



**VERY RICH HOURS**  
An exhibition of new works by **Jean-Marie Appriou**  
September 11 - November 1, 2020  
C L E A R I N G, New York

Jean-Marie Appriou is fascinated by journeys, by the innately human infatuation with the unknown that has inspired our boldest scientific leaps and most seductive legends. The knights of medieval lore sought the Holy Grail and eternal youth. Today, paleontologists seek the origins of life on earth while astronauts search for new lifeforms altogether, venturing deeper into space. In his latest works, Appriou conjures up these epic quests, real and imagined, and shows us how they hold a mirror—not only to our collective ambition—but to our yearning to understand our own small place in this vast and mysterious universe.

In a series of intimately scaled, subtly radiant bas-reliefs, Appriou's painterly, alchemical approach to sculpture is on full display—in these works the artist has coaxed the metal to become water, fire, earth, air, and flesh. Each piece depicts a knight alongside real or mythical creatures (moles, frill-necked dinosaurs, and saber-toothed tigers, to name a few) and their titles allude to transitional times of day—moments of metamorphosis. In *The Waterline (Dawn)*, our hero floats serenely, eyes closed and arms outstretched, among the waterlilies beside a plesiosaur. The ripples distort the edges of the knight's body like expressionistic brushstrokes, blurring the boundaries between it and the primordial world, rendered in shimmering purple, delicate green, and gold. The figure in *The Primitive Soup (Dusk)* strides between two sauropods, stepping past a bubbling volcanic crater, through mystical twilight shades of silver and lavender fraught with umber shadows. *Sunrise, Evening, Night*—by evoking the earth's daily passage around the sun, Appriou speaks to grander time scales that have brought us from the planet's formation to the present and will carry us further still. Tellingly, many of these scenes involve water. It is a door between worlds for the artist—the fluid temporal membrane between our modern selves and a primordial era when our ancestors drifted alongside ancient jellyfish. As the artist points out, water is also the holy grail of space travel—where we find water we may also hope to find other organisms. In these works, with their swirling ripples and waves of bronze, Appriou opens a portal, inviting him to journey with him, to discover what we might find when we allow our imaginations to quest alongside knights of the distant past and remote future.

Four new sculptures—*The Blood Drop, The Water Drop, The Pearl Keeper, and The Berry Keeper*—each depict androgynous bronze astronauts (the knights of our modern world) crouching among the scaly coils of serpentine dinosaurs. They wear chainmail, sabatons, and delicate glass helmets (rosy pink, glacial blue, yellow, and violet, respectively), hand-blown by the artist. The reptiles and life-size human figures are physically conjoined, as though they are extensions of the same hybrid being. Astronauts (a recurring subject for Appriou) are metaphors for the future in his work. By fusing them here to long-extinct beasts, the artist suggests how tightly the prehistoric past and faraway times ahead are entwined in our imagination. For all their richly metaphorical layers, these works are also strikingly physical. Appriou is a master of texture and color, and the swooping limbs and torqueing forms of these sculptures are alive with blue and russet scales, golden links of mail, and expressive ridges, dimples, and crests of bronze.

Appriou, who grew up in Brittany immersed in science fiction, Arthurian lore, and comic books, has conjured up six heroes of Arthur's Round Table in another new series of works. Lancelot, Perceval, Tristan, Yvain, Modred, and Gauvain pace through the gallery, each one bearing a hatchling dinosaur on a platter encased in glass. Striding forward, staring straight ahead, these slender, childlike chevaliers in vibrant tunics radiate a magnetic sense of clear-eyed purpose. Their procession nods to the tale of Perceval, who first saw the Grail being carried on a tray through the castle of the Fisher King. By replacing the Grail with embryonic dinosaurs in these sculptures, Appriou underscores the kindred nature of our quests for eternal life, prehistoric ancestors, and extraterrestrial beings lightyears away. With these new works, Appriou leads us to the crossroads of fact and fantasy, fusing the past and present with an equal sense of wonder and potential.

—Zoë Lescaze

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

His work has been exhibited in New York with Public Art Fund; and at Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris; Palais de Tokyo, Paris; Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris; Le Consortium, Dijon; Lyon Biennial; Château de Versailles; Astrup Fearnley Museet, Oslo; David Roberts Art Foundation, London; MAK, Vienna; as well as Jan Kaps, Cologne; Simon Lee, New York; Eva Presenhuber, Zurich; and C L E A R I N G New York and Brussels.

Jean-Marie Appriou's work is part of the collections of Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris; Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris; Zabludowicz Collection, London; and Vanhaerents Art Collection, Brussels.