



The Top Emerging Artists of 2016 Artsy editorial, 2016

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Portrait of Marguerite Humeau in her London studio by Kate Berry for Artsy.

Humeau is filled with existential questions: What is life; what does it mean to exist? But rather than just lie awake at night, the young French artist collaborates with scientists and specialists on rigorous, research-based projects—not to solve these enigmas, but to revel in them. Humeau has been on our radar since her standout solo exhibition at DUVE Berlin in 2015. But this year—with a powerful presentation at Manifesta 11, her first solo museum exhibition at Palais de Tokyo, a prize for best work at the Moscow Young Art Biennial (which she shared with Brazilian-American artist Juliana Cerqueira Leite), and a solo booth at Frieze London, among others—has cemented her place among the next generation of rising stars.

Counting linguists, paleontologists, zoologists, explorers, and elephant specialists among her collaborators in 2016, Humeau has focused her research on the origins of life, language, and love. In each of her projects, holes in scientific knowledge are filled in by fantastic, speculative narratives. At Palais de Tokyo, Humeau takes us back to the moment some 100,000 years ago when a mutated gene spurred the beginning of human consciousness. Ten elephants, enacting a mourning ritual, reimagine our world if pachyderms had instead become the dominant species. “Marguerite feeds her work with our past, present, and future writing of the world, and the infinite potential we have to collectively transform it,” says the show’s curator, Rebecca Lamarche-Vadel. In the spring, Humeau’s commission for New York’s High Line will be followed by a solo show with C L E A R I N G in May and a solo show at the Schinkel Pavillon in Berlin in June.