



Julien Parant-Marquis & Fran Williams

**Bérénice's Stomach**

July 4th - 26th, 2024

*Espace Maurice* at Pangée

*Why art thou cast down, O my soul?  
and why art thou disquieted in me?*

Psalm 42:5-11

*Everything swallows me. When my eyes are shut, my own stomach swallows me, chokes me from within.*<sup>1</sup> In the depths of Bérénice's stomach, her organs feel as if they have collapsed into themselves. She can't catch a breath. Her eyes peer outwards and within the center of her belly. Inwards and out. The crevice of her little abdomen full of eyes and throat and breath and apprehension. She is engulfed by the vastness of the river, the sky full of butterflies, the maternal face. But also, her interiority -an expansiveness like an echo in a cave. Bérénice peers into herself like a pond: a reflection that keeps engulfing, digesting.

*Where does this black sun come from?*<sup>2</sup>

Bérénice closes her eyes. *When you shut your eyes, you end up where you are: in the dark, in the void.*<sup>3</sup> Behind our eyelids the darkness takes a

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<sup>1</sup> Ducharme, Réjean. Tr. Madeleine Stratford, *Swallowed*, Esplanade Books, 2020, p. 17

<sup>2</sup> Kristeva, Julia. Tr Leon Roudiez, *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia*, Columbia University Press, 1992

<sup>3</sup> Ducharme, p 18

reddish hue at sunrise. It'll devour you, the sadness. The impossible mourning that leads you back to the primordial detachment, the mother and the enveloping womb.

When Kristeva writes of melancholy she writes of an obstructed light<sup>4</sup>. An eclipsed sun hiding behind its dilated pupil. No matter what you do, you must avoid looking at it, but you do. And you wouldn't be the first. No matter what you do, you are left looking for words. You will not find any.

In this room, Fran Williams' abstractions hide a precise and ongoing deconstruction of lettering, language and word formation. Some kind of praise to asymbolia, a push back against definition. This meditation on the preverbal invites us to prioritize the awe-striking experience of colors colliding against each other. Even her portraiture is fragmented. You will not be given the answer here.

Bérénice's fiery angst pulsates like worms or maggots. She will not be swallowed! When she closes her eyes, she falls back into the earth, into the expansive silence: *"Nothing helps. There are daisies for hunger, rainwater for thirst. But nothing for loneliness or fear."*<sup>5</sup>

The windows are open just enough to let the breeze come in from the mountain. Somewhere between the most cavernous parts of the body

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<sup>4</sup> Kristeva, p.3

<sup>5</sup> Ducharme, 18

and crevices in the ground, Parant-Marquis' eerie dreamscapes flourish. Warm, and tentacular, quasi-futuristic landscapes pull us inwards. Wherever the black sun lies, it has engulfed us. Have we fallen into Bérénice's ear?

What was the saying: *black bile saps great men*<sup>6</sup>? What if it were a question of Aristotelian *humors* instead? Then it would also be a question of heat. Black sun, black bile. The antidote to which can only be found in its *euphoric counterpoint*<sup>7</sup>: froth. Froth, like the foam of waves as they hit the sky, like sperm, like fermenting wine.

It's the beginning of July and the premature heat waves have come and left us, we know they will return. Somewhere out of the city the lakes are warmed up like an embryonic sac, only from the sun.

From the shore the iridescent water rises into the interminable skies surrounded by mountains. It rises and folds over like some kind of pulse, at moments pulled forth by breathtaking stillness, at others toppling into terrifying darkness.

Exhibition text by Marie Ségolène C. Brault

*Bérénice's Stomach* is on view from July 4th to July 26th, 2024

Pangée is located at 1305 Pine Ave W, Montreal, and is open Wednesdays to Saturdays, from noon to 5pm.

Espace Maurice is an apartment gallery founded in 2021 by Marie Ségolène C.Brault. Named after jewelry designer and artist Maurice Brault, the gallery has hosted solo and group exhibitions by local and international artists and curators.

Maurice is located at 916 Ontario E., apartment 320.

*For more information please contact: [espacemaurice.info@gmail.com](mailto:espacemaurice.info@gmail.com)*

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<sup>6</sup> Kristeva, p.7

<sup>7</sup> Idem