any faith.

When the exhibition opens the steel tabletop of *Glissement de Terrain* is piled high with sand. Connected via the internet to a database of global tectonic activity, motors shake the table when an earthquake is registered in real time. Upon closing this sand will cover the floor. We the viewer, wrapped up in the cotton wool of the gallery space, are confronted by the realities presented by *Glissement de Terrain*: the ubiquity of uncertainty for those in the global South vs the relative safety and security of the West.

For *Rendez-vous*, discarded shards of mismatched marble populate the floors of the gallery. Marble as a natural resource isn't present on La Réunion so its existence on the island is purely synthetic: a manifestation of human occupancy. With each marble type quarried in a different locality, their existence together, their *Rendez-vous*, is a natural impossibility. Collectively the marble fragments convey displacement.

Brossard herself knows what it is to be displaced. France is heralded as a land of promise amongst the Réunionese but, upon arriving in France, Brossard was met with the realities of assimilation. Now considering this eurocentric rhetoric to be insidious, the physical weight of the work (over one tonne) helps Brossard speak about her own experience. The challenge of moving and installing her work symbolising the weight of her own displacement and the mutations she endured as a result.

The works presented in *Notre Dame Des Laves* function as a counterpoint: minimal and slick in aesthetic but abrasive in subject matter. Brossard encourages the viewer to reckon with the fragility of humanity and our relationship with nature from our position of relative privilege; empathising with what it means to be displaced or live in uncertainty.

Notre Dame Des Laves has been made possible with generous support from Fluxus Art Projects.

Stéphanie Brossard (b. 1992, Le Port, La Réunion) works across installation, sculpture, performance, photo and video to explore themes of mobility, creolization & political borders, often in relation to the natural world. Her work was exhibited at La Collection Lambert in Avignon in 2016 in the exhibition "Rêvez!". Winner of the Yvon Lambert Prize for young creation, she was again invited to participate in "Rêvez #3 — Memories saved from the wind" in 2019. She was selected for the Parallèle festival, Marseilles and in the same year was a finalist in the Talents Contemporain competition of the Schneider Foundation.

