

DANIEL DAVIAU

丹尼尔·达维欧



ANIMAL BEAUTY 万物有灵



Galerie

DUMONTEIL

NEW YORK • PARIS • SHANGHAI

杜梦堂

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PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Daniel Daviau – Animal Beauty

Part I - Galerie Dumonteil Shanghai

Dates: 26 May to 28 July, 2018

Address: Building 105, 199 Hengshan Road, 200031 Shanghai

Opening Hours: 11:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m., Closed Mondays

Part II - Xiyunlou

Dates: 24 May to 24 August, 2018

Address: Building 1, Xiyunlou, 388 Hongde Road, Shanghai

Galerie Dumonteil is proud to announce Daniel Daviau – ‘Animal Beauty’, the first major retrospective of the internationally renowned artist in China, also marking the 10th anniversary of the Shanghai gallery. The exhibition takes place in two venues, the gallery space and Xiyunlou, the newly established commercial center in Jiading District, featuring up to 40 dimensionally varied animal sculptures that showcase the artist’s originality and mastery of techniques. Thirty-three non-monumental pieces are presented at the gallery, while six monumental sculptures are exhibited at Xiyunlou. At the Xiyunlou opening reception on May 25, an unveiling ceremony for the monumental *Rhinoceros* (2010) will be held to mark the inauguration of its eponymous square.

Animals have always been an important theme in the history of art — from the vivid single-line depictions of prehistoric Lascaux caves, to the subjective imageries of animals in medieval era, and to the groundbreaking animal-oriented creation during the Renaissance. Since the 19th century, France has been home to many animal art masters who bring new possibilities to the theme. The outbreak of World War I revealed the savagery and brutality of humans in an unprecedented scale, which compels great masters such as Bugatti and Pompon to further break the tradition and start to portray the sensitivity and fragility of animals, contrasting the “humanity” of animals with the “bestiality” of humans. Standing upon the shoulders of the predecessors, Daviau attempts to depict the characteristics of different animals with his unique language and humor. And through the hidden human perspective in the works, he also challenges us to confront the role of people in natural environment and animal survival, raising concerns for a more balanced world.

In an attempt to present the most complete Daviau to the Chinese audience, ***Part I - Galerie Dumonteil*** consists of non-monumental works reviewing the artist’s career in the past three decades, from the early works to the most recent *Golden snub-nosed monkey* (2018) specially dedicated to the Chinese audience, along with several out-of-edition works. Among the six monumental pieces exhibited in ***Part II - Xiyunlou***, the beloved Hippo series including *Hippopotamus* (2013), *Barnaby* (2017) and *Titipo* (2016) will be exhibited as a complete series for the very first time.

Why Animals?

Daniel Daviau was born in Sarlat, a historical city in Southwest France, and brought up on a farm near Dordogne River where little Daviau was surrounded by various kinds of farm animals. All these village experience taught Daviau the valuable lesson of respecting the natural environment, which later became his life motto and the guidance to his art practice.

At the beginning of his sculpting career, Daviau’s works revolved around naturalism, seeking inspiration from a plant, a stone, a potted bonsai, and reproducing the source of life. Not long afterwards he was captured by

his own passion for animals, and naturally shifted his focus area. Daviau's emotions have always been subordinate to a long tradition of animal art, from the prehistorical Lascaux Caves to the masters in the 19th and 20th centuries: Barye, Bugatti, Sandoz, Pompon, Guyot... It is also clear that the artist's creations are closely related to anatomy and zoology, and he has done meticulous research on animal art. And yet all these do not quite explain the instantly recognizable quality in Daviau's animal sculptures — sensitive, strong and original, with pure lines and composed elegance. Perhaps we can find some answers in the technical aspects as well as the works themselves.

Unique Vision and Unrivalled Skills

One can easily tell the pure love the artist has for his models, but it is often neglected that the expression and gesture of the animals are not from the "beasts" themselves, but from the artist's vision. Daviau has drawn inspiration from animals that are rarely sculpted, such as *Platypus* (2011), *Lemur and Its Children* (2001), *Tamarin* (1999), etc., and he uses his signature style to integrate the body shapes of different animals and translates his languages into a gentle and witty expression. For example, he intends to give the *Hippopotamus* a sweet, gentle, well-intentioned appearance that children want to embrace, while the *Rhinoceros* (1993) appears warrior-like with his eyes firmly glaring at his possible annihilation. *American Buffalo* (1995) and *Canadian Moose* (1997) are shown in steadfast and fearless poses, ready to challenge at any time as they face daily threats from both nature and humans. He only takes interests in popular animals when he discovers a gesture rarely expressed in the existing versions or he was compelled by the urge to do so, which was the case for *Big Lola* (2014), a chubby cat with a serious look and an amusing sitting pose.

In 2010, Daviau expanded his body of work with life-size monumental sculptures—the first piece was commissioned by one of Daviau's collectors—attracting widespread attention from cultural foundations, the public domain, and private collections. Among them, *Rhinoceros* (2010) was exhibited at Xintiandi, Shanghai, while *Canadian Moose* (2015) was showcased at the Statue Square, Hong Kong, and *Giraffe* (2013) won the 'Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts' gold medal. A few editions of the monumental sculptures have already found their permanent home in China, including Xiyunlou in Shanghai and Deji Plaza in Nanjing.

