

AGNÈS THURNAUER



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PAINTING IS THINKING

One of the most recognized artistic voices of the French contemporary art scene, French-Swiss artist Agnès Thurnauer (*1962, lives and works in Paris) has built an innovative body of work since the mid-1990s. She primarily explores language (words, meaning, reciprocity) through her paintings, sculptures, and installations. In her practice, writing is often incorporated in the picture—in many different expressive ways—and even when it is not, the allusive power released by the subject places the viewer within art history or contemporary concerns as in the endlessly renewed emancipation of their own reading and thinking. The visual quality of language is also tested in three dimensions with her sculptures made of casts of letters on different scales, permitting the involvement of both the gaze and the body.

This reference monograph encompasses the last twenty years of Thurnauer's practice, weaving together her different series and major exhibitions, as well as showing how the conceptual cogency of her work is achieved through a rejection of style, and a free vision of painting conceived not as a figurative/abstract device, but as a means to give representation to questions related to art, politics, the body, and self-investigation—so to speak “painting in the expanded field.”

Newly commissioned essays by American art critic and curator Dean Daderko, Musée Picasso's President Cécile

Debray, and French cultural writer Elisabeth Lebovici, as well as an introduction by editor Clément Dirié, offer new perspectives on the artist's oeuvre, while an extensive conversation with Italian curator Lorenzo Benedetti reflects on Thurnauer's breadth of thinking about her own practice and art in general.

Agnès Thurnauer's recent solo exhibitions include *Aliénor L'Ouragane*, Abbaye de Fontevraud, 2023; *On se retrouve chez toi*, Musée Matisse, Nice, 2022; *A comme Boa*, LAM, Villeneuve d'Asq, 2022; *RRose c'est la Life*, Centre d'Art Bouvet Ladubay, Saumur, 2021; and *Land and Language*, Fondation Thalie, Brussels, 2020. Active from the mid-1990s, her first solo exhibition was held at Palais de Tokyo in Paris in 2003. Since then, she has exhibited at the Centre Pompidou, Paris; Jesus College, Cambridge; LAB Kunsthalle, Bratislava; Lyon Biennale, Lyon; Seattle Art Museum, Seattle; SMAK, Ghent; and Yale School of Art, Yale (USA). She works regularly with poets, writers, and philosophers—among them Tiphaine Samoyault and Rod Mengham—to co-conceive publications and artist's books. In 2022, she unveiled a major public commission, "Matrices Chromatiques," at the Musée de l'Orangerie, Paris.