

Press Release

Berlinde De Bruyckere

Hauser & Wirth Zurich, Limmatstrasse
26 January – 13 May 2023



Layering spiritual iconography and ancient mythology with narratives of transience, carnality and sensuality, Berlinde De Bruyckere surpasses religious connotations and transfers them to the realm of the universal and profane. Presenting a powerful meditation upon the fundamental human search for transformation, transcendence and reconciliation in the light of mortality, De Bruyckere's upcoming exhibition at Hauser & Wirth Zurich, Limmatstrasse will feature new bronze and lead sculptures from the Arcangelo series. Alongside these, a selection of monumental framed relief works and paper collages from the artist's It almost seemed a lily series will be shown. Spanning both painting and sculpture, De Bruyckere works with wax, animal skins, paper, textiles, metal and wood to create hybrid forms with human, animal and plant features.

Placed high on plinths, De Bruyckere's Arcangeli cast in bronze and lead offer protection, in spite of the heavy burden they seem to carry; captured in a dynamic moment of imbalance, tilting slightly forward, they are at once about to rise up, yet are weighed down. Hovering between divine supremacy and human fragility, these mysterious, hybrid figures merge distinct human figuration with animal hides, revealing pointed protrusions at the shoulders that reinforce the suggestion of wings. These beings appear to carry a dark secret under their cloak of fluidly-draped skins and conjure an image as consoling and inviting as it is unnerving. A larger version of the Arcangelo sculptures is on view at the newly reopened Diözesanmuseum Freising in Germany, responding to the museum's collection of late Gothic sculptures.

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Following her recent critically-acclaimed exhibitions at MO.CO. Montpellier Contemporain, France and the Arp Museum Bahnhof Rolandseck in Remagen, Germany, the artist will also present works from her It almost seemed a lily series. Inspired by the richly decorated Enclosed Gardens from Mechelen, Belgium, De Bruyckere realized her own large scale versions of these 16th century private altars for worship and meditation. Dominated by the figure of the withering flower, her wall sculptures show the intertwining of nature and history and offer an overriding sense of fragility in the way they are assembled and layered. Permeated with their own history, found wallpaper and blankets provide the backdrop to the enlarged flowers and petals, framed by oak planking from the 18th Century. 'I connect the petals of the lilies to images of skin, of flesh; their fragrance to lust and pleasure; their unsavoury smell while wilting to ephemerality and pain,' the artist explains. This sense of frailty is also explored in the artist's new collages of the same name, composed using abstract petals cut from found tracing papers embossed with flower patterns for needlework, and sutured together. Above all, De Bruyckere's work is based upon the dialectic experienced between images of current affairs and the breath of universal and timeless parables.

For additional information, please contact:

Anna-Maria Pfab, Hauser & Wirth, annamariapfab@hauserwirth.com, +41 79 965 50 89 (Europe)

Maddy Martin, Hauser & Wirth, maddymartin@hauserwirth.com +44 7585 979564 (Europe)

Hauser & Wirth Zurich, Limmatstrasse

Limmatstrasse 270
8005 Zurich

Opening hours:

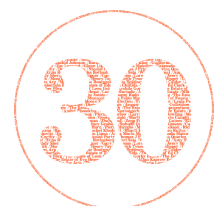
Tue – Fri, 11 am – 6 pm

Sat, 11 am – 5 pm

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Caption and courtesy information:

Image:
Installation view, 'Berlinde De Bruyckere,
Arcangelo (Freising), 2022 (detail),' Diözesan
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