

HdM GALLERY

"ISLAND OF THE FAY"

A DUO SHOW OF MARCEL-LA BARCELÓ AND APOLLINARIA BROCHE

CURATOR: NICK HACKWORTH

28.11.2024 - 14.12.2024

FRIEZE NO.9 CORK STREET



Marcel-la Barceló, mixed media on canvas, (detail), 2024



Marcel-la Barceló, mixed media on canvas, (detail), 2024



Marcel-la Barceló, acrylic and oil on canvas, (detail), 2024

"I love, indeed, to regard the dark valleys, and the grey rocks, and the waters that silently smile, and the forests that sigh in uneasy slumbers, and the proud watchful mountains that look down upon all — I love to regard these as themselves but the colossal members of one vast animate and sentient whole — a whole whose form (that of the sphere) is the most perfect and the most inclusive of all"

The Island of the Fay, Edgar Allan Poe

HdM Gallery presents Island of the Fay, a duo show of works by painter Marcel-la Barceló (b. 1992, Palma de Majorca, Spain; lives in Paris, France) and sculptor Apollinaria Broche (b. 1995, Moscow, Russia; lives in Paris, France) at Frieze No. 9 Cork Street, London. The show is curated by Nick Hackworth.

INTRODUCTION

The exhibition brings together two new bodies of work - a group of Marcel-la Barceló's chromatic, figurative paintings that depict often solitary figures in dreamlike landscapes, with a collection of bronze and ceramic sculptures by Apollinaria Broche of lushly surreal, human-sized flowers and plants and diminutive sylvan creatures in various states of metamorphosis. The meeting of the works by these two artists with their mutually sympathetic thought-worlds, casts the show as a portal to an otherworldly place where human and more-than-human life and the mythic seamlessly intermingle as part of a dynamic, abundant and numinous whole.

CULTURAL CONTEXT AND INFLUENCES

The exhibition takes its title from the eponymous essay by Edgar Allan Poe. One of his most ethereal texts, The Island of the Fay is a philosophical meditation in fictional form on the particular profundity of the solitary experience of the natural world and on the cycles of death and rebirth that shape existence. In it, the narrator discovers an enchanted island that is variously radiantly vital and somber and necrotic at either end and imagines it to be the last home on earth of Fays - sprites in other words. They end by recounting a vision in which they imagine the last of the Fays rapidly circling the island in a boat, in a metaphor of their lifecycle, until they finally fade from view. Poe's The Island of the Fay forms part of a literary tradition of employing islands as allegories for consciousness, as in Treasure Island, Robinson Crusoe and The Island of

Dr. Moreau, and is a text close to the heart of both artists.

Another point of cultural communion for the artists and one that influences the work in this show, is their respective love of multiple aspects of Japanese culture. It is a deep engagement that, collectively, encompasses traditional painting and ceramic arts, contemporary Japanese art, film and subcultures such as anime and manga and Japanese folklore, animism and Shinto. Marcel-la has visited and worked for extended periods in Japan many times and Broche has recently returned from a residency and exhibition in Tokyo.

ON THE WORKS OF MARCEL-LA BARCELÓ IN THE SHOW

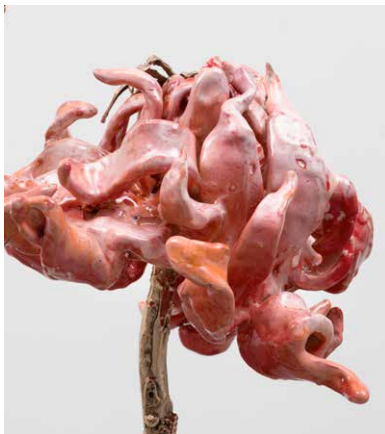
The paintings that Marcel-la presents in the show are animated by a powerful sense of entwined dualities. *Island of the Fay*, (2024) with its purple-red sky and reflective expanse of water, is redolent with a still, mysterious and lunar quality. *Morel* (2024) meanwhile features a mysterious and inviting figure standing on the shoreline with their silhouette and the bright, abundant landscape behind, reflected in the expansive water in the foreground. There is a powerful sense of a holistic vitality in the scene. It recalls the fundamental belief of animism in its many manifestations, including in Shinto in which nature spirits, or kami are worshipped, an idea important to Marcel-la. Elsewhere, figures in several paintings, as in *Le Complexe d'Ophélie* (2024), hold yogic poses that in both form and name connect with nature and animals, symbolically hinting at the possibility of transformation that lies within us all. This line of thought and articulation find fuller, alchemically accented expression in Marcel-la's painting of a mandrake, long associated with witchcraft, with a human head for a root. As always with Marcel-la's work, the paintings here exhibit an impressive fluidity in their handling of form and, by turns, a delicate and powerful use of colour. Similarly to Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, Marcel-la invites us to step through her paintings into another world.

