

LA LETTRE
ACADEMIE DES
BEAUX-ARTS



A BESTIARY OF THE ARTS

Editorial

The magnificent *Cynocephalus* adorning the cover of this edition of *La Lettre* emanates a feeling of peaceful strength true to the personality of its author, Pierre-Yves Trémois, the oldest member of the Académie des Beaux-Arts after being elected to Paul Lemangy's seat on 8 February 1978.

Through the insatiable curiosity and astounding energy that he brings to the table at the age of ninety-eight, Pierre-Yves Trémois shows us the extent to which artistic creation can be regenerative, especially when it is not seeking to conform to any passing trend. In May 2017 we elected forty-three year-old composer Bruno Mantovani to Jean Prodromidès' seat.

Watching the two passionately converse about art, we realized that the half century separating them was of no importance.

The Académie des Beaux-Arts is known for the immense aesthetic diversity running throughout its different sections.

This reality is in stark contrast with academicism.

Whether we elect figurative, abstract or conceptual plastic artists, tonal, atonal or electroacoustic music composers, or fictional or documentary filmmakers, the common ground between all these artists will always be excellence and openness to others.

The rich diversity of our Compagnie stems from the different and at times contrasting approaches to artistic creation pursued by its different members.

Its cohesiveness stems from a shared dedication to creation, combined with tolerance for visions that are often incongruous but nonetheless always respected. We therefore intend to fully assume our role as cultural adviser to the French government, ensuring that the will to democratize culture is achieved through an elevation of audiences' knowledge and not through the lowering of creative ambition.

Laurent Petitgirard, Permanent Secretary of the Académie des Beaux-Arts

Above: Pierre-Yves Trémois and Bruno Montovani. Photo LP / Académie des beaux-arts



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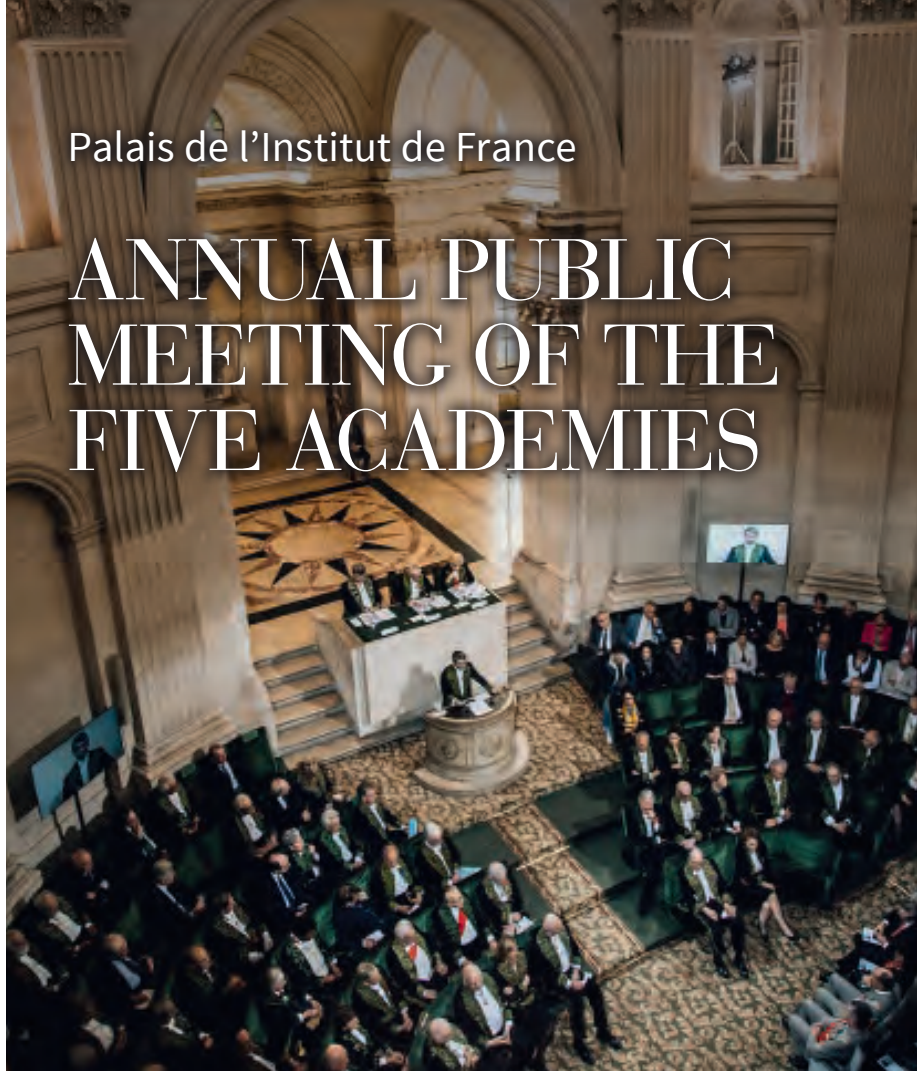
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Palais de l'Institut de France

ANNUAL PUBLIC MEETING OF THE FIVE ACADEMIES



Every year, on the Tuesday that falls closest to 25 October, the date of the creation of the Institut de France in 1795, the five academies composing it meet under the Coupole for their formal session to mark the beginning of the new academic year and to reaffirm their values and role in furthering and disseminating knowledge.

Members from the five academies deliver a speech on a single theme chosen collegially, approached from the angle of their specialty. The subject chosen for the 2018 annual public meeting of the five academies was “Astonishment”. Following the opening words by Jean-Louis Ferrary, president of the Institut de France and of the Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres, the programme consisted of the following talks: “Humankind: Astonishment before God” by the Chief Rabbi Haïm Korsia, a member of the Académie des sciences morales et politiques; “Astonishment along the enigmatic journey of the gaze” by Brigitte Terziev, member of the Académie des beaux-arts; “Science without astonishment is but a ruin” by Yves Agid, member of the Académie des sciences; “Before the dawn of the world: Medieval humans facing creation” by Jean-Yves Tilliette, member of the Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres; and “Neptune’s sleep” by Sir Michael Edwards, member of the Académie française.

Excerpt from the speech by Brigitte Terziev, member of the Sculpture section:

“Who, in the silence of a cave, has not dreamed of being the first person to discover that fabulous bestiary, those figures sketched on the rocky wall; of gazing upon the marks left behind by early humans and being able to sense their fragility, their ferocious fight against fear? A latecomer to the chronology of the species, humans expressed themselves, probably with unknown gods: they screamed, sang, danced, drew, coloured the ground or the wall with clay or coals from their torches, manganese dioxide, or iron oxide. This was the symbiosis of body and mind, but also proof that art has no boundaries in time. To our delight, it offers us this universal language, this invisible portal, one that links us with the spirit world. The lines of these paintings are affirmed in a way that leaves room for nothing other than the urgency of understanding and being understood; like a vision- or hearing-impaired person who conveyed the essence of their existence through the language of the plastic arts. Allow me to make a hypothetical comparison for you, a sort of sign language return to the source: How mind-blowing would it not be to find, in an underground hunter-gatherer cave, like a sudden shift in the tectonic plates of human memory, the visceral exuberance and cosmic touch of a Pollock, a Kooning, or a Basquiat? What sort of astonishing portal could take us to a neighbouring cave holding Picasso’s Guernica, side-by-side with a bull by our ancestors from thousands of years ago? ■

Above: Under the Coupole of the Palais de l'Institut de France, during the ceremony.

To the right: Brigitte Terziev, a member of the sculpture section, represented the Académie des beaux-arts. To her left are Sir Michael Edwards and Jean-Louis Ferrary, and to her right, the Chief Rabbi Haïm Korsia, Jean-Yves Tilliette, and Yves Agid. Photos by Ben Dauchez



ADRIEN GOETZ

On Wednesday, 5 December 2018, Adrien Goetz, elected to Pierre Dehaye's seat in the Unattached Members section on 17 May 2017, was welcomed by his fellow member, Hugues R. Gall, under the Coupole of the Palais de l'Institut de France.

Adrien Goetz, born in 1966, a former history student of the École normale supérieure, has a PhD in art history and is currently a professor at the faculty of arts of Sorbonne-Université. His research focuses primarily on the Romantic Period and Ingres' circle and pupils. He is the author of many novels that are often related to art, including among others *La dormeuse de Naples*, *Intrigue à l'anglaise*, and *Villa Kérylos*.

Adrien Goetz has received the François-Victor Noury Prize awarded by the Académie française, the Roger Nimier Prize, the Deux Magots Prize, and the Arsène Lupin Prize in crime literature. For ten years he acted as general secretary and then vice president of the non-profit Patrimoine sans frontières [Heritage without Borders]. He has written for multiple media publications and has a weekly column called *Les Arts* in the national daily *Le Figaro*. He is the editor-in-chief of *Grande Galerie*, *le Journal du Louvre* [the journal of the Louvre Museum].

From the speech by Hugues R. Gall:

“ Might my favourite of your novels, *La dormeuse de Naples*, not also be, in a sense, a novel on the Académie des beaux-arts? The heroine is a painting by Ingres, a matching piece of *La Grande Odalisque*, and on the last page Delacroix comes onto the scene, this time elected on his eighth attempt. Your novels often contain [...] a search for a missing piece: a painting that has disappeared, those couple of lengths of embroidered linen missing from the Bayeux Tapestry, the panels of a scattered polyptych that the hero of *Une petite légende dorée* has to reassemble [...]. *La dormeuse de Naples* is probably the fruit of a dream that you may have had after giving a series of lectures on Ingres, Corot, Géricault, and Delacroix. It's nothing like those historical fiction books built on piles of notes and scholarly digressions. It's a novel that shines because you wrote it after reading all the books, and one can sense the passion in it. [...]



Being a writer is also what enables you to remain engaged and fight your battle. For ten years, at Patrimoine sans frontières, alongside its president Béatrice de Durfort, you passionately defended the idea that cultural heritage consists of more than just Venetian museums. You went into the Albanian mountains; you were blown away by the patterns of the Khmer weavers wiped out by the Cambodian revolution, or by the architecture of musgum mud huts in Cameroon. By being active in countries that were barely stepping out of wars, you contributed to establishing the idea that we have to protect cultural heritage as soon as the wounded have been given the first convoys of medical supplies. [...] You fought to ensure that the management of the Opéra de Paris didn't tear down the walls of the booths of the Palais Garnier to fit in more seats, which would have transformed this unique and perfect work of art so dear to me into a moneymaking machine. And all of your outrage has carried weight because it has come from a well-loved and respected writer ■

To the left: Adrien Goetz next to the Permanent Secretary of the Académie, Laurent Petitgirard, and Hugues R. Gall.

Above: with his fellow members from the Unattached Members section, Hugues R. Gall, Henri Loyrette, Muriel Mayette, Patrick de Carolis, and Professor François-Bernard Michel.

Photos: Juliette Agnel

Jean-Jacques Annaud welcoming his fellow member and friend Jacques Perrin.

Photos: Patrick Rimond



JACQUES PERRIN

On 6 February, Jacques Perrin, elected to Francis Girod's seat in the section Artistic Creation in Cinema and Audio-visual, was welcomed by his fellow member Jean-Jacques Annaud under the Coupole of the Palais de l'Institut de France.

Jacques Perrin, born in Paris in 1941, was admitted to the Conservatoire National d'Art Dramatique at the age of 17. Valerio Zurlini discovered him in *L'année du Bac*, directed by Yves Robert, and took him on alongside Claudia Cardinale in *La ragazza con la valigia* [*Girl with a Suitcase*], which marked his beginnings in film. Later, he played Marcello Mastroianni's brother in *Caro Diario* [*Dear Diary*]. In 1964 he filmed *La 317^e section* [*The 317th Platoon*] along with Pierre Schoendoerffer, followed by Costa-Gavras' first film *Compartiment tueurs* [*The Sleeping Car Murders*]. In 1966 he returned to Italy to film Vittorio de Seta's *Un uomo a metà* [*Almost a Man*] (Volpi Cup for Best Actor at the Venice Film Festival in 1967). In the same year he played Maxence, Jacques Demy's Sailor in *Les demoiselles de Rochefort* [*The Young Girls of Rochefort*], and then Prince Charming in *Peau d'âne* [*Donkey Skin*] in 1970.

At the age of 27, Jacques Perrin became a producer with Costa-Gavras's film *Z* (Academy Awards for the Best Foreign Film and Best Film Editing in 1967). Their collaboration continued with *Section spéciale* [*Special Section*] (Best Director award at the Cannes Film Festival in 1976). In the same year he produced *Le désert des tartares* [*The Desert of the Tartars*], based on the novel by Buzzati and directed by Valerio Zurlini; Jean-Jacques Annaud's first film, *La victoire en chantant* [*Black and White in Colour*] (Academy Award for Best Foreign Film in 1977); and went back to working with Pierre Schoendoerffer to film *Le Crabe-tambour* [*Drummer-Crab*] and *L'honneur d'un capitaine* [*A Captain's Honour*]. Jacques Perrin later met Gérard Vienne, who introduced him to animal documentary film-making and guided him along the path of nature with *Le peuple singe* [*The Monkey Folk*]. In 1994 he started on the production of Claude Nuridsany's and Marie Pérenou's *Microcosmos, le peuple de l'herbe* [*Microcosmos – People of the Grass*], which received five

César Awards, including for Best Director in 1997; followed by *Himalaya, l'enfance d'un chef* [*Himalaya*] by Éric Valli and *Le peuple migrateur* [*Winged Migration*] in 2001, co-directed with Jacques Cluzaud and Michel Debats. Close collaboration was established with Bruno Coulais, who composes all of the musical scores for his films. In summer 2003, Jacques Perrin produced Christophe Barratier's first film, *Les Choristes* [*The Chorus*], with Gérard Jugnot and François Berléand, which was a huge success, winning the César Award in 2005 for Best Original Music.

