

MASSIMODECARLO

CARNIVAL

MATTHEW MONAHAN, LUIGI ONTANI, ZHAO GANG

Massimo De Carlo is pleased to present Carnival, an exhibition with works by artists Luigi Ontani (Grizzana Morandi, Italy, 1943), Zhao Gang (Beijing, China, 1961) and Matthew Monahan (Eureka, California, US, 1972). The three artists are known for practices that are extremely different from one another, yet all three encompass and explore the mythological and the fictional, decadence and futuristic optimism, the popular and the niche. Each artist, through different mediums, investigates the multi-facet perspectives and shades of the human being, both as a figure and as an existence, as faces and as masks.

Italian artist Luigi Ontani uses the self as the starting point of his research drawing inspiration from his own image and body and creating allegorical, biblical and folkloristic figures. Brightly tinted wooden sculptures representing devilish, carnivalesque creatures inspired by the artist frequent travels in Asia, are paired with the drawings that inspired them, highlighting the process of transforming paper into the three-dimensional.

Matthew Monahan's golden sculpture masks are the result of violent and raw creation process, where the gesture is key and underlines the precision of human hands compared to machines. Each mask is composed like a metallic origami, the artist folds the sheets of metal, that appear weightless yet hefty, and that addresses the idea of figuration. The artist's gesture of transforming materials into anthropomorphic shapes introducing a dynamic narrative that questions classicism, industrialism and futurism.

Chinese painter Zhao Gang presents a series of eerie and colourful canvases, where each character portrayed has his or hers face concealed by a mask. In between Western and Eastern traditions, each painting recounts a tale of identity anxiety. The symbolism and meaning of the mask, and its powers, is explored encompassing Chinese tradition and Western classicism through the traditional medium of painting.

The exhibition evolves through an array of concealments and faces, bodies and shaper that are charged with rhetoric and a multiplicity of meanings. Luigi Ontani trades his image with the appropriation of different and exotic character types and roles, creating enticing sculptural works, while Zhao Gang infuses traditional Chinese compositions and imagery to produce an uncanny series of portraits. Matthew Monahan, through the evocation of the classical, creates contemporary creatures made of aluminium and gold leaves, embodying the cold aesthetic of technology and the nostalgia of mythology.

Carnival is an exhibition that challenges our perception of ourselves, asking us to reveal and confront the various masks we use to adapt to different situations, how flexible are we? How many different versions of us exist?

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LUIGI ONTANI

Luigi Ontani was born in 1943 in Vergato, Bologna. He lives and works in Rome, Italy. His work has been exhibited in prominent institutions such as, among others: “er” “SIMULÀCRUM” “amò”, GAMeC, Bergamo, Italy (2015); *Rivoltartealtrove*, Castello di Rivoli, Turin, Italy (2011); *AuroboruSerpentine*, The Serpentine Gallery, London (2010); *CapoDIOMonte*, Museo di Capodimonte, Naples, Italy (2009); *VetriEtereEteroclit*, Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice, Italy (2006). Selected group exhibitions include: TATE Modern, London (2012); MAXXI, Rome (2009). He was selected to participate in Manifesta (2008), Biennale de Lyon (2000), New Delhi Triennial (1991), Sydney Biennial (1986), and multiple editions of the