

## *The Carnival of the Animals*

### Part I: Galerie Dumonteil Shanghai

Dates: 19 September 2020 – 31 October 31 2020

Address: Bldg 105, 199 Hengshan Road

Opening Hours: 11:00-19:00, Tuesday to Saturday

### Part 2: Shanghai Symphony Orchestra Concert Hall

Dates: 2020-2021 Musical Seasons

Address: 1380 Middle Fuxing Road

### Participating Artists:

Patrick BINTZ (b. 1953)

Daniel DAVIAU (b. 1962)

Marcel DERNY (1914-2003) | Estate

Tess DUMON (b. 1990)

Jean-Marie FIORI (b. 1952)

Roger GODCHAUX (1878-1958)

Georges MUGUET (1903-1988)

Eric PILLOT (b. 1968)

Ugo SCHILDGE (b. 1987)

Pierre VOITURIEZ (b. 1962)

WANG Keping (b. 1949)

Galerie Dumonteil is delighted to present *The Carnival of the Animals*, featuring 33 pieces/sets of works from 11 artists, covering sculpture, mixed media on panel, and photography. An attempt to tap into public space, the exhibition took place jointly at the gallery and the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra Concert Hall, creating a unique audio-visual experience for the audience. Also at the gallery, "*Hugo Deverchère: Preview - The Far Side*", a special solo project is held from September 11th to October 10th, 2020.

The exhibition is inspired by Dumonteil's long-lasting interest in animal art. Throughout the history of art, animals remained one of the most represented subjects — the single-line depiction of the prehistoric Lascaux caves, the source of symbolism in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, the attention to "humanity" after the First World War, and more diverse messages in today's art world. There has always been a desire for dialogue with the animals. This group exhibition serves both as a review of the creation of modern animal sculptures, and as a quest for the meaning and value of animal art in the contemporary context.

### *A Cross-Field Initiative with the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra*

The Carnival of the Animals also marks the collaboration between the gallery and the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra (SSO). Over the recent years, SSO has been actively transforming its wonton-shaped concert hall into a multiple-experience space combining classical music with various contemporary art forms. This time, it has become the temporary home for five monumental animal sculptures — Daniel DAVIAU's *Hippopotamus*, *Barnaby*, *Giraffe*, and *Canadian Moose* as well as Tess DUMON's *Mare and Her Foal* — spanning the whole 2020-2021 musical seasons. It is also worth mentioning that the exhibition title is inspired by French composer Charles Camille Saint-Saëns's renowned piece *Le carnaval des animaux (the Carnival of the Animals)*, aiming to bring art, music and joy to the public.

The animals have always fascinated us with their diversity and particularity. During the Renaissance, the Pope and kings competed to build their own menageries for the collection of exotic creatures – they were accessed by only a small number of artists, whose works then became a key channel for more people to learn about animals. When the zoo has frequented by the public for recreational purposes, artists' animal-themed works have assumed a new role – diverting our attention towards the living environment of wild animals and their close interconnections with the human society. With the establishment of animal protection consciousness and the popularization of art's power, the public attribute of animal-themed artworks has been further enhanced.

The cross-field collaboration between Galerie Dumonteil and SSO also manifests that good artworks should never be confined to the traditional "white box" presentation, as art can embrace the public sphere when the right condition is provided.

### ***The Modeling Art That Carries Souls and Attitudes***

An exhibition that highlights different kinds of sculptures, including bronze, sandstone, biscuit porcelain and wire mesh, *The Carnival of Animals* seeks to present the perceptual dialogues between different artists and the animals, as well as the sculptures themselves as independent artworks that embody the beauty of materials and the attitudes of their creators.

*The Hippo Family* by Daniel DAVIAU, displayed in the vitrine area, showcases the artist's mastery of patina as well as the elegance of lines. Using his works to freeze-frame animals, DAVIAU re-creates a poetic world in which all creatures are animistic and equal. The several sandstone pieces by Marcel DERNY forms a unique allegoric narrative. As a cross-generation artist, DERNY broke away from the constraints of the 19th century classics by returning to the essence of sculpture. With a touch of obscurity, Jean-Marie FIORI's biscuit porcelains create pure, dreamlike animal images that coincide his inner childlike sensibility. Tess DUMON's *Mare and Her Foal*, displayed at the building entrance of SSO, capture its audience with its light, shining and floating-like quality in contrast to its coarse, sharp materials, while depicting love — the most profound and universal emotion shared by humans and animals.

In addition to the dialogue between different sculpture materials, the exhibition also showcases bronze sculpture's plasticity in revealing other textures. For instance, Roger GODCHAUX's *Tomaï* retains the surface of the hand-modeled clay prototype with its extraordinarily soft lines perfectly corresponding to the piece's heart-warming theme, whereas WANG Keping's bronze sculptures reproduce the quality and essence of his wood carving, with the Chinese artist's several exhibited works from the *Bird* series combining the life essence of animal forms with the ultimate simplicity of calligraphy and brushwork.

In terms of curatorial display, it is noteworthy how the sculpture pieces interact with the panel works in space. FIORI's *Head of a Ara* and *Head of a Toucan* can be regarded as the spatial and thematic continuation of *The Lost Birds*, Ugo SCHILDGE's mixed media on panel — wild lives are disappearing in the seemingly beautiful jungle, we must act now to curb the ecological deterioration so that the carnival of the animals continues.

The exhibition hopes to bring the public attention to the global environment through the wonderful vision of "the celebration of the animals". The voice of art is more precious than ever as the world joins hands to overcome the current adversity. While the 32nd edition of La Biennale Paris has been postponed to 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, its organizers will co-host with Christie's an online auction offering more than 90 iconic works from 42 international galleries starting from September 24th to October 8th. Among them, Galerie Dumonteil Paris will also physically exhibit all its selected pieces during the online auction.