It took five years of filming to produce *Océans* [*Oceans*] (César Award for Best Documentary in 2011), co-directed with Jacques Cluzaud, with whom Jacques Perrin got back together shortly afterwards to produce *Les saisons* [*Seasons*]. This film came out in 2016, along with Christophe Barratier's *L'outsider* [*Team Spirit*]. Gilles de Maistre's *Mia et le lion blanc* [*Mia and the White Lion*] was his most recent production.

Excerpts from the speech by Jean-Jacques Annaud:

"Zurlini would be Jacques' first 'film school'. Zurlini was making films that were very different from those of the new wave unfurling on French screens. Valerio didn't move his camera to follow the movement of bodies or to be stylish, but to film the movement of feelings, to move closer or more distant, to look straight on or to choose to film from behind to accompany an shift of emotions. [...] The door to his second great film school opened up unexpectedly and was completely opposite to the first. His new mentor was a Frenchman, a mentor who from 1988 to 2012 was a member of our Cinema and Audio-visual section. His name was Pierre Schoendoerffer. [...] A third great encounter would lead to a turning point in Jacques' life. He'd 'already done the actor thing' in Konstantin Costa-Gavras's two films, *Compartiment tueurs* [*The Sleeping Car Murders*] and *Un homme de trop* [*Shock Troops*]. Costa-Gavras offered him a role in his next project, called *Z*, which was really dear to his heart, because it talked about the dictatorship of the colonels that came to power in Greece while he was growing up. It was a perfect setting, and therefore obviously one that no producer wanted anything to do with..." ■

FORMAL SESSION OF



Top: Laurent Petitgirard conducted the Colonne Orchestra, playing works by Lili Boulanger and Johannes Brahms.

Above: The laureates of numerous prizes and contests gathered in the courtyard of the Palais de l'Institut de France.

Centre: under the Coupole.

Photos: Juliette Agnel

Prizes and contests. During the annual public session of the Académie, approximately fifty prizes are awarded to acknowledge artists in all disciplines, as well as the authors of works dedicated to art. By doing so, young generations of artists are encouraged to persevere along the often-difficult path of art. These prizes are awarded by juries composed of members of our Académie as well as outside personalities involved in the discipline in question.

In addition to these prizes, the Académie provides personalized support to artists, based on social criteria. It thus accompanies more than one hundred artists every year in their creative process, granting them valuable support at the beginning of their career.

In 2018 the Académie distributed, from its own funds and those of the Institut de France, on its proposal and with its backing, approximately fifty prizes to a total value of €435,000. To this must be added €502,000 from the Commission des aides et encouragements and €225,000 in grants to artists.

The detailed list of prizes and contests is attached to this issue of *La Lettre de l'Académie des beaux-arts* and can be consulted on the website www.academie-des-beaux-arts.fr.

Palais de l'Institut de France

THE ACADEMIE DES BEAUX-ARTS

The formal sitting of the Académie des beaux-arts took place on 21 November under the Coupole of the Institut de France. After president Patrick de Carolis paid tribute to members of the Compagnie no longer present, vice president Pierre Carron announced the 2018 award-winners, acknowledging approximately fifty artists, whether well-established or just starting out their career, in the fields of drawing, painting, sculpting, engraving, architecture, musical composition, photography and architectural works.

By encouraging all forms of artistic creation, the Académie is contributing to renewing generations of artists, and is positioning itself as a major patron and a key player in promoting France's cultural influence. During this session – punctuated by musical interludes by the choir Les Métaboles and the Colonne orchestra –, the Permanent Secretary of the Académie, Laurent Petitgirard, gave a talk on the subject “Is Interpreting Creation?”

Excerpt from Laurent Petitgirard's speech:

“Writers, poets, painters, sculptors, engravers, composers, or photographers initially create in solitude, without the need for a performer. Their work is complete, regardless of whether or not it becomes known, and can even emerge long after their death. Theatre directors, filmmakers, or choreographers create directly with the support of their interpreters, which makes the relationship between creation and interpreting much more ambiguous. Architects no longer exist in isolation: they manage an office that at times contains dozens or even hundreds of co-workers. And even if they are in control of the whole project, launch the initial “architectural act”, and define the design of the work, implementing all of this requires the involvement of their entire team. Next comes the involvement of a multitude of professions before the project will emerge from the earth or the water. Within the same art form, creators can produce their work through a different approach, depending on whether it stems from nothing or is based on a pre-existing subject. Composing a symphony with complete freedom, an opera following a booklet, or a film soundtrack to support the image, will lead composers on different creative paths that will generate a wide variety of constraints on the interpretation.

Painters have no interpreter because, regardless of the importance of the layout of paintings at an exhibition or a gallery, there is no real “interpretation” by the curator or gallery owner.

A founder making the bronze work for a sculptor has very little room to manoeuvre; he must be completely true to the original moulding, and his work is more that of an artisan than a performer. Engravers manage the entire production chain of their work. Poets will essentially be read, at times defended by bold comedians, and at times even botched up by themselves...

Thanks to the invention of audio recording more than a century ago, we can now hear Sarah Bernhardt in Phèdre, Guillaume Apollinaire reciting his own work, “Sous le pont Mirabeau coule la Seine” [“Under the Mirbeau Bridge flows the Seine” – English translation by Richard Wilbur], or Jean Mounet-Sully reciting Œdipe-Roi [“Oedipus the King”]. But not without surprises!

Because it's true that in music in particular, creators are not necessarily the best interpreters of their own work, especially when they don't have the technical proficiency necessary to convey it under in the best conditions”. ■



Above: Les Métaboles, winner of the Liliane Bettencourt prize for choir vocals, marked the ceremony with works by Vytautas Miškinis, Éric Whitacre, and Maurice Ravel, conducted by Léo Warynski.

Photos: Juliette Agnel

Musée Marmottan Monet

“ORIENTAL VISIONS: FROM DREAMS INTO LIGHT”

The Musée Marmottan Monet, a museum owned by the Académie des beaux-arts, will be running the exhibition “Oriental Visions: From Dreams into Light” from 7 March to 21 July 2019. This is a journey to the beginnings of Modern Art, in which European painters, through the experience of travel, transitioned from a fantasized Orient to an experience of dazzling light.

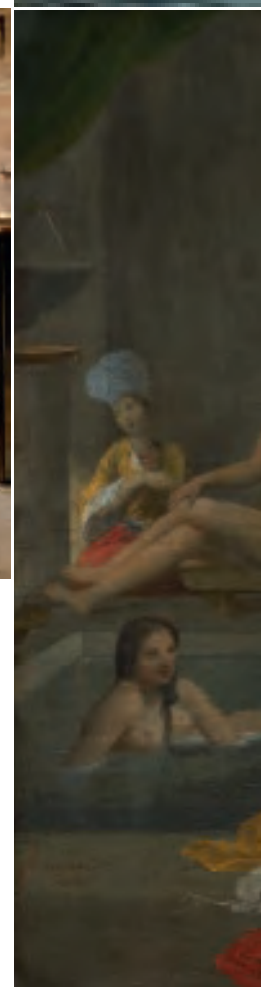
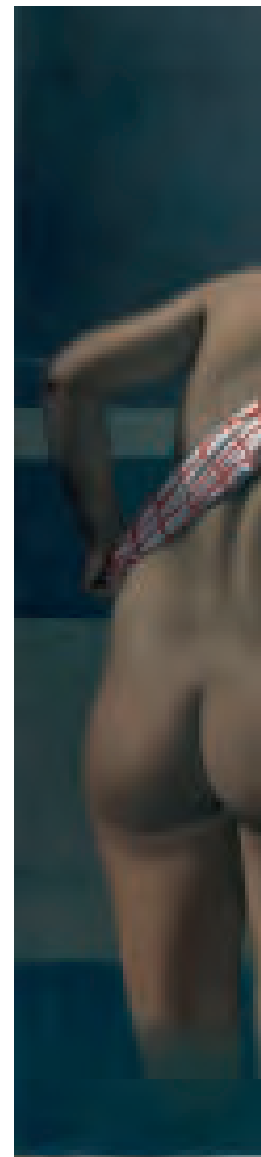
With approximately sixty masterpieces from the most important public and private collections in Europe and the United States (musée du Louvre, musée d’Orsay, musée des Augustins de Toulouse, Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus in Munich, the Thyssen-Bornemisza collection in Madrid, the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, and the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute in Williamstown), this exhibition’s goal is to use this journey to reveal a new perspective on these works.

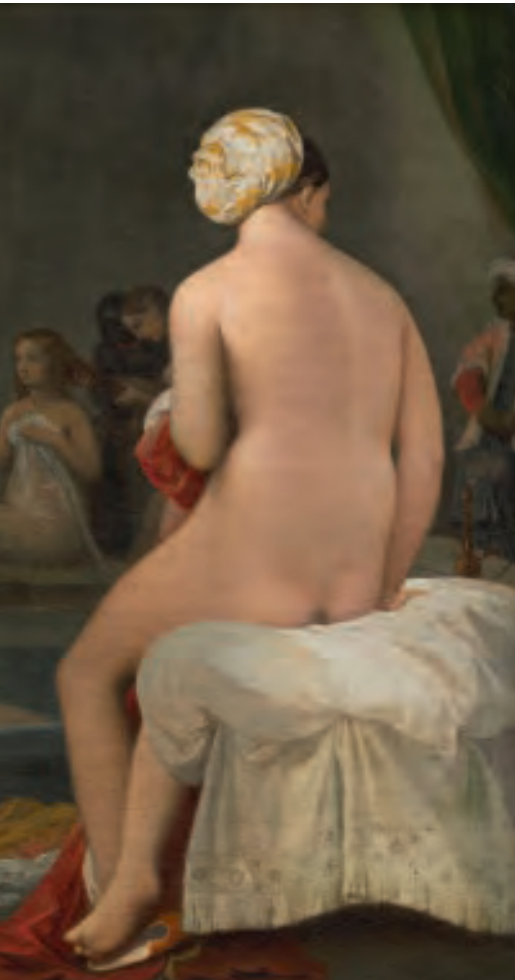
Inspired by the Napoleonic conquests, European painters imagined the Orient before turning their dreams to reality through travel. A fantasy surrounding Oriental femininity nevertheless endured: that of the odalisque or concubine, which continued to inspire painters from Ingres and Delacroix to the beginnings of modern art.

The “school of travel” moreover contributed knowledge on architecture and decorative arts that progressively pushed classicism towards the use of geometric shapes, leading to a certain harmony between the human body and the abstract ornament, from Gérôme and Landelle to Vallotton, Migonney, Bernard, or even Matisse.

Additionally, the experience of the landscape and outdoor scenes from daily life spawned new practices and hastened the emancipation of colour. Under the dazzling light of the Orient and faced with unfamiliar scenes, artists invented new ways of painting. From Fromentin’s or Lazerges’ landscapes to the first inklings of modern art, from the impressionists and neo-impressionists to the Fauves, Kandinsky, and Klee, colour was progressively liberated from photographic exactitude. In that sense the birth of abstraction took place through the Orient, and this exhibition affords an opportunity to discover certain lesser-known aspects of the birth of modern art. ■

Curator: Emmanuelle Amiot-Saulnier, PhD in art history.





Top: Félix-Édouard Vallotton (1865-1925), *Le bain turc* [*The Turkish Bath*], 1907, oil on canvas, 130.5 x 195.5 cm. City of Geneva, Musées d'art et d'histoire. © Musées d'art et d'histoire, City of Geneva, photo: Bettina Jacot-Descombes

Below, from left to right:

Maurice Bompard (1857-1936), *Une rue de l'oasis de Chetma*, 1890, oil on canvas, 140 x 160 cm. Marseille, Musée des beaux-arts. © City of Marseille, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Jean Bernard

Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1780-1867), *La petite baigneuse*, also known in French as *Intérieur de harem* [English: *The Small Bather*], 1828, oil on canvas, 35 x 27 cm. Paris, Musée du Louvre. Photo © RMN-Grand Palais (Musée du Louvre) / Michel Urtado

Vassily Kandinsky (1866-1944), *Oriental*, 1909, oil, gouache, and watercolour on cardboard, 70 x 97.5 cm. Munich, Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus und Kunstbau. © Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus und Kunstbau München

subject file

A BESTIA

Image from the film *Les Saisons* (2016) co-produced by Jacques Perrin and Jacques Cluzaud

RY OF THE ARTS



Letter to Pierre-Yves Trémois

But in this piece, what first touched the naturalist that I am to the core was the importance that it gave to animal life, the way in which it is integrated into the world of humans.

Trémois sees more in animals than just an object of interest or visual recreation. He identifies with them, as if he physically, carnally, felt our kinship with them. It seems like he is experiencing, in his own way, the famous words that Darwin spoke as he pondered over animals: "We may be all melted together". Nowhere does this kinship, this fraternity with beasts, better shine through than in the realm of sexuality. The ubiquity of love is one of natural history's fundamental themes. A blind quest for pleasure from which life will come, the tension of instinct towards fleeting satisfaction, voracity for the other, the need to intertwine with another who is not quite identical to ourselves: all that which is familiar to humans and in which they recognize themselves has inspired some of Trémois' most fascinating compositions. He is peerless when it comes to setting in stone the mating of toads, the embrace of salamanders, the aerial coupling of fireflies. In recent years, Trémois has graced me with illustrations for some of my own texts. And to my surprise I found that, through his drawing, he had been able to say things that I had not said with words. Whosoever could translate to prose the images that Trémois gifts us with, would find therein material to write fine pages."

Jean Rostand, February 1971



Above: Trémois, *Crapauds accouplés*, 1953, monotype, 30 x 42 cm.

