



CLEARING

Griffe, langue, rose et écailles

An exhibition of new works by **Jean-Marie Appriou**
September 6 – October 20, 2018

Griffe, langue, rose et écailles unfolds on the banks of a river of quicksilver. It is magnetic, drawing animals – monkeys, piranhas, jaguars, serpents – and humans alike: flute-playing children, pert-buttocksed young men playing the lyre, and languid women dozing as their bodies seem to melt back into the earth.

Are we witnessing a grandiose eden – a symbiosis of man and beast in perfect co-attraction – or the mythic staging of a far more predictable mutual threat?

For his third solo exhibition at C L E A R I N G, Jean-Marie Appriou presents a large scale sculptural installation, an ecosystem in cast aluminum and glass. We humans have always had strange ways of expressing our longing to belong as we hang at the precipice of nature: Like Orpheus, we play music to allure “the trees, the savage animals, and even the insensate rocks” in hopes that they will follow us. But nature, as we know, does not answer the calls of any one of its creatures alone.

Our attempts at seduction only betray our desire to be seduced.

The influence of the Symbolists is rarely far away in Appriou’s oeuvre: the strangled and wispy markings of Gustave Moreau; the impossible scenography of Pierre Puvis de Chavannes; the statuesque, dangerous erotics of Fernand Khnopff’s women all cast their aura over the strange combination of vulnerability and monumentality in Appriou’s sculptures.

It is no mistake that he takes his cues from the painterly: Appriou’s creatures are gestural, their craggy exteriors suggesting constant motion. Figures appear topographical, their shapes accentuated with finger-carved lines that almost resemble brushstrokes. Still, the curiosity of Appriou’s alchemical process, his relentless pursuit of studio-based experimentation, remains at the forefront. The sculptures in *Griffe, langue, rose et écailles* are markedly darker, more roughly hewn. Rather than emerging polished and painted, brutal traces of their foundry beginnings remain solemnly intact; only the oil-slick iridescence and the burnishing of certain pieces is allowed to catch the light.

Quietly apart from the beastly melee, rose bushes dot the exhibition space. They are symbols of the mystical and romantic rapport humans have with nature, a testament to the appreciation of its fragility, a warning against rashness.

Jean-Marie Appriou (born 1986 in Brest, FR) lives and works in Paris.

His work has been exhibited at Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris; Palais de Tokyo, Paris; Musée d’Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris; Château de Versailles; David Roberts Art Foundation, London; Astrup Fearnley Museet, Oslo; Vienna Biennale; as well as Établissement d’en face, Brussels; Jan Kaps, Cologne; Simon Lee, New York; Eva Presenhuber, Zurich; and C L E A R I N G New York and Brussels.

This year, he will have a solo exhibition at C L E A R I N G Brussels, BE, and Eva Presenhuber, Zurich, CH. In 2019, he will have a Public Art Fund commission at Doris C. Freedman Plaza in New York.

Jean-Marie Appriou’s work is part of the collections of Musée d’Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris; Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris; Fondation Pinault, Venice; Museo Jumex, Mexico City; the Zabłudowicz Collection, London; and Vanhaerents Art Collection, Brussels.