

PRESS RELEASE

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VIDYA GASTALDON

PUSH THE EARTH WITH YOUR KNEES, THE SKY WITH YOUR HEAD

43, ROUTE DES JEUNES

OPENING ON 24.01 – 18H

« I represent the gods but also energy, Prana, Qi, vibration, X bosons, a myriad of protean things in their process possibly divine. Whether it is a mountain, Sponge Bob or a smiley face, they are for me only allegories, icons, emanations of the divine. Totems without taboos. »

Vidya Gastaldon, *Call It What You Like*, 2008

Art Bärtschi & Cie is pleased to present, for the third time within its walls, a new solo exhibition by **Vidya Gastaldon**, *Push the Earth with your Knees, the Sky with your Head*.

From the very beginning of her artistic exploration, the Franco-Geneva artist's drawings already contained the seeds of her pictorial work. It is this passage from the free and light world of drawing to the materiality and physical strength of acrylic that is at the very heart of Vidya Gastaldon's aesthetic preoccupations. The artist's figurative practice evokes forms inhabiting a marvellous space, where nature seems to be endowed with a magical force. Finally, this cosmic environment seems to be the real place of an ecology that encompasses a complex whole.

The *suspensions*, made of wool, beechwood rods, threads and beads, appear like majestic snakes that throne in space like a portal to unknown worlds. The initiatory journey unfolds through this doorway to the universe that underlies the visible.

His latest canvases use painting as a marker of tangible materiality. The invisible, the immaterial, remains at the centre of the artist's preoccupations, but returns to inscribe itself in our reality. The frame thus no longer delimits the boundaries between representation and the world, and this transgression is symbolized by the artist, in his *Healing Painting*, a series of works presented during his solo show at artgenève at the Art Bärtschi & Cie stand, by extending the painted space to the frame itself. Thus, it is no longer a limit but a part of the pictorial composition. Indian philosophical motifs are also present, through evocations of the "super energy" of the Shakti, a feminine principle of strength, power and vital energy in Sanskrit. Finally, they are small sower gods that remind us of two related aspects, eroticism with ecstasy and joy, and matter with life.

The dreamlike and mysterious world of Vidya Gastaldon is more than ever present. If paintings such as *Atlantide* or *Le lac de Galilée* present a generous artistic gesture and a rich composition, these works require an attentive listening to the viewer. In the artist's work, it is the invisible that comes to weave its discourse, and it is this invisible that deserves the full attention of the viewer. It is the realm of belief and therefore of a communication that goes beyond the framework of rational logic that is evoked here. By recreating the discourses that make and unmake human history and by bringing out the models of a buried world, Vidya Gastaldon gives back to see what has been lost, and gives back to the spectator the possibility of a spiritual communication.

"The dream, the vision, the hallucination, are not unwelcome disturbances of the mind, but rather doors to understanding the self and the world.

Marco Pasi, *Soigner l'invisible, sauver l'impossible*, 2016

Vidya Gastaldon (1974) was born in Besançon, France. She studied at the Beaux-arts de Grenoble where she still lives and works. From 1994 to 2001, she worked in collaboration with Jean-Michel Wicker. She has already presented her work in numerous solo exhibitions, notably at the Centre d'Art Contemporain de Genève in 2003, at the MAMCO in 2005, and at the CAPC, Musée d'art contemporain de Bordeaux. Her works can be found in many public collections, including the MAMCO in Geneva, the Musée national d'art moderne - Centre Pompidou, in Paris, and the Walsall Museum, in Walsall.

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