Left and top: Trémois, *Le Singe*, *Le Dromadaire*, *Le Mammouth* and *Le Caméléon*, engravings from the illustrated coffee table book *Le Bestiaire solaire*, by André and Pierre Gonin (eds), Lausanne, 1975





MY “SOLAR BESTIARY”

By **Trémois**, member of the engraving section

Be they divine, religious, fabulous, imaginary or descriptive, bestiaries have existed from time immemorial. At the dawn of thought, they were imagined, drawn, engraved, written on impulse, drive, love or fear of animals, by humans, in a context of magic or religion. The Near East, Asia, and Africa were their cradle.

Since the magic rituals of Altamira, where the worship of the warring Bull God was inscribed on cave walls for eternity. Since Mithra-Hero-Sacrificer immolating his bull, that animal God, that God of Sun and Moon, bestower of the generative seed, who later, much later, became the Mystical Lamb. Then came our obsessive memories and last came “Morals”, truly invented by humans, slipped in to subjugate them, obliterating magical animal incantations. And finally bestiaries were gradually reduced to moralizing fables.

Yet, a new worship was born: that of the image. Despite billions of photographed images of animals, photo safaris, films, television, countless scientific incursions to crack the mysteries of the animal realm, it remains an enigma. Retaining its aristocratic, mythical distance, be it anthropomorphic or not, it screams our wildest dreams out to us.

Did Henry de Montherlant not make the choir in his admirable *Pasiphaé* say, “I sometimes wonder if the absence of thought

and the absence of speech largely contribute to the great dignity of beasts, plants and water”. And did he not write, in his introduction to one of my latest exhibitions, “The animal realm attracts Trémoi and the human realm. But above all, engravings in which these two realms unite move the author of *Pasiphaé*. Some say they are ‘murky’ when they are crystal clear, and ‘troubling’ when there is sublime peace in the two realms reconciled by shared felicity”.

As for the mythical side, did Hesiod, Bidpai, Aristotle, Pliny and Oppian not draw abundantly from the depths, from the beastly dawns of the Persians, Sassanids, Hindus, Egyptians, Chinese, etcetera? But since then, what a collection of moralizing bestiaries there has been!

My goal when illustrating this present menagerie was to bring together or to try to reconcile “two realms”: the calligraphic and the graphic. Thus, for the companion texts to the ten chosen animal images, a pilgrimage to the origins of primordial alphabets was fitting. It even served as a pretext for this Solar Bestiary.. ■

Since time immemorial and almost everywhere, bird song has served as a model for human music. The Ancient Greeks, like Alcman, and the few Kaluli who have survived in Papua agree on this point: they recognize their debt. It is therefore useless to list our own trophies, as Janequin, Rameau and Messiaen were merely the brilliant illustrators of a long established truth. Thus, in closely linking recordings of birds, transcriptions of these recordings and instrument scores, as I have done for half a century, I innovated only with respect to the degree of precision brought to this endeavour. And in founding zoo-musicology, my aim was to try to understand how birds acquired such prestige. The first enigma that their songs present concerns their musical superiority. The best singing species construct individual repertoires, elaborate polyphonic practices amongst neighbours, and make use of imitation that increases in complexity as it grows in virtuosity. They can transpose, adorn and vary their patterns. This is an unnecessary luxury, as most other birds can reproduce very well without it.

The hierarchy that humans have established between living beings would have chimpanzees, for instance, be the better musicians, while birds should hardly babble. Yet no: the very few singing mammals – wolves, gibbons, whales – are overall inferior to the some 300 truly musical species of birds when it comes to inventions in sound. It seems that evolution has erred, or is not on the right key here. On some obscure level, this dilemma appears to have troubled humanity forever. More often than not, humans have settled for another hypothesis: birds sing because the gods have bestowed this role upon them. Their songs and their flight serve as messengers (*angeloi*) from heaven. When drawing inspiration from them, the composer, much like the shaman, is attempting to make contact with the world beyond. But without reaching for these heights from the outset, can listening to animal voices at the very least be a heuristic method, and can the analysis of the sounds chosen as models work as a source of “good ideas”? Wrong way – music is not only the elaboration of a “language”, be it new or not; it is also partially an actuation of a biological function, which may or may not collaborate with creative freedom. We cannot confine the act of listening to animal song to the field of the picturesque or of the pastoral, for it reflects back on our self and our own animality, of which a whole heritage has essentially tried to abstract and liberate us.

The opposition between man and nature is a Greek and biblical heritage. It retained considerable weight in European civilization



until man-made destruction started seeming even more dangerous than the hazards of nature. As a general consequence, the mission of arts, and of music in particular, is changing. Instead of expressing something beyond language and extolling the supremacy that mankind was so certain was its right, they may now be destined to a disquieted search for reconciliation and harmonization with the forces that humans have vainly brutalized, yet without ever being able to fully escape them. Music as an enhanced and so-called universal language might have to make room for more modesty. Its claim to be a pure convention built on random signs, and perhaps even that this may grant it supremacy over the other arts, those that are still under the rule of representation, no longer holds.

When it is brought into contact with the more or less rudimentary forms that it sometimes takes in the animal world, music also appears to be one of our species' functions – much like breathing and movement – and, moreover, an underpinning of intelligence in the broadest sense. Questioning sound as a composer does is a way to better understand the world we live in, and therefore to live better in it. Referring back to animal

LIKE THE LETTERS OF AN ALPHABET

Interview with **G rard Garouste**, member of the Painting section
By **Hortense Lyon**

Hortense Lyon: Do you take particular pleasure in painting animals?

G rard Garouste: Great pleasure, I have an infinite interest in animals. As much as I love to warp, disarticulate and sometimes ridicule the human body – and singularly my own – I always respect the anatomy of animals. I thus honour their surprising qualities, their formal diversity and a strangeness that fascinates me.

H.L.: The animals that you paint are often accompanied by texts, myths or fables.

G.G.: I have indeed drawn from the Greek mythology's bestiary as well as Aesop's and La Fontaine's fables, where animals are used as metaphors for human character traits. In our imagination, a lion does not represent the same thing as a fox or a donkey. Strength, cunning, laziness, are all character traits that can be translated into animal terms, by means of these tales that have shaped our collective memory. I have used this anthropomorphism while simultaneously trying to subvert it. I also use my own story... Be they real or chimeric, I truly take pleasure in appropriating this type of representation that allows me to skip from one register to the next and from one myth to the next. On canvas, my works intertwine. In recent years they have revolved more around biblical myths and tales from the Talmud, legends whose origins are lost in the mists of time.

H.L.: On the other hand, if we were to write a history of your bestiary and look for the original animal, it would be the dog. The dog holds an important place in your work, where it is a recurrent figure; what does it mean to you?

G.G.: The first mythical function of the dog is that of a psychopomp, a companion during the day and a guide for the dead in the night. The dog follows its nose. It is used to wandering. It represents the intuition that seeks its way in the forest, which for me is similar to the initiatory journey of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, from which I drew inspiration in the late 1980s. I really like this metaphor of crossing through darkness. The idea is to not be content with what we already know. The traveller is confronted with uncertainty; accepting it means agreeing to question oneself and to go beyond oneself. I have fed on Greek and Latin mythology: from *Orion* in the early 1980s to *Actaeon*, the dog has accompanied me. In a recent exhibition at the *Mus e*

de la Chasse et de la nature devoted to the myth of Diana and Acteon, the dog has a completely different function. I let my imagination run wild. My interpretation of the vengeance of dogs is a departure from the classical version.

H.L.: This animal guided by its nose – where did it take you?

G.G.: Dante, Rabelais, Cervantes, Goethe have accompanied me, but in recent years I have focused my approach on biblical myths, the philosophical and poetic dimension of which I admire. I am immersed in the study of the Torah, which is inseparable from the Talmud, and I rely on the philosophy of its masters. God's word is a pretext for discussion and dialogue. The goal is to settle things between people. It is a call to tolerance and introspection. For a painter like myself, it is an inexhaustible supply of images and reflection whose starting point is often an irrational or even absurd situation, which is very much to my liking.

*H.L.: One of the occurrences of the dog is that of your dog Basile in a strange painting: *The centaur and the bird's nest*.*

G.G.: For fun, I represented a very real dog, my own, in an extravagant situation, and associated it with other stories. I borrowed from many places: the centaur from Greek mythology, the vase from Herg 's comic book *The Blue Lotus*, the bird's nest from Talmudic thought. Much like the crossing of the forest, the theme of the bird's nest is linked to travelling and the journey of thought. It comes from the *Chullin* treatise (folio 139b) which proposes a comment from the following verse: "If you come across a bird's nest with chicks or eggs, you may take the young, but be sure to let the mother go, so that it may be well with you and that you may prolong your days". This enigmatic verse (Deuteronomy 22:6) has given rise to very complex comments depending on whether the nest is on the side of a road, in a tree, on the sea, in the air, on or in one's head... In discussing the place of the nest and the mother's ousting, commentators raised fundamental questions. The comments that my friend Marc-Alain Ouaknin made on this verse inspired me to paint *The Rabbi and the Bird's Nest*, in which he is depicted wearing a nest of birds-of-paradise and making a gesture that is peculiar to Talmudists. Part of the Talmud consists of tales and legends that are mostly presented in incomprehensible forms: proposals that are at once abstruse and poetic, and make me want to create images. For me, what matters is what we do with these stories



Gérard Garouste, *The Rabbi and the bird's nest*, 2013, oil on canvas, 162 x 130 cm. Private collection

and how we can enrich the base of existing interpretations. In paintings, there are intertwined links between Christian myths, the Talmud and ancient Greece in a network of references and correspondences, as for instance in the fable of the Lion and the Stork, which is common to the Talmud, Aesop and La Fontaine.

H.L.: Other animals accompany you, like the donkey, another recurrent figure in your bestiary.

G.G.: I give an important place to this animal, whose legendary wisdom refutes the stupidity whereby some characterize it. I was successively inspired by Goya's series of *Proverbs*, Jean de la Fontaine and his *Ass Carrying an Image* in *The Blind Librarians....* In *Balaam*, I address the biblical theme of the animal that is sensitive to spirituality. In the Book of Numbers, Chapter XXII, the donkey of Balaam is the only one capable of hearing the divine word. This is why the attribute of the Talmudic masters is the white jenny, a sign of mystical wisdom. At the time of the looting of the second temple in Jerusalem, it was rumoured that Jews worshipped a god in the shape of a golden donkey. In reality the centre of the temple was empty and this emptiness was simply unthinkable for idolaters. With its big ears, the

donkey is the one who listens and knows how to do without the sight of idols. In the Bible, hearing refers to a relationship to the world that is not idolatrous and points the way to freedom. When Moses came down from the mountain with the Tablets, it is said that the Hebrews "saw the voices". This relationship between hearing and sight fascinates me. Tracing its occurrences in my paintings, one can see the donkey become richer in meaning as my career advances. There are more than a thousand of them in *Warsaw bridge and the donkeys...*

H.L.: As a painter, what does practising Hebrew in reading the Scripture bring you?

G.G.: More than reading in the traditional sense, it is about decoding and interpreting legends so ancient that they aggregate, sometimes in different versions, multiple contributions and myths from other cultures. What I learned from Hebrew was another way of reading. The root of a Hebrew word is usually three letters long. Reading requires an analysis that consists in associating or swapping these letters to reveal other possible meanings and combinations. For example, "donkey" is "HAMOR" in Hebrew, which also means "matter". >>>

>>> By swapping these letters, the word “donkey” refers to the word “HEREM”, which means “anathema”. The text thus opens up to other meanings and new interpretations. There is no dictionary *per se* in Hebrew, the existence of every word is based on previous occurrences. The text feeds on itself; as a word can be inserted between each letter, a story between each word, it swells from within. In the Talmudic spirit, commentary is added onto commentary and one quotes one’s masters. Meaning is never univocal but is rather revealed through infinite cross-references of occurrences and associations. Relatively speaking, I paint in the same spirit. From a fable, I feed on correspondences between words, symbols, colors and anything that can enrich interpretation. So in my bestiary, I no longer use animals for what they represent or symbolize, I use them as letters of an alphabet. This leads me to forget about representation in favor of a set of codes and signs that refer to a language. These signs take the form of the lion, rooster, eagle-owl, snail, giraffe, magpie, crow, goose, snake, frog... One day a frog bigger than a village is eaten by a snake that is in turn eaten by a crow. A master who witnessed the scene says: “had I not seen it with my own eyes, I would never have believed it”. This Haggadah by Talmudic master Raba Bar Bar Hana inspired me to paint *La Grenouillerie*. The interest of this story lies less in the tale itself than in each individual letter and word that compose it. In my paintings I often bring together pieces of stories from different traditions. Their sometimes delirious aspect comes from my delight in reading and linking these different texts so as to raise questions. The construction of these images is not a surrealist assemblage but a semantic game built on rigorous rules.

H.L.: In such a labyrinth, how can the spectator find their way around?

G.G.: My painting, if it serves its purpose, will raise questions for the spectators as interpreters, and their comments will echo what I was pondering over. The myths from which my paintings are woven never cease to be decoded. Successive questions and interpretations enrich a thought that is constantly in motion. Heraclitus used the metaphor of the river in which you never bathe twice. Rabelais compared words to flints that are rubbed together to create sparks of meaning. But it would be a mistake to take things too seriously. In these games of language and interpretation, one should not forget the poetic dimension and the element of humor. I am currently studying a short story by Kafka with Marc-Alain Ouaknin, about a marten strolling about on the wall of a synagogue... ■



MY OWN BEASTS!

By **Vladimir Velickovic**, member of the Painting section



“ What matters most in my painting is the human figure, man lost in an imaginary space. But he is often surrounded by animals. My own bestiary is made of dogs, rats, a few raptors: rather aggressive, violent animals.

My drawings, paintings, and sculptures have never been “a pleasure for the eyes”, according to comments they have elicited from the beginning of my career. What I paint and draw speaks of the world around us. I feel like my work is a form of resistance. The dog was present in my drawings and paintings from the beginning. I represent its movements: it is all bones and muscles, and bears witness to what seems to me to be the most vital energy, that which consists in running, in fleeing the unknown, which is like rushing through the time that devours us. That was the *Variation on the theme of a self-portrait* series.