As a graduate of sculpture, Daviau once worked as an assistant to the French sculptor Haïm Kern, and practiced at the top bronze foundry in France. He is one of the few contemporary artists who understands and masters all the techniques of bronze sculpture fabrication. For Daviau, bronze is a noble material with thousands of years of casting history. It can give a piece of work the appreciation beyond its own value. It is particularly worth mentioning that Daviau is also one of the very few who have mastered the "patina" technique—the skill of distressing a thin layer that variously forms on the surface of the bronze. He tailor-made the patina of each piece so that each edition became unique. *"The exceptional sophistication of patina has made him unrivalled, at a time when the finishing details and the aesthetics of artworks are too often neglected,"* as the gallery founder Pierre Dumonteil puts it, *"his requirement for the quality of the execution of the limited-edition bronze sculptures shows an infinite respect for his artworks and the collectors."*

A Poetic Universe of Animals

"Daniel Daviau's animals are curious, peaceful food-lovers, slightly mocking, animals seen often in childhood dreams, smelling of the perfume of far-away if not forgotten lands. They look at you, unafraid, confident in their enduring nature, and each stands its ground according to its character or reputation. Their outlines are strong, clear and stark of any superfluous ornament. French Sculptor Daniel Daviau has defined such a personal and unique approach to the creatures of his planet that one already can recognize those belonging to 'The Daviau's line'."

— Jacques-Philippe Wapler, curator of the Edouard and Maurice Sandoz Foundation

Needless to say, Daviau is attentive to the equilibrium of the planet and his sculptures emphasize on the relationship between nature and human, however, in the artist's opinion, if his work can arouse people's respect for animals and nature, he feels very happy, but this is not his primary mission. He is just doing what he wants to do most. And yet his works are surely powerful testimonies, expressing tenderness and complicity; they remind us of the connections established between humans and animals — not only do we share the same planet, but also our “souls”.

Daniel Daviau (b.1962, Sarlat, France) graduated from Professional School of Sculpture in Pau before continuing his study of Modeling and Sculpture in Paris.

His work has been featured in major exhibitions at prominent institutions that include:

Bestiaire, Musée de Jouy-en-Josas, France, 1996;

The Animals, Musée d'Histoire Naturelle, Orléans, France, 1998;

The Sculptures and the Animals in 20th Century Arts, Monnaie de Paris, France, 1999;

El Arca del Siglo, BBK, Bilbao Biskaia Kutxa Fondation, Bilbao, Spain, 2005;

100 Animal Sculptures, Bugatti, Pompon, Giacometti..., Musée des Années 30, Boulogne-Billancourt, France, 2012;

S|2's, spring exhibition explores non-monumental sculpture of the 20th and 21st centuries (Rodin, Moore, Picasso, Calder, Fiori, Kapoor, Koons, Giacometti, Hirst, Daviau), Sotheby's New York, 2013.

In 2000, Daviau was awarded the *Edouard-Marcel Sandoz Prize*, the most important distinction to an artist of the animal contemporary movement *Les Animaliers*. Other notable awards include a gold medal from the 'Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts' in 2013, a silver medal from Académie Arts Science et Lettre in 1999, and Société des Artistes Français, 1998, etc. In 2001, Daviau became the vice-president of the 'Salon National des Artistes Animaliers'.

More than 250 Daviau's sculptures have been included in private collections and foundations in European, American, Middle East and Asian.

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ABOUT GALERIE DUMONTEIL

Since 1982, Galerie Dumonteil has assumed a major role in the market of the figurative sculpture. Focusing on modern and contemporary art, Galerie Dumonteil has three gallery spaces in Paris, New York and Shanghai respectively. While the headquarters in Paris focuses on gathering a permanent collection of artifacts, the branches in New York and in Shanghai serve to preserve the zeitgeist of the Interwar Period and promote European artists from this epoch to both Chinese and American audiences through focused, themed exhibitions.

Established in 2008, Galerie Dumonteil's Shanghai branch, committed to strengthen the collaboration and professional ties within the art scene in Asia, is one of the first Western art galleries that has involved in the early stage of the burgeoning Chinese contemporary art.

Galerie Dumonteil is renowned for its group and solo exhibitions featuring artists who were active between the 1930s and 1970s such as François Pompon, Georges-Lucien Guyot, Rembrandt Bugatti, Diego Giacometti, Charles Artus, Marcel Dery, Pablo Picasso, Armand Petersen and Joseph Czaky. Through its extensive networking with artists and collectors, Galerie Dumonteil has become the leading gallery in terms of animal figures and objects depicting nature around the world. For more than 20 years, the gallery has devoted itself to the discovery of and promotion of talented contemporary artists. Today, artists such as Daniel Daviau, Jean-Marie Fiori, Helmut Koller, Eric Pillot, Jean-Claude Meynard, Rubén Fuentes, Hubert le Gall and Wang Keping, with their predecessors, share the walls of the gallery's three spaces in Paris, Shanghai and New York, creating a truly diverse group of objects for the appreciation of collectors.

Through a thoughtful selection of artists and objects which reflects the ideologies and aesthetics of the founders, Pierre and Dothi Dumonteil, the gallery builds up an unparalleled taste for its clients by showing selected French art from the 1930s as well as works by contemporary artists. Following the traditional model of marchand d'art, the gallery maintains a long term relationship with artists as their exclusive agent. The gallery's financial support for sculptors whom it has promoted has been exceptional. Putting much care into the management and distribution of the artist's works, Galerie Dumonteil out-stands from other art galleries due to its collaboration with artists' families, various foundations, and artists' estates. Furthermore, much more than a commercial gallery, Galerie Dumonteil, expanding its influence and involvement to other sectors of the art industry, not only offers bespoke art consultancy which aims to help clients form important and valuable collections but also leases objects to museums for special exhibitions.

Regularly collaborating with museums and numerous influential publications, Galerie Dumonteil has participated in multiple international fairs, including the Biennale des Antiquaires since 1990 and the PAD Paris/London since 1998. A member of the Comité professionnel des Galeries d'Art, Carré Rive Gauche, Compagnie Nationale des Experts, Syndicat National des Antiquaires, Galerie Dumonteil is a truly versatile and influential establishment.

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