ON THE WORKS OF APOLLINARIA BROCHE IN THE SHOW

The several, human sized, beautifully surreal, bronze and ceramic flowering plant sculptures that Broche has planted in the gallery would likely find fertile homes in Marcel-la's paintings. A similar sense of organic intelligence runs through these and Broche's other works, compellingly shaped by a surreal sensibility reminiscent of modern artists such as Leonora Carrington and inspired by metamorphic folklore and myth. Having recently carried them back to Europe in her memory, here Broche sculpts ceramic flower forms inspired by flowers common to Japanese gardens and depicted in traditional Japanese flower calendars that chart the seasons in flowers and plants and elucidate their cultural meetings. The symbolism of colour is of great importance in Broche's work. In previous bodies of her flower works, bright, vivid colours flourished. Here softer pastels and fading tones bloom - the shades and colours of nostalgia and fleeting memories. Dotted around the gallery and amongst the flower sculptures, Broche brings to life tiny sprite-like creatures, caught in moments as they fluidly move between their anthropomorphic and floral forms - the fays identified by Poe's perhaps, liberated from his text. Like Barceló's drawing of the mandrake-human, a form that unifies earth and sky, Broche offers us, installed towards the end of the main gallery space, a sculpture of a delicate, silver rope ladder that climbs into the ceiling - another portal allowing us to transcend our earthbound world and enter that of the imagination and spirit beyond - one of essential promises of art itself.



Apollinaria Broche, Glazed ceramic, bronze, decal, (detail), 2024



Apollinaria Broche, Glazed ceramic, bronze, decal, (detail), 2024



Apollinaria Broche, Glazed ceramic, bronze, decal, (detail), 2024



Beijing space



Beijing space



Founders

HdM GALLERY

Created in 2009 by Hadrien de Montferrand with the support of Laurent Dassault and Olivier Hervet, HdM Gallery specializes in all disciplines of contemporary art – painting, sculpture, video and installation - with a particular focus on Chinese artists. Based in Beijing, it opened a project space in Paris in 2021.

The gallery is dedicated to supporting recognized artists from different horizons; most of its Chinese artists are in the early stage of their career and the gallery promotes their work abroad. International artists on the other hand are more established and the gallery mainly attempts to raise awareness of their work in China.

Besides its normal exhibition program, HdM Gallery participates in art fairs in China and abroad including Art Basel Hong Kong, Art021 Shanghai, Art Brussels and Art Geneva, produces academic catalogues, and organizes institutional shows for its artists.

FOUNDERS

Hadrien de Montferrand has long served as a bridge between the Art worlds of China and Europe. His more than seven years at various auction houses and Art institutions included roles as marketing director for ARTCURIAL, the largest French auction house, and for the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art in Beijing.

Laurent Dassault , an entrepreneur to the core, helped to found Arquna, continental Europe' s leading horse auction house, in 2006. His entrepreneurial spirit extends to his charitable activities as well: Laurent serves as the administrator of the "Friends of Pompidou Museum' s Association" in Paris, and heads the development committee for the auction house ARTCURIAL.

Olivier Hervet graduated with an MA in Classics from Oxford University in 2008. After working for Hadrien de Montferrand Gallery since its inception in 2009 where he developed the gallery' s network of young collectors, he became a partner in 2012 with the goal of opening a second space in China.

No.9 Cork Street, London W1S 3LL

Duration: 28 November 2024 - 14 December 2024

Opening Hours: Tuesday - Saturday from 10am to 6pm

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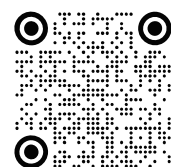
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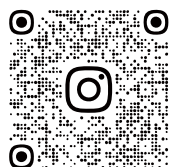
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