The raven is a scavenger. Its flight is never candid and it knows no rest. As a predator, it watches, spots its prey; it is about to spring into action. Its plumage is black, ink black, black as the fate it promises its victim.


The rat is the last of the survivors of an ending world. It is aggressive, an inhabitant of the underworld. *Experiment* is the

title of several drawings and paintings. The rat is as instrument, serving as a guinea pig for scientific research. It may also take on other roles in which it is no longer the victim but the aggressor. In the *Aggressions* series, it attacks.

As for the original wound that led me to these “choices”, it is the torment of humans who cannot escape their destiny. They flee to nowhere. They are lost, helpless in the face of the blindness of violence that has reigned and dominated the world since the beginning of humanity; reason is of no help to them. That is the foundation of my oeuvre. But I will not accept the comments of those who equate the violence depicted in my images to the violence that humans ceaselessly inflict on humans.” ■

Top: Vladimir Velickovic, *Chien n° 22, variation sur le thème d'un autoportrait*, 1972, oil, pencil and chalk on canvas, 195 x 365 cm.

Cnap Collection



THE MUSÉE DE LA CHASSE ET DE LA NATURE: TOEING THE BOUNDARY BETWEEN MAN AND BEAST

Meet **Claude d'Anthenaise**, Head Curator of heritage,
Head of the Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature
By **Nadine Eghels**

Nadine Eghels: François and Jacqueline Sommer, its founders, designed the Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature as an “art lover’s house” and its collections are, initially, traditional craft. Your deliberately contemporary cultural programme addresses themes that have been present throughout the museum’s journey by presenting works of creators who deal with animality. What thought process led you to this bold approach?

Claude d'Anthenaise: I used to hunt and I arrived here over twenty years ago. At that time the President of the Foundation was a former banker who had been put there by Jacqueline Sommer. He had devoted his efforts to improving the Foundation’s financial resources but had not been involved in its subject matter at all. It functioned as a private club of hunters, and the museum was rather secluded, serving as a backdrop for club meetings. In accordance with the founder’s wishes, the president completed the acquisition of the adjoining building and I was asked to fit it out, which is how I got here.

N.D.: What did this task consist of?

C.d.A.: This task quickly proved to be exciting, because it involved reflection on repositioning the museum. A museum, yes, but what museum, for what purpose, for what audience? I set up a scientific committee composed of philosophers, anthropologists, sociologists, writers, artists, and so on. This phase was a bit informal, but everyone laid out their ideal vision of the future museum. It soon became apparent that the most interesting thing would be to put the question of hunting in a broader perspective, that of the history of the relationship between man and animals in Western culture.

N.D.: Why choose this geographical limit?

C.d.A.: One of our collectors had gathered hunting objects from all continents but it had a “curiosity cabinet” side to it. We preferred to take a more anthropological approach, and to deepen the reflection by limiting it to the Western world – which in itself is a vast programme. We were fortunate that the Foundation accepted this evolution, which involved taking a step away from the club.

At that time, two other museums with public collections were interested in hunting and were considering undergoing renovations: the Musée de la Vénérerie in Senlis and the International Hunting Museum in Gien. We concerted all together with a representative from the Musées de France to split this field between us, in terms of collections and of angle of approach.

A practical museum on hunting would clearly not have been very relevant in the heart of Paris. The provincial museums therefore focused on this aspect – how we hunt – and we kept the more philosophical and anthropological question – why we hunt – for ourselves.

Based on the collection, as it had been built up over the centuries, it seemed rather difficult to deal with this subject, because François Sommer and the previous curators were very interested in 18th century art and had assembled an extraordinary collection focused on this period. I managed to convince my council of the need, in order to best serve our approach, to expand the collection, to make it more balanced, and therefore to buy and commission works, since we had to illustrate the relationship between humans and animals in contemporary society.

Since our reopening in 2007, the presence of contemporary art, and specifically the fact that our programming is focused on the relationship with animals through the lens of contemporary art, has boosted attendance: we've gone from 7,000 visitors per year, a family audience tightly linked to the club, to over 120,000 visitors today. The theme is of interest to the Parisian public. This can be seen more widely in literature and in major exhibitions: there is now a real interest in everything that touches on the boundary between humans and animals, among artists, philosophers and writers, and among the public as well.

N.D.: How did you design the museography?

C.d.A.: To illustrate this theme, it was essential to avoid classical museography... And I didn't want an educational museum. I think that with a museum of this type, if you do educational stuff or propaganda, no one hears you. The challenge was to catch the visitor's attention with emotion, atmosphere, subtlety, humour... In short, to overcome preconceived ideas in order to arouse their curiosity and make them ask questions. It was exciting reflection to carry out and implement. And I think the result is working well.

N.D.: How do you choose artists? How do they react to your proposals?

C.d.A.: I'm a happy curator. When I started going around approaching artists in 2005, it was quite difficult to convince them because the museum was at best unknown, at worst perceived as a place of propaganda for hunting. Nowadays, artists are generally up for it.

N.D.: What are your selection criteria?

C.d.A.: In this world of contemporary art, I claim to be "the village idiot". I'm looking for artists who're into emotion, rather than trendy concepts. I like it when they have a connection to the hand, to the gesture, to the craft, when it's not all about ideas. At the end of the day, I want the result of their work in the museum to be beautiful, moving, even if that's not their primary goal.

N.D.: How does it work? Do they choose the spot in which their work will be displayed? Do they have carte blanche?

C.d.A.: I am very constraining, I think it frees up creativity. And since I don't want everything and anything to be done in this



N.D.: Are you still in this process of commissioning works?

C.d.A.: Yes, of course! This aspect was really thriving between 2005 and 2007 because there was a whole collection to build, I wanted to make a museum with a distinctive atmosphere and I asked artists to help me. There are many works that are part of the décor and that suggest different emotional states that you can experience when you walk in nature. Since then, the collection has constantly been enriched because we keep some works as we go along, producing temporary exhibitions. And I think that, if all goes well, we will thrive again because we've freed a floor after moving to the new building. That floor will be annexed to the museum, which allows me and artists to continue to explore the question of people's relationship with animals in contemporary society.

museum, no one has absolute carte blanche! Actually, I did so for the first time with Mircea Kantor, the Romanian artist we're hosting at the moment, who's rather conceptual. Even though I'm not very comfortable with that, you need something for all tastes and he's an interesting artist. >>>>>

Top and right: views of the rooms of the Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature. Photo credit: Didier Bizet / Alamy and DR

Centre: work by Kohei Nawa within the exhibition "PixCell-Deer", December 2018. The stag – a sacred animal in ancient Japan – is covered with glass spheres, fragmenting its silhouette. The work dialogued with images of deer from Western culture that were already present in the permanent collection. Photo credit: DR

>>> *N.D.: Who was the first artist you invited?*

C.d.A.: Éric Poitevin was the first artist to have exhibited here, and he also inaugurated our artists' residency in Ardennes: he stayed there to take pictures of animals in preparation for the museum's reopening. As part of his temporary exhibition, he had hung twelve very large and beautiful photos of dead animals. Museography was treated in the second degree, with a little humour, and his photos in this context really made an impact, especially on our traditional audience!

N.D.: How did hunters react?

C.d.A.: At first the hunting public didn't want us to represent death. Being faced with works by contemporary artists, which they did not understand, made them feel insecure and they perceived it as a kind of a criticism of their practice, a challenge to their status as hunters. I was even suspected of being some kind of mole sent by anti-hunting activists! Now, these initial difficulties have been overcome; hunters have understood that it is in the interests of hunting to have a place that is talked about and which, through these contemporary exhibitions, makes the public a bit more familiar with their world. Our image is more positive today, with them and with the broader public as well.

N.D.: How do you improve this image?

C.d.A.: I don't try to convince people, I like to slightly destabilize them, to make them ask themselves questions. As the museum does not take itself too seriously, and even challenges traditional museum codes a little, this leads visitors to wonder exactly where they are. And it's a good attitude because it forces one to think outside the box, to clear one's eyes and to go beyond the binary aspect of "for or against". Let's not forget that hunting is part of nature: all wild animals hunt! This museum is about hunting AND nature: two inseparable elements. Thanks to all the communication work we have done since reopening, this title is now perceived as a brand rather than a programme.

N.D.: Is this enough to explain the museum's tremendous attendance rate?

C.d.A.: Visitors to an exhibition will often visit subsequent ones, which explains the exponential increase in the museum's attendance rate. After their first visit, they're no longer ashamed to come back! ■

WHAT TO DO WITH THIS VIOLENCE?

Questions to **Éric Poitevin**, photographer, visual artist, professor at the École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts de Paris

La Lettre: In 2007, after a first series on this theme in the early 1990s, you presented a photographic installation at the Museum of Hunting and Nature, featuring large animals killed during a culling operation, in a white, almost sanitized environment. What does this installation express both in the context of the museum, and in that of your work as a whole?

Éric Poitevin: Claude d'Anthenaise, who imagined a future for the hitherto dormant Musée de la Chasse, wanted to make room for contemporary art right in the middle of historical or didactic collections, with the idea of stirring up a whole series of more current questions in our relationship to hunting, animals and the environment. He suggested that I create a work, a series of images from "large animals", mainly deer, which would be the subject of the museum's reopening exhibition.

This request was a direct result of a series of photographs I had taken of deer in 1993, which Claude d'Anthenaise had looked at closely. For me, it was therefore a kind of a commission that I experienced as a great opportunity to extend this already old work since there was no question of doing the same thing, the same gesture, again. Neither for him nor for me!

With this change of scale, the subject became even more central, more present, stronger, but the challenge, precisely, was to remain strictly photographic. The subject as a pretext and the image as an answer. I was lucky enough to have access to deer, and therefore to a whole body of iconography. All this has a broad power to fascinate but, precisely, what should I do with this grace, which actually lasted only for a few minutes after death, just before rigor mortis? And what to do with this violence, too? The studio I improvised for the occasion on the hunting grounds was in no way sanitized. It was white but very sensitive to variations in light, so that it offered a whole range of grey and presented the subject with no added effect, in a kind of softness that only daylight can offer. No distractions, the eye rests on the animal. This is a staple of my studio work.



L.L.: You reject the spectacular in your approach and yet the contrast with the violence contained in the representation of these animals, outside their natural space, is striking. Is this the boundary on which your exploration is located?

É.P.: The spectacular is not my style, especially since it's very easy to go there with this type of subject. On the contrary, the idea is to "slow down", to show without imposing, to establish a relationship and not to inflict punishment; no morals either, especially not!

L.L.: With animals, or humans as in your recent work, dead or alive, you remain very close to the "organic", to embodiment, with an expression that becomes almost abstract though, yet through a realistic form. It's tempting to draw a connection with certain particularly expressive still lifes from classical painting. Wrong way?

É.P.: No, you're not on the wrong track, I think it's normal that these references come up. First of all, Chardin, of course; the little pile of fish painted by Goya, I saw it not so long ago in Brussels and it's been on my mind ever since; and Irving Penn's still lifes, that are engraved in my memory; my origins, in short.

The "poorness" of some of Felix Thiollier's or Charles Jones' photographs of fruits and vegetables makes them a choice dish for me. Photography, I find, sits well with "worthless" things.

I try to respond to images with other images, and the idea that the ordinary can become extraordinary is perhaps one of the powers of photography. ■

Nadine Eghels: When and how did you start your engraving work on the theme of animals, and specifically on monkeys? Why were you drawn to this subject of animals?

Astrid de la Forest: It started in 2008, a time when I really wanted to draw people and I didn't know how to approach them. I'd devoted years to my job as a criminal courts artist. My inspiration has always been nature but, as Jean-Christophe Bailly wrote in *Le parti pris des animaux*, "Neither the mountain nor the pine forest can do what any animal can do: see us and make us understand that we are seen". I wanted to carry on drawing living beings and, as I couldn't find models, I naturally turned to animals. I went to the menagerie of the Jardin des Plantes, where I was immediately fascinated by the monkeys. I also drew other animals, but I was always drawn back to the monkeys, they're so captivating – all in all, so "human".

N.D.: This attraction, how come?

A.dlF.: First of all, I was visually drawn to them because they move with such speed and freedom that drawing them requires dexterity and intense concentration. They're elegant and fluid. Drawing them takes little more than a single gesture: I capture the monkey while it moves – and often it's looking at me. While I'm drawing I freeze the movement, but it's already erased, replaced by a host of others that have succeeded it. Yes, the drawing stems from the gesture, a little like in calligraphy or Chinese painting.

N.D.: How do you proceed?

A.dlF.: I make very quick sketches, in ink. Then, back in the workshop, in the same state of concentration, I transpose my sketches in etching in a very gestural way, with the carborundum technique that I discovered in parallel and which happens to be very well suited to this type of work.

N.D.: What does this technique consist of?

A.dlF.: Carborundum etching makes it possible to be very fast insofar as material is added instead of being removed as it is in traditional etching, with a mordant; there is no "biting" into the board with acids. Instead, you partially cover it with carborundum grain which is fixed using a mixture that adheres to the plate; it's this grain mixed with the paste that, once fixed on the board, will retain ink as the hollow areas of an etching do. On a blank steel plate, I paint with this mixture made of adherent material, without prior drawing and very spontaneously. Just my brush and a gesture.

The parts of the etching that contain carborundum will therefore form a surface composed of a multitude of asperities, all very close together.



The hollow areas between these asperities will retain ink more or less intensely depending on the size of the grain. By playing on the different grain sizes, it's possible to obtain effects ranging from intense black to the finest shades. In the engraving profession there are as many processes as there are engravers; it's infinite, all ways of doing things coexist. Of course, the great nobility of engraving lies with etching, drypoint and aquatint, but this carborundum technique is very suitable for this work and its alchemy introduces a mystery, revealed when it goes under the press, that just fascinates me.

N.D.: Do you copy your original drawings?

A.dlF.: No, I don't duplicate my original drawings, nor do I copy them... I draw inspiration from them. I don't make a sketch on my steel plate, I put myself in the same conditions as in the plant garden. I've observed and drawn them so much that I somewhat own them. As the monkeys are always moving, it is the unconscious mind that does the work; I no longer have time to think about what I'm going to do, I'm only a gesture and a hand, nothing else. I'm then able to draw again what I've studied. The interest also lies with my interpretation of them and the dose of humanity I discern in them.

DRAWING ANIMALS, WHO IS WATCHING WHO?

An interview with **Astrid de la Forest**, member of the Engraving section

By **Nadine Eghels**

N.E.: Was it a bit the same when you drew trials?

A.dlF.: It was indeed. People moved, talked, I had to draw scenes very quickly, to sketch a likeness of defendants or of lawyers in full action and to render the intensity that a criminal trial represents, with all the emotional charge, and the looks, the silences, the pleadings and the strength of these moments. During a trial of members of Action Directe, I remember drawing entire scenes based only on memory: the accused chanted The Internationale with their fists raised, the President of the Court had them taken out of the courtroom, and I had to represent the scene with empty benches in front of me. With monkeys, it's somewhat similar. My gaze dictates past situations to me and my hand executes them.

monkeys?

A.dlF.: Animals are deprived of speech but they have a life parallel to ours, and monkeys' gaze is sometimes so unsettling when it lands on you...

The monkey is condemned to silence, but its gaze is very moving. It is above all its proximity to man that makes it so disconcerting. Since the dawn of time, man has had a primeval relationship with animals.

Sculptor Barry Flanagan said, "I sculpt hares because they have things to say that interest me". But to have something to say is not necessarily to speak, and animals aren't blessed with the gift of speech... The animal sees far, it does not look back, it's in the present moment and, with our perpetually tormented gaze, we have much to learn from them.

N.D.: Have you drawn any other animals?

A.dlF.: Yes, of course, I've drawn many other animals, including hybrid ones. I invented associations like a nilgai with a goat, it yields a strange animal with one horn. Ibises, herons, lots of birds, raptors, a kind of hen: all these animals were in the Jardin des Plantes' menagerie, so they were prisoners, outside their territory.

N.D.: Didn't you want to draw your dog? Or your cat?

A.dlF.: No, I only drew animals that I didn't know. Exchanging glances with these unknown animals unsettled me, sometimes I didn't know who was watching whom anymore. This very real presence, what is its nature?

N.E.: Does drawing allow one to approach this border between our world and that of animals in a different way?

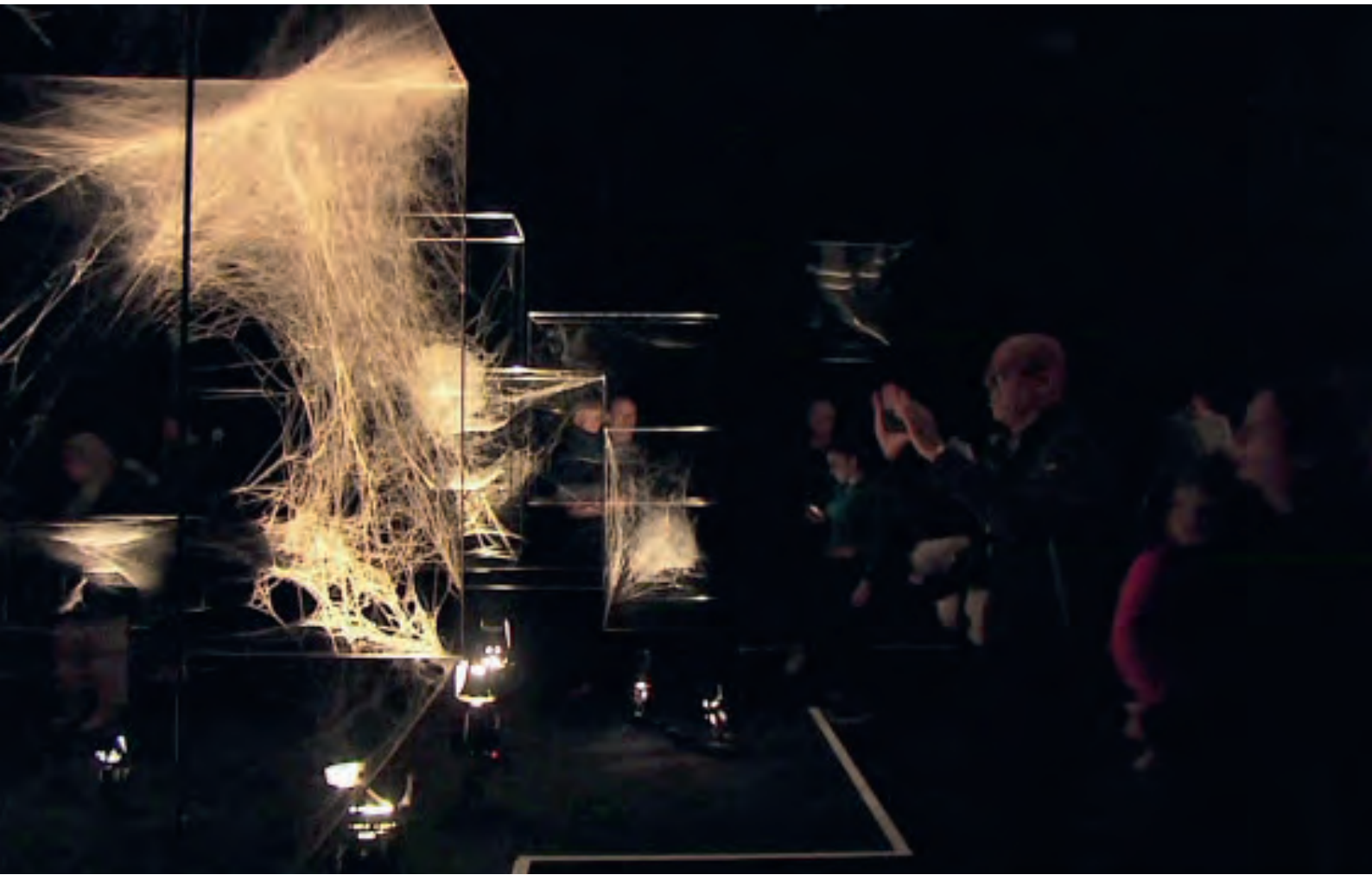
A.dlF.: Absolutely! Drawing is a way to dialog, to be accepted. I often went to the Jardin des Plantes and I had the impression that they recognized me. During the week there's no one, I was distracting them. But there is something pitiful about them being deprived of a territory that is so essential to them, so I was also upset. Their game of hiding from gazes in the enclosed space of the cage is captivating and unsettling.

N.E.: You approached the fringes of animality with this work, how was that for you?

A.dlF.: When you reach this edge and wonder what makes us different, you don't come away unscathed, but you are enriched. Animals have a lot to tell us. Their gaze goes beyond us, and it comes from further away too. From the beginning, animals have been essential for humans. The first works of art, Lascaux, the Chauvet cave, show animals engraved on walls. I can't imagine a world without animals, a river without life, a sky without the flight of wild geese or the "murmurs" of starlings... Would we exist without the animal world?

N.E.: Were you aware, in this work, of being in touch with the very origins of painting?

A.dlF.: It's exactly the same gesture! Since the dawn of time, this reflex, which the hand has had, to engrave animal silhouettes, an outline rather than filling... the first engravings were on the walls of caves. I'm trying to bear witness to the complicity between humans and animals. Today, media and techniques have changed, but the desire is the same. My obsession is to rediscover, beyond current techniques, the power of the original emotion, that which the first artists may have experienced. ■



Ever since the myth of Arachne in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, spiders have continued to fascinate artists. We never grow old of the complexity of the charm that they exert over human nature.

At times they express a protective power, at times the terror of a phobia.

They excel at the unclassifiable diversity of their silent talents as weavers, nonetheless working towards a macabre purpose. Well-established in an age-old popular vision, they appear as a sorceress, lunatic, daughter of the devil, drawing a seemingly infinite strand of silk from their belly. With an innate sense of geometry, they create strange designs intended for predation.

Timeless muses due to their magnetic sway over artists, they were mines of inspiration during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Examples are the myth of Arachne painted by Vélasquez, Véronèse, and Rubens.

Gustave Doré also "sank" into his canvasses by way of Dante's writings on Arachne in *Purgatory*.

Later, Odilon Redon created *The Crying Spider* and then *The Smiling Spider*, which is even more disconcerting, a sort of nightmare dreamed up by its maker.

The 20th century shuffled the cards and changed the status quo. Artists described a bestiary in a new light, relegating myths and symbols to the back room. And while Picasso, Max Ernst, Le Douanier Rousseau and many others would most likely be overjoyed, for others the nightmare was revived in the form of torturers and victims. Damien Hirst, for example, dared the offense to animals, or the critique of humans' judgement

THE SPIDER, A PERFORMANCE ARTIST

By **Brigitte Terziev**, member of the Sculpture Section

of animals, with for example a cow split in half, preserved in formaldehyde. All that was left was for humans also to be exhibited in a chemical solution... But these may have been no more than minor end-of-century scandals.

Before that there was the sculptor Germaine Richier. For her, anthropomorphism was felt with finesse. By modelling the human form, she was able to reveal the nature of small country animals – a grasshopper, a toad, a mantis, or of course, a spider –, yet with tenderness and in harmony with nature.

She was a strange artist who could, contrary to this softness and without a dialogue with animals, use clay to create male or female characters borrowed from raw sculptural writing, seemingly devoid of empathy, as if humans had been deprived their most active root: their animality.

But let us return more directly to the goddess of undergrowth and wooded paths: the spider.

Spiders could be said to be contemporary artists, because all of their work is ephemeral, and has been since the beginning of time. Is “Bobo” ephemeral as well? Because they normally place their silky creation in sumptuous parks, but most of them take care to spread their web in places where poverty predominates, in osmosis with the people one might say...

More seriously, let's talk about sculptor Louise Bourgeois. What interests her and what she presents is the body of the spider. The giant scale of her enormous-legged arachnids is clearly representative of voracious power. However, the artist has said that she wanted to embody the memory of her mother: a hymn to maternal protection.

Another interpretation: Calder's *Red Spider*. Its stylization is so large that the memory of the animal somewhat dissipates faced with the pretext of its architecture. But why not? To each artist their own spider so to speak.

Jeff Koons has also undertaken this task. As a child, he was probably thrilled to see Spiderman at the movies.

Other, more discreet artists continue to present their own original perspective on this frightening creature. For example, painter Jean-Jacques Vigoureux scours the countryside to harvest the artwork of these deserving labourers. He binds their webs to his canvases. Maybe the royalties should be shared!

Chiharu Shiota is a Japanese plastic artist. She innovates, disrupts and revolutionizes through her emotional density. Inspired by spider webs, she uses the example of the tarantula's world as a metaphor for human memory. For her space, she uses an entire exhibition room. She hangs strands from the walls and from the floor to the ceiling in lines of convergence to create a haze of criss-crossing perspectives. The most disconcerting elements are the few pieces of clothing, and especially dresses, that she places here and there in this labyrinth, which seem to record the magnitude of the time lost. It is simultaneously impressive, spectacular, and above all unforgettable.

I would like to finish this tribute to spiders with the recent exhibition by Argentinian artist Tomás Saraceno at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris.

This exhibition, called ON AIR, also conveys the theme of the attention that should be paid to everything living, including animals, humans, nature, and above all, their precious interconnection for the good of our planet.

But it is mainly the magnificent scenography created by this artist that I would like to acknowledge.

In a large, dark room, you walk among webs that seem to have sprung from the Milky Way: flying membranes, white illuminations, wispy clouds. This installation presents the work of 450 spiders from across the globe, some of which were taken from the very hallways of the Palais de Tokyo itself. Different textures of veil and silk weaving are presented under the same shafts of light. Different species cohabitate here, in this case artificially. By doing so, they form multiple layers of webs: a fantastic staging of the capacities of traps and their methodical variants regarding what could almost be called their embroidery point, depending on their origins.

Aesthetically speaking, we are faced with lightness, transparency, and almost virtuality; ultimately, these webs share common ground with our modern era.

Here, dreams no longer have to be rooted in our imagination; they are already embodied by the magic spell of these living arachnids ■



To the left: the webs woven by several hundred spiders made up a portion of Tomás Saraceno's installation at the ON AIR exhibition at the Palais de Tokyo from October 2018 to January 2019.

Video capture, director: Maya Carillon © Connaissance des Arts 2018. For all the works appearing in the video: courtesy of the artist and Andersen's Contemporary (Copenhagen), Esther Schipper (Berlin), Pinksummer Contemporary Art (Genoa), Ruth Benzacar (Buenos Aires), Tanya Bonakdar Gallery (New York)

Above: Louise Bourgeois (1911-2010), *Maman*, 1999, bronze, marble, and stainless steel, 895 x 980 x 1.160 cm, version 2/6. Guggenheim Museum Bilbao.

"The Spider is an ode to my mother. She was my best friend. Like a spider, my mother was a weaver. My family was in the business of tapestry restoration, and my mother was in charge of the workshop. Like spiders, my mother was very clever. Spiders are friendly presences that eat mosquitoes. We know that mosquitoes spread diseases and are therefore unwanted. So, spiders are helpful and protective, just like my mother" - Louise Bourgeois.

Photo: Didier Descouens



Animals are clearly present in the Lurçat's artwork: they are found in his tapestries, poetry, and graphic works.

"I use animals to teach humans", wrote Jean de la Fontaine, and Lurçat used this title for one of his tapestries. He also illustrated Fontaine's *Fables*, most often choosing the least well-known of them. His purpose was very different from that of the fabulist, for he was not seeking to convey a moral but to express his vision of a world in which animals were important actors in continuity with the mineral, plant, and human world crowning creation. He drew on Western symbolism, using the largest possible number of intelligible elements, with a very strong sentiment of the unity of the world in which the kingdoms intermingle. Animal figures are participants in this great melting pot, and Lurçat's bestiary is unique and surprising.

This bestiary evolved over his career. His works in the 1920s-30s revolved around zodiac signs and hybrid forms of fauna and sirens, characterized by light and decorative lines.

When the artist instead took up high-warp tapestry, this bestiary took on a new importance. It is a part of the conception of the cosmos that Lurçat forged for himself. The artist offered few explanations regarding the symbolic meaning underpinning his bestiary. Aside from a few comments, he left it up to others to provide their own interpretation, and conserved his freedom by remaining outside a rigid system of interpretation.

In this teeming repertoire of animal representations, we can nonetheless still mention a few clues. The rooster appears very early in his work and returns almost obsessively. Present from Lurçat's first tapestries, it is the lookout, the guarantor of the promise of dawn. During the war it conveyed patriotism, and this symbol of passive resistance, clearly identified by his admirers, escaped censorship. Lurçat's plastic work is limitless. Birds are a marvellous object of plastic experimentation, which he used in small works and incorporated into larger compositions. The artist's poetic inventiveness is conveyed by the variety of the descriptors in his titles.

Other animals also populated Lurçat's first tapestries. They make direct reference to the great works of the Middle Ages, which infused his first period of tapestry making. At the time, he published a charming book, *Le bestiaire dans la tapisserie du Moyen âge* [the bestiary in mediaeval tapestry]. It followed a

“I USE ANIMALS...” THE BESTIARY OF JEAN LURÇAT

By **Martine Mathias**, chief custodian of heritage, former director of the Musée d'Aubusson, and member of the scientific committee of the Fondation Jean et Simone Lurçat at the Académie des beaux-arts

very original approach, because the artist and his photographer, Robert Doisneau, focused on details, and Lurçat made comments in a familiar and precious poetic style.

The 15th-century allegorical tapestry *Les cerfs ailés* [the winged stags] was inspiration for his *Hommage aux dames et aux licornes* [tribute to women and unicorns]. *Hallali*, a dramatic piece, presents animals at bay in a pond, a symbol of suffering France, but these beautiful animals are exceptions in his work.

Dogs, friendly and loyal companions, accompanied Lurçat throughout his life. His very own dogs – Afghan hounds, a newly fashionable and elegant breed with a naturally textile coat – are those leaping in his first tapestries.

Actually, Lurçat drew inspiration from the bestiary of mediaeval tapestries for a while only, and some animals of importance in the history of Western civilisation are almost absent in his work, such as horses. He however made extensive use of the zodiac, starting from the time of the Zodiac tapestries, about which he commented: “It’s a treasure trove of poetry, mysterious communication, and secret meanings”.

Constantly present, Lurçat’s fish are found on trays, their mouths open pointing towards the sky, suspended, on a skewer, hung from the branches of a tree, or in the water. Sometimes they adopt graphic forms with no thickness, or sparkle in suspended waves that challenge gravity and resemble landscapes. They are nondescript carps or ferocious piranhas following Lurçat’s trip to South America. What better way to emphasize the importance of an element that we originated from – water – than to use it so frequently? There is the mysterious fish that we see in Orpheus’s right hand as he exchanges a keen glance with the little bird of prey in his other hand.

The 1950s witnessed the culmination of animal representations in his tapestries. *L'armoire d'Orphée* and *La belle armoire* are strange cabinets of curiosities that offer a disturbing choice of animals, with a disproportionately large butterfly, an epic pig, a tortoise, a strange siren with a headdress of plants, fish swimming in the air, and a duck under the gaze of a giant rooster, while all sorts of insects are found the top of the cabinet.



Insects occupy a place that warrants its own analysis. Lurçat made disproportionate and disturbing gouache representations of them. “Those insects there are armed better than a tank”, Lurçat once commented to his friend Marcenac.

Lurçat also expressed himself through the beautiful illustrated books *Géographie animale*, *Le bestiaire fabuleux*, and *Mes domaines*, which contain many of the poems from an imaginary bestiary containing, for example, the *Carpe de lune* [moon carp], the *Pieuvre persique* [Persian octopus], or the *Sirène-taureau d'Aden* [siren-

bull of Aden]: animals that could have existed.

This is but a brief glimpse of the richness of this bestiary. It is worth also highlighting a few more instances of symbolism adopted by Lurçat: the tortoise, which typically represents the stability of the world; the auroch in *Grande menace*, a brutish beast ejaculating atomic fallout; and the owl that has inherited the gift of night vision and therefore some of Minerva’s wisdom. The diversity of the bestiary represented became progressively more limited, except in *Le Chant du monde*, a summary of existence according to Lurçat. In his later years, his compositions were occupied mainly by fish, a few South American birds, and immense butterflies shining like stained-glass windows. Roosters left the field, to be represented separately in countless variations. From this point on, animals were distinctly separate from humans. ■

Top: Jean Lurçat (1892-1966), *Le taureau zébré*, 1951, watercolour, 38 x 28 cm. taken from *Bestiaire fabuleux*, poems by Patrice de La Tour du Pin, Maurice Darantière editor. Collection Fondation Jean et Simone Lurçat.



BESTIARIES RARELY NAMED AS SUCH

By **Bernard Perrine**, Photography section correspondent

When “Bestiaries” are mentioned, they immediately transport you to the bright colours of the illuminations of the Aberdeen or Ashmole masterpieces. These “books on nature and animals” following the “Physiologus” tradition attribute personalities and feelings to animals, comparable to those of humans. Animals can thus be used as examples. The rich iconography of these bestiaries amply reflects the important place granted to animals. In his valuable works, Michel Pastoureau¹ deciphers the symbolism of the Middle Ages and its colours, providing us with a study of different species with both their symbolic and religious dimensions. This was a time when, rather than animal worlds, fantasy or dream worlds were what reigned supreme: a sort of interlinking of animal encyclopaedias suffused with myths and legends in which giants, fairies, sorcerers, dragons, and other unicorns crossed paths. The phoenix, the immortal bird already present in Pliny, Herodotus, Hesiope, and Plutarch, before Pierre de Beauvais turned it into a symbol of resurrection... Mages, griffons, sirens, basilisks, centaurs or satyrs, chimeric creatures... a mythology of the monstrous born in the valleys of Mesopotamia between the Tigris and the Euphrates. Illuminations filled with animals which, like the many-headed serpent, have since their origins run through civilizations and most often surpassed the fabulation of mediaeval art.

Photography contains few works bearing the name of a “Bestiary”, and those that are named as such rarely touch on mythical systems of symbols related to the world of the imaginary, with the exception of aesthetic subversion. However, by metonymy we can find numerous bestiaries in photographers’ work, whether they are hidden or designated as such, under another term. This is one of those rarely discussed occurrences that I would like to illuminate.

Whether consciously or not, from the dawn of humanity up until today, for different reasons, animals have always fascinated photographers; they are one of the most photographed of all subjects. Over the years and with the progress of technology,

amateurs, specialists (animal photographers), artists, poets, and professionals are allowing us to immerse ourselves in the private space, behaviour, and beauty of animals through an increasingly large number of books on the subject or specialized regular columns in large magazines.

But photography goes even further. Loyal to the vast field that it encompasses, it was photography that revealed the secrets of animals and their movements through the scientific experiments

carried out in the United States by Eadweard Muybridge and in France by Étienne-Jules Marey. In the eleven volumes of *Animal Locomotion* (1887) and *The Attitudes of Animals in Motion* (1881), Muybridge used a “zoopraxiscope” to analyse and demonstrate that, contrary to the claims of the world of art, a horse lifts all four hooves when galloping. Marey, a physician and physiologist, developed time-lapse photography in order to study “the animal machine”



in movement or in flight: its stride, its path²... These works would influence artists such as Rodin, Bouguereau, Eakins, and Degas (with his dancers), as well as Italian futurism. They were the inspiration for Marcel Duchamp’s famous 1912 work, *Nu descendant un escalier No. 2* [*Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2*], before significantly influencing the birth of anthropometry and film.

It was moreover photography that would reveal the existence of fauna with forms that often surpassed the fabulations of even the most extravagant illuminators. >>>>

1- Michel Pastoureau, *Bestiaires du Moyen Âge*, Seuil 2011, *Symboles du Moyen Âge : Animaux, végétaux, couleurs, objets*, Le Léopard d’or 2012.

2- Étienne-Jules Marey (1830-1904), *Le vol des oiseaux*, Masson, 1890; Étienne-Jules Marey, Michel Frizot, *Photo-Poche n°13*, Actes Sud 1990; *Chronophotographie*, Michel Frizot, Nathan/Delpire 2001.

3- Tim Flach, *Portraits de la vie sauvage en voie de disparition*, Heredium 2017.



>>>> And it is once again photography that has and will have the task of immortalizing in bestiaries all of the species that will become extinct. One example is Tim Flach's *Endangered*³. Another is *Le Bestiaire imaginaire*⁴, the goal of which is to reveal the presence of animals in photography from the 1850s to today. This single book – the catalogue for an exhibition – brings together around a hundred photographs of real or imaginary animals taken by around forty photographers. Alongside photographs by Jeanloup Sieff, Brassai, Walker Evans, Joel Peter Witkin, Nick Brandt, Peter Beard, and many others, readers can also discover lesser-known photographers such as Crystèle Lerisse, Marteen Wetsema, Herbert G. Ponting (*Lone Penguin*), Didier Massard (*La Méduse* and *L'Ara vert*), as well as Caroline Feyt, Charles Camberoque, and Lithuanian Aleksandras Macijauskas.

In Montherlant's *Les Bestiaires*, as in this *Bestiaire imaginaire*, animals can be perceived as a myth. The word bestiary, which also conveys the meaning of "gladiator" (Latin: *bestiarius*), is a source of both dreams and terror. It places animals "between the real and the imaginary, because they are central not only to beliefs, stories, and legends, but also to the domestic life of our universe". This brings to mind Jorge Luis Borges' *Book of Imaginary Beings*, between chimera and imagination. The singular strangeness of the bestiary is revealed in a way that is peculiar to photography.

What about *Fauna*⁵, that other imaginary bestiary, produced between 1985 and 1989 by Joan Fontcuberta, a young Catalan photographer, in a Spain that had just been liberated from the yoke of the Franco dictatorship? His photomontage, *Cargol treu banya* [the snail sticks out its horns], could be considered representative of all the hybrid chimera, between fascination and monstrosity, composing this work.

His bestiary presents imitations of false scientific processes in

order to criticize the hidden manipulation of images. This is an entirely unknown fantasy bestiary: *Solenoglypha Polypodida*, Tamil Nadu, (India), a photo of a vertebrate snake with 12 feet; *Cercopithecus Icarocomu* (a forest in the Brazilian Amazon), a black and white photograph of the flying unicorn monkey, an animal sacred to the Nygala-teb tribe; *Felix Penatus*, the skeleton of a winged cat, bone remains discovered in 1932 in a cave in Grand Atlas (Morocco). The only thing that is true is that "it reflects modern photography and the documentary aesthetics that prevailed during the 1930s and 1940s".

"You could say that Fontcuberta used fiction in his works as an indication of its omnipresence in reality, and that he played with rules and conventions in order to push back the limits or to free himself of them to raise questions". In this sense, it is not surprising that he declares that "today more than ever, the artist should reclaim the role of demiurge and seed doubt, destroy certainties, annihilate convictions, so that from the chaos that is generated, a new sensibility and awareness may be constructed". In Sandy Skoglund's work⁶, by invading her images, cats, foxes, squirrels and other animals give them a hallucinatory purpose, transforming "petty-bourgeois dreams into nightmares". Just like Joan Fontcuberta, she challenges photographic reality through her design and graphism. It is the intellectual overlay and manipulations implied by the final product that raise questions around the opposition between being and seeming, between reality and artifice. The presence of animals in her work – *Radioactive Cats* (1980); *Revenge of the Goldfish* (1981), consisting of terracotta goldfish floating around in a blue child's bedroom; or *Fox Game*, in which red foxes take possession of a grey-blue restaurant – does not come close to constituting a bestiary, but it is used to question the human condition and the place left for humans in an "artificial and outrageously consumerist society". The suffocating and claustrophobic worlds

Left page: Daido Moriyam, *Stray Dog Misawa*, 1971, silver print, 48 x 71 cm.

Below: Tim Flach, *Monkey Eyes*, in *More Than Human*, Abrams 2012

in her oeuvre primarily have an effect on the unconscious mind. Her dreams intersect with the subjects of surrealists, who are one of her influences.

These works also question photography and its history insofar as “all viewers start with the assumption that photography is real, and by looking more closely, they realize that they have been deceived”.

Without calling them “bestiaries”, photographers such as Frank Horvat, Bettina Rheims, and Josef Koudelka dedicate their works to animals. In a portfolio of 18 slides published in 1990, *Animal*⁷ contains the animal photographs taken by Josef Koudelka during the 1970s-80s. And it was the famous photograph of the dog in the Parc de Sceaux that would be chosen for the cover of the first issue of *Exils* in 1988.

Bettina Rheims⁸ approach attempts the opposite: using the same title of *Animal*, she groups together the result of a process that consisted in photographing a series of taxidermy animals between 1982 and 1984. Michel Onfray⁹ sees this approach as thematically partially related to injury and death, but in the form of a “black and white photographic bestiary”. While Bettina Rheims is playing with ambiguity in it, she is also proposing a variant of the “centuries-old genre of vanitas”.

With Karen Knorr, taxidermy animals take on a new dimension. Adrien Goetz's short novel *Le soliloque de l'empailleur*, in which the taxidermist's profession is redeemed by the author's poetic style¹⁰, gave her a pass to enter the most ornate palaces. A boar brushes against a beautiful chest of drawers, a fight between stags takes place in the red lounge... Starting in the 1980s, the photographer organized architectural scenes in which she staged animals: a lyrical animation of her symbolic fictions presented at prestigious institutions, including the Musée de la Chasse et de la nature in Paris, which placed a large order with her, the Musée Carnavalet, the Palace of Venice, the Villa Savoye, the Musée Condé in Chantilly, the Château de Chambord, and the Tate, with installations that she describes as her fables, new fables, or *India songs*, following a long project on French homes from 2003 to 2008. Her animals move about in cultural sanctuaries that are typically protected from the desecration of beasts, which is a transgression similar to the worlds of Lewis Carroll and Angela Carter.

With Jean-François Spricigo¹¹ we are clearly no longer dealing with the representation of animals or the imaginary world that they can convey, but rather, as the title of this work suggests, with their *Anima*. Moreover, the photographer confides that “it was a dog that taught him about photography, or rather about the soul (Anima) of photography”. As Robert Delpire points out in the preface to his book, for Spricigo, “while animals are not the only subject matter of his images, they are a constant feature of his quest for a fair image, that which is not created to describe or to illustrate a text, but rather proves a profound interest in the animal, expresses empathy, emotion”. Spricigo's bestiary has no hierarchy; above all, it expresses respect for animals, the visible glimpse of which is located within the field of art “in order to



move towards the imaginary, the beyond, and the imperceptible, to bring them to us, to offer them to us as we never would have understood them”.

When Belgian Michel Vanden Eeckhoudt photographs animals, he is also talking about humans. He is a storyteller who uses animals to convey his vision of the world: “you always sound a bit stupid when you say ‘I love animals’. But I love photographing animals [...]”. To explore this bestiary, which is not named as such, but which is composed of around a dozen books, he travelled across every continent for over thirty years, seeking out “comical, strange, and moving zoological scenes. He went out to hunt butterflies, with his lucky days and his really bad days”. *Doux-Amer*¹², his latest work, is “populated with dogs, a lot of dogs, pigs, monkeys, and people as well. As opposed to engaging in sentimentality or silliness, these animals are serious. The majority of the time, they are looking at us, their eyes are mirrors and reveal our deepest depths [...]. Some people will laugh and find an image funny, while others will find it a bit tragic, a bit sad. I like that ambiguity”, he joyfully comments. >>>>

4- *Le Bestiaire imaginaire : L'animal dans la photographie, de 1850 à nos jours*, Antoine de Baecque, Skira 2010. Exhibition: Palais Lumière, Évian (winter 2010-2011).

5- John Fontcuberta, *Fauna*, Arte y Proyectos Editoriales 1999.

6- Sandy Skoglund, *Sandy Skoglund*, Paris Audiovisuel 1992.

7- Josef Koudelka, *Animal*, portfolio of 18 photo-engravings, Trois Cailloux 1990.

8- Bettina Rheims, *Animal*, Gina Kehayoff Verlag Munich, 1994.

9- Martine Torrens Frandji, Michel Onfray, *le principe d'incandescence*, Grasset 2013.

10- *Le soliloque de l'empailleur*, photographs by Karen Knorr, short story by Adrien Goetz, Le promeneur 2008.

11- Jean-François Spricigo, winner of the Marc Ladreit de Lacharrière Photography Prize - Académie des beaux-arts 2008, *Anima*, La revue des deux mondes (special issue) 2009.

12- Michel Vanden Eeckhoudt (1947-2015), *Doux-amer*, Delpire Hors collection 2013.



>>>> Massachusetts-born American William Wegman also makes the best of these ambiguities when, like the great storytellers, he makes fun of human behaviour through anthropomorphic portraits of dogs. *Being Human*, his most recent work, is a sort of mischievous mirror consisting of 300 photographs and an entire line of Weimaraners, which conveys all of the irony of how we believe we perceive the human condition. [...]

While by no means intentionally attempting to construct a “bestiary”, many photographers have nonetheless produced collections of animal photos which, when combined, would constitute the greatest and most fabulous (in the sense of a “fable”) bestiary ever made. Among these could be Masahisa Fukase’s ravens excited by the smell of agony, his cat Sasuke alongside the immense whale tail, the Galapagos Islands iguana foot, the great albatrosses of the Falkland Islands, and an entire procession of animals that could constitute Sebastião Salgado’s “Genesis bestiary”. The same goes for the famous “stray dog” in Aomori at the beginning of 1971, as well as the ravens and birds of Japanese photographer Daido Moriyama, the snake and emaciated dog of Christer Strömholm, the Kenyan lions and the prize-winning farm animals of Yann Arthus-Bertrand, as well as the poetic bestiary omnipresent in the photographs of Pentti Sammallahti.

We could see as “bestiaries” in themselves the “dramas du taureau” [bullfighting stories] present in so many works by Lucien Clergue¹³. In his *Bestiaires*, Henri de Montherlant insists on the equivocal relationship of quasi-bestiality between the *torero* [bullfighter] and the bull. The idea is not to know whether the *corrida* [bullfight] is derived from Cretan *tauromaquia* [bullfighting tradition] to pay tribute to Mithra. The mythical

drama found in these “bestiaries” that are not named as such shines light on the ambivalence stressed in Cocteau’s “Hommage noir”, which “dramatizes one side of beauty on the other side”. Absent in his first work, *Poesie der fotografie*, the dead bull followed the dead flamingos of this work. More than a bestiary, they propagate the omnipresent death underlying the entire work. Behind the works honouring *toreros* (such as Ordóñez/Dominguín, El Cordobés/Curro, followed by Manolete and of course José Tomás), we still find a tribute to the bull – that is, when it is not directly present in the titles of the works dedicated to it. Do these fifteen minutes of fame belong to the bull or the bullfighter, or is it just the “drama of the bull”: “Toros Muertos”, “Le taureau au corps”?

Peter Beard was one of the first people to warn us of the disappearance of the elephants and rhinoceros in Tsavo National Park in Kenya. The graphic and poetic appearance of *The End of Game*¹⁴, published in 1965, and republished and extended regularly since then, attempts to be the last echo of the paradise of a continent shaken by industrialization. [...]

Nick Brandt also warns us, but as opposed to Peter Beard’s “diaries”, his writing is monumental. His first works¹⁵, *On This Earth*, *A Shadow Falls*, and *Across the Ravaged Land*, attempt to paint a mythical portrait of East Africa. Close-up photography of these animals without a telephoto lens glorifies this fauna of the great lords of East Africa. However, he does so only to draw more attention to the threats faced by these lions, elephants, gorillas, leopards, or zebras. His subsequent works, *Inherit the Dust* and *This Empty World*, decry mass deforestation and urbanization, the first victims of which are animals. In the first of these, he reintroduces life-size prints to the places where these wild animals lived. “My images are unashamedly idyllic and romantic, a kind of enchanted Africa. They’re my elegy to a world that is steadily, tragically vanishing”. ■

13- Lucien Clergue (1934-2014), *Toros muertos*, Panoramas Forces Vives 1963; *Le quart d’heure du taureau*, Chêne 1998; *Le taureau au corps*, texte de Daniel Schmitt, Editec 1963.

14- Peter Beard, *The End of Game*, Viking 1965, Tashen 2015.

15- Nick Brandt, *On This Earth: Photographs from East Africa*, Chronicle Books 2005; *A Shadow Falls*, Harry N. Abrams 2009; *Across the Ravaged Land* 2014 Harry N. Abrams; *Inherit the Dust*, Edwyynn Editions 2016.

Top: Sandy Skoglund, *Foxes Games*, 1989, Ilfochrome print, 120 x 162 cm.

Auditorium du Palais de l'Institut de France

“CONCERTS FOR A SEAT”



On 15 April, the new André et Liliane Bettencourt Auditorium at the Institut de France will resound with an original concert. At the initiative of Permanent Secretary Laurent Petitgirard, it will host a series of concerts, each of which will be dedicated to all the Académie members who have successively held a seat of the Musical Composition section since 1815.

Because this section has eight seats for a total of seventy-six academicians, and because the availability of the auditorium must be taken into consideration, this project will be staggered over several years. It will start with the fifth seat, and the detailed schedule has been entrusted to François-Bernard Mâche, who currently holds it. In the two centuries preceding him, nine members held this seat, so ten works or excerpts of works will represent them.

Here is the programme, which will be performed by the Debussy Quartet, the two pianists Georges Beriachvili and Marie Vermeulin, and percussionist Emmanuel Séjourné:

Luigi Cherubini: Scherzo from *Quatuor à cordes* No. 4

George Onslow: *Sonata* Op. 22 for piano 4 hands

Napoléon Reber: Adagio from *Trio* No. 7 Op. 37 for strings and piano

Camille Saint-Saëns: *Barcarolle* Op. 108 for strings and piano

Georges Hüe: *Thème varié* for viola and piano

Guy Ropartz: *Scherzo* for piano

Jacques Ibert: *Histoires* No. 2 and No. 9 for piano

Georges Auric: *Sonatine* for piano

Iannis Xenakis: *Paille in the wind* for violoncello and piano

François-Bernard Mâche: *Phénix* for percussion

Top: Permanent Secretary Laurent Petitgirard conducted the Solistes Français ensemble for the first two movements of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *Symphony No. 29 in A Major* during the inauguration of the André et Liliane Bettencourt Auditorium on 19 February.

Above: Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1780–1867), *Portrait de Luigi Cherubini*, oil on canvas, 1841, 83 x 71 cm. Cincinnati Art Museum.

ELECTIONS

During the plenary session on 14 November 2018, the Académie des beaux-arts elected Marc Barani to the seat previously occupied by Claude Parent (1923-2016), and Bernard Desmoulin to the seat previously occupied by Yves Boiret (1926-2018) in the Architecture section, as well as Jean-Michel Othoniel to the seat previously occupied by Eugène Dodeigne (1923-2015) in the Sculpture section.



Jean-Michel Othoniel, born in 1964 in Saint-Etienne, has been inventing a world with multiple boundaries since the end of the 1980s. He has been using glass since 1993, after initially exploring materials with reversible qualities, such as sulphur and wax.

In 1994 he participated in the “Feminine/Masculine” exhibition at the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, and in 1996 was a resident at the Villa Medici in Rome. From that point on, he started to establish a dialogue between his works and the landscape, hanging giant necklaces from the gardens of the Villa Medici, from the trees of the Venetian garden of the Peggy Guggenheim Collection (1997), as well as at the Alhambra and Generalife in Granada (1999). In 2000 he transformed the Palais-Royal – Musée du Louvre Parisian subway station into the *Kiosque des Noctambules* [*Kiosk of the Night Owls*] (first public commission). Since then, his works have been divided between public spaces and museums: the “Crystal Palace” exhibition presented at the Fondation Cartier pour l’art contemporain in Paris and at the MOCA in Miami in 2003; the following year, in the Mesopotamian rooms of the Musée du Louvre as a part of the “Counterpoint” exhibition; and an invitation from the Musée Delacroix in Paris in 2012. The year 2015 marked his collaboration with landscape architect Louis Benech to redesign the Bosquet (grove) of the Théâtre d’Eau in the gardens of the Palace of Versailles. In September 2016, he unveiled *Le Trésor de la cathédrale d’Angoulême*, which took him more than eight years to complete. His works are conserved by the world’s largest contemporary art museums, charities, and private collections.



After studying architecture and scenography, **Marc Barani**, born in 1937 in Menton, completed his training with anthropology studies, which led to him spend a year in Nepal. In 1992 he received his first public commission, with the extension of the Saint-Pancrace cemetery in Roquebrune-Cap-Martin. In 2008 he received the Prix de l’Équerre d’argent du Moniteur [a renowned architecture prize] for the tramway station in Nice – a project with which he was a finalist for the Mies van der Rohe Prize in 2009. In 2010 he created the Pont Renault bridge on Ile Seguin, and in 2011, the Pont Éric-Tabarly bridge in Nantes. In 2013, he was awarded the Grand Prix National de l’Architecture [French national architecture prize]. From 2015 to 2017, Marc Barani collaborated with the French Ministry of Culture to create the new national architecture strategy. In 2018 he received the Grande Médaille d’Or awarded by the Académie d’Architecture for his multifaceted approach to architecture, landscape architecture, and urban planning, combined with his scrupulous sense of detail in construction..



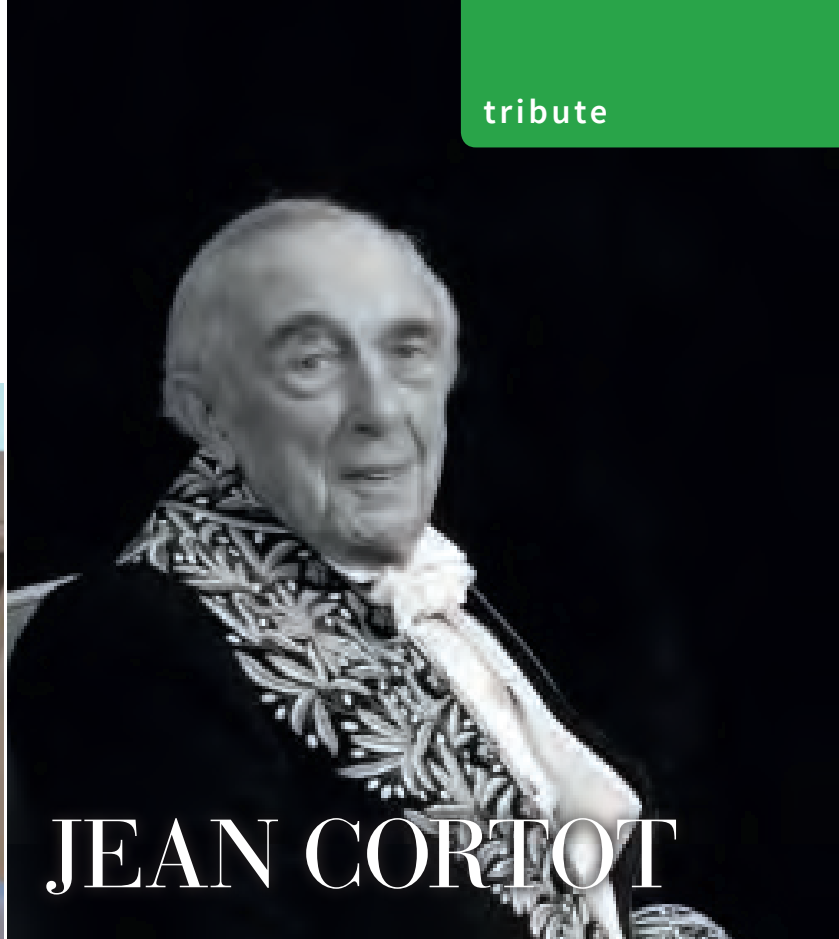
Bernard Desmoulin, born in 1953 in Toulouse, graduated in 1981 after having studied architecture under the glass roofs of the Grand Palais. He then moved on to work for different firms in Paris and New York. A resident of the Villa Medici in Rome in 1984 and 1985, and winner of the *Albums de la Jeune Architecture* award, he designed the Nécropole de Fréjus (1993), which is as much a building as it is a landscape. The majority of his creations are found at remarkable sites, such as the Villa Medici, the Salle Pleyel, the garden of the Russian Orthodox Church in Paris, the Musée Rodin, the Musée du Louvre, the Zona Rosa in Mexico City, the abbeys of Cluny and of Port Royal des Champs, as well as the Grand Commun at the Palace of Versailles and the Musée de Cluny in Paris. Successive commissions for architecture, museography, and landscapes led him to design the Musée de Sarrebourg and renovation of the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in the Marsan wing of the Louvre. Although often participating in historical contexts, his firm has contributed primarily to the creation of new buildings, such as the new Conservatoire de musique et de danse of Clichy-la-Garenne in 2009, which won him the Prix de l’Équerre d’Argent. Today, he has multiple large-scale projects underway, such as the Nouvel Hôpital Lariboisière, the Piazza Campitelli in Ajaccio, and the Chinese Cultural Centre in Paris at the Hôtel particulier de Montesquiou-Fezensac. In 2000 he received the silver medal from the Académie d’architecture, to which he was elected a seat-holding member in 2003.



The Cabinet d'estampes contemporaines de la bibliothèque de l'Institut de France

Created in 2008 at the initiative of engraver Louis-René Berge (1927-2013), the Cabinet d'estampes contemporaines de la bibliothèque de l'Institut de France [the contemporary engravings room of the library of the Institut de France] was inaugurated on 20 February. Photos: Olivier Thomas

This new space is home to the engravings of members of the Académie des beaux-arts and artists who have won the Académie's engraving prizes. Académie members Albert Decaris, Roger Vieillard, André Jacquemin, Jean-Marie Granier, Louis-René Berge, and Paul Lemagny, the four current members of the engraving section, Pierre-Yves Trémois, Érik Desmazières, Astrid de La Forest, and Pierre Collin, as well as Yves Millecamps, member of the Painting section, have works in this room. To date, it contains 275 engravings, in addition to which are 683 engravings were donated by Mario Avati in 2015, at the time of the creation of the Mario Avati Engraving Prize awarded by the Académie des beaux-arts.



JEAN CORTOT

On 28 December our fellow member Jean Cortot left us at the age of 94. He had been elected to the Painting section in 2001, to the seat previously occupied by Olivier Debré. Here his friend, the painter Gérard Garouste, pays tribute to him.

Photo: Juliette Agnel

“ I was lucky to have been able to meet Jean at a young age.

I remember his wit, his natural elegance, with the classic turquoise vest that he would wear accompanied by a strange shapeless hat.

Jean shared with us a world of multifaceted knowledge.

He could recite Chateaubriand's *Le Génie du christianisme* by heart as well as any contemporary poet, like his friend Jean Tardieu.

The first exhibition that I saw at a gallery was Jean's at the Jacques Massol Gallery. I marvelled at Jean Cortot's work which I discovered then.

His advice was very valuable. He maintained a distinct distance from the whimsical nature of contemporary art, always with much humour. We'd do comedy together, with him playing the part of the pompous old artist and me playing the one who was hopelessly ignorant. Our improvisations went to the point of absurdity. We'd laugh a lot.

His work is considerable. It's a doorway for future generations, because it highlights an essential dimension of art: the power of written words. Signs that become letters and letters that become words that become poems, stories, and contemporary mythology. As a part of this path, he surrounded himself with poet friends, such as André Frénaud, Raymond Queneau... but his paintings also praise Apollinaire, Baudelaire, Valéry, William Blake, and many others.

Through this, Jean's works have taken on a timeless dimension that goes far beyond passing trends and the games of avant-garde art. This is most evident in the fact that he sat among us, as a member of the Académie des beaux-arts, the very definition of which is found in its duty to pass on art.” ■



Antônio Carlos Jobim, highly-elaborate popular music

Press release presented by Laurent Petitgirard, Permanent Secretary of the Académie des beaux-arts, and illustrated by musical accompaniment by Marcio Faraco (guitar and vocals), Julio Cezar Goncalves (percussion), and Romulo Marques (bass). Photos: CM Pezon

Antônio Carlos Jobim was born in Rio de Janeiro in the 1920s. He is considered one of the co-founders of the “bossa nova” style. As a composer of Brazilian popular music, he was one of the main contributors to the transformation of this music, which contains many academic elements. Through his language, Antônio Carlos Jobim synthesized some of the popular music of his time, establishing himself as a pivotal 20th-century composer. ■



Restitution of African cultural heritage: the Académie des beaux-arts defends the inalienability and circulation of collections

At their plenary session on 28 November 2018, the members of the Académie des beaux-arts examined the conclusions of the Savoy-Sarr Report on the restitution of African cultural heritage, as presented by the Office of the President of the Republic when the report was officially submitted on 23 November. After this session and a long and detailed discussion, the Académie des beaux-arts reaffirmed its support for the idea of a universal museum – an idea invented in France and which enables dialogue between cultures and civilizations. It therefore reasserted the intangible principle of the inalienability of national collections that is indissociable from this generous and open notion of what constitutes a museum. The Académie also considers it legitimate to provide peoples with access to the artistic masterpieces of their civilizations in their national territory. It believes that the inalienability of national collections, as guaranteed by law, is by no means a hindrance to the essential circulation of works of art, by means of the lending system, through all museums, in keeping with the wishes of the President of the Republic. Potential delisting can be considered only on a case-by-case basis. ■

Above: *L'Homme-requin* [Man-Shark] (details), end of the 19th century, wood, iron nails, pigments, 168 x 102 x 92 cm. Sossa Dede, a courtesan of King Béhanzin of Danhomé (currently Benin) sculpted this “man-shark” as a tribute to his monarch. At the time, Béhanzin compared himself to a “ferocious shark disturbing the helm” defending against the French colonizers coming from the Atlantic coasts. Musée du quai Branly - Jacques Chirac. Photo: Musée du quai Branly

At the age of 36, Jules Massenet (1842-1912) was already a public figure who was hard to miss on the music scene at the time, and who was ready to cross the threshold of the Institut de France.

On 30 July 1878, François Bazin, who occupied seat VI of the Musical composition section of the Académie des beaux-arts, died suddenly. The election of his successor took place on 30 November, when 34 votes were cast in a two-round ballot process. During the first round, Saint-Saëns was leading (13 votes), ahead of Massenet, Boulanger, Membrée, and Duprato. The majority (17 votes) was not attained. During the second round, Massenet was elected with 18 votes in his favour, with Saint-Saëns retaining the same score as during the first round, and Boulanger obtaining three votes. Saint-Saëns was somewhat resentful of this result, but would eventually be elected in 1881. This was the first noteworthy episode of the “I love you; nor do I” (love/hate) relationship that the two composers would maintain throughout their life.

Massenet was admitted at the session on 14 December 1878, wearing the green tunic that his widow would gift to his pupil and successor Gustave Charpentier, 34 years later. [...]

On 19 July 1879, following the tradition that new Académie members must pay tribute to their predecessors at the session, Massenet presented his “Note on François Bazin”. This episode warrants some analysis. What had gone unsaid up until then was that in 1859, Bazin had kicked the young Massenet out of his class for “impudence in harmony”, and most likely for rebellious behaviour. Bazin was first slighted by destiny when Massenet’s first lyrical work, *La grand’tante*, was performed as the opening act to his comedy opera *Le voyage en Chine*. I will take the liberty of citing Auber, director of the Conservatoire at the time, who said the following about Bazin: “at his class in the morning, he taught how to compose, and in the evening, at the theatre, how not to compose”. Quite the compliment. The superlatives used by Massenet during this probationary task – “remarkable artist”, with “exceptional value”, “exceptionally brilliant”, “a master of the art of writing”, “elegant”, “a popularizer”, “an excellent teacher”, “admirably knowledgeable”, “a distinguished composer”, “an eminent theoretician” – were likely not only the expression of the appropriate emphasis, but also contained sarcasm, considering that their author readily employed antiphrasis. For example, I remember the following anecdote: a woman was telling Massenet that Saint-Saëns was saying terrible things about him, and Massenet replied that he had great admiration for Saint-Saëns, later admitting to the somewhat confused woman: “but you know that composers always say the opposite of what they think!”

Dedicated in his beginnings, Massenet gradually came to attend the meetings of the Académie des beaux-arts increasingly less frequently, although admittedly the agenda did not systematically concern music...

JULES MASSENET, COMPOSER AND ACADÉMIE MEMBER AT THE TURN OF A CENTURY...

By **Hervé Oléon**, musicologist and vice president of the Massenet Internationale association

For example, there was the session on 23 May 1885, during which, due to the lack of musical subject matter, Saint-Saëns, Delibes, and Massenet seemed to get bored... and became unruly, to the point of drawing the picturesque “Javanese Dancer” together. But fortunately, other sketches made during sessions by Garnier, Ballu, Gruyer, Müller, and others show that distraction is not a quality exclusive to members of the Music section! Massenet’s regular attendance also fed his increasingly productive composing activity. And that which would lead him to the forefront of musical art was not his monumental production of 475 titles known today, but his constant focus on quality, based on a process of searching and exploration that places him not within the aesthetics of the end of a century but rather in the projection of the transition into another. [...] ■

Excerpt from the talk delivered on 7 November 2018
Grande salle des séances

Photo: Jules Massenet, by Eugène Pirou, in 1895. Source: Gallica.



The Academy supports Berlioz's entry into the Pantheon

Following the weekly plenary session on Wednesday, 23 January, the Permanent Secretary Laurent Petitgirard sent a letter to the President of the Republic, the "Protector" of the Académie des beaux-arts, to support initiatives aimed at bringing composer Hector Berlioz into the Pantheon. The Académie, vigorously and confidently supports all events that may take place to raise awareness and disseminate Berlioz's work in our country in 2019, the year in which the 150th anniversary of his death is commemorated. On this occasion, the Academy will host, *inter alia*, a symposium on "Berlioz and Paris" at the Palais de l'Institut de France, as well as a concert conducted by Gilbert Amy, to pay tribute to all the composers who held Seat IV of the Musical Composition section that Hector Berlioz himself held from 1856 until his death in 1869.

At the end of his letter, the Permanent Secretary reminded the President of the Republic that this decision would "for the first time, bring a composer into this monument that the French Republic has chosen to dedicate to the great figures of our country".

Photo: Hector Berlioz by Pierre Petit. Gallica-BnF



Page 1 and opposite:
Trémois, *Cynocéphale*, 1977,
polished bronze, 54 x 38 x 13 cm
Photo: DR



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Philippe Garel • 2015
Jean-Marc Bustamante • 2017
Gérard Garouste • 2017
Fabrice Hyber • 2018
Jean-Michel Othoniel • 2018

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Claude Abeille • 1992
Antoine Poncet • 1993
Brigitte Terziev • 2007
Pierre-Édouard • 2008
Jean Anguera • 2013

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Jacques Rougerie • 2008
Aymeric Zublena • 2008
Alain Charles Perrot • 2013
Dominique Perrault • 2015
Jean-Michel Wilmotte • 2015
Marc Barani • 2018
Bernard Desmoulin • 2018

Section IV - Engraving

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Érik Desmazières • 2008
Astrid de la Forest • 2016
Pierre Collin • 2018

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Laurent Petitgirard • 2000
François-Bernard Mâche • 2002
Édith Canat de Chizy • 2005
Michaël Levinas • 2009
Gilbert Amy • 2013
Thierry Escaich • 2013
Bruno Mantovani • 2017
Régis Campo • 2017

Section VI - Unattached Members

Michel David-Weill • 1982
Pierre Cardin • 1992
Henri Loyrette • 1997
François-Bernard Michel • 2000
Hugues R. Gall • 2002
Marc Ladreit de Lacharrière • 2005
William Christie • 2008
Patrick de Carolis • 2010
Muriel Mayette-Holtz • 2017
Adrien Goetz • 2017

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in cinema and audiovisual
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Régis Wargnier • 2007
Jean-Jacques Annaud • 2007
Jacques Perrin • 2017
Coline Serreau • 2018

Section VIII - Photography

Yann Arthus-Bertrand • 2006
Bruno Barbey • 2016
Jean Gaumy • 2016
Sebastião Salgado • 2016

Section IX - Choreography

Foreign Associates

S.M.I. Farah Pahlavi • 1974
Ieoh Ming Pei • 1983
Leonard Gianadda • 2001
Seiji Ozawa • 2001
William Chattaway • 2004
Woody Allen • 2004
SA Karim Aga Khan IV • 2007
SA Sheikha Mozah • 2007
Sir Norman Foster • 2007
Antonio López García • 2012
Philippe de Montebello • 2012
Jiří Kylián • 2018