TESS DUMON
ALMOST A COSMOS

19 October - 14 November 2026
19 rue Guénégaud, 75006 Paris, FR

In Lucretius, atoms fall like rain through the void, and it takes only the slightest swerve in one of them for them to collide and for a world to take shape: a kosmos, the Greek word that first meant an order, an arrangement.

First there is a night sky, or perhaps a sea. Up close, the image comes apart. It becomes nothing more than a number: thousands of touches of gouache, laid down one by one. The landscape was never given; it was counted.

Tess Dumon makes this shift the heart of her practice. The smallest pictorial unit, the dot, describes nothing in itself. Star one moment, sea foam the next, it loses, through sheer repetition, every fixed meaning and becomes medium, density, distance. The painting is not composed: it precipitates, as a celestial body is born through accretion.

The sculptures obey the same law. Worked stitch by stitch, the expanded metal acquires the volume of a life-size horse without ever ceasing to be porous. Air passes through it; the solid organizes itself around the void. The horse is called *Rosa*. Riderless and without a pedestal, she moves forward at the eye level of whoever looks at her, curious, as if drawn by a presence. For centuries, the monumental horse served as the foundation of power: it was reared up, mounted, raised above the crowds. Very few women have depicted it, among them Rosa Bonheur, who had to obtain official permission to wear trousers in order to go and draw at the horse fairs. *Rosa* pays her homage by subverting the equestrian statue: here, the horse is no longer an instrument but becomes a subject.

Caught between the bronze of generals and the pink of children's bedrooms, where it is reduced to "girly stuff," *Rosa* takes seriously an attachment we have been taught to find naïve, and at last gives it the scale of a monument. A monumentality that carries no weight: a presence rather than a mass. *Rosa* does not dominate; she draws near. We now know, notably thanks to equine therapy, that the horse senses in us what we do not show, and responds to it. It is this unseen thing she comes to seek out: encounter rather than conquest.

Scales, from then on, no longer hold. A field of flowers reads as a constellation, sea foam as a galaxy. Earth and cosmos share the same elemental grammar, and the eye must constantly choose its distance.

Within these expanses, small figures emerge: a child at the edge of an immense wave, a body curled up on the shore. They do not command the landscape. They introduce into it a human measure, fragile and provisional, in the face of what exceeds them.

Other presences inhabit these landscapes: sculptures by artists who have left their mark on the history of contemporary art, such as Ugo Rondinone and Antony Gormley. Trained in sculpture at Central Saint Martins and then at the Royal College of Art, Tess Dumon knows how much such works, once installed in public space, rewrite the landscape around them. Transposed into her paintings, they become landmarks, points of orientation in a world still taking shape.

The exhibition does not depict infinity; it offers the experience of it. Nothing here emerges all at once: everything is built gesture by gesture, over the duration of the work as over the duration of the gaze. One by one, until the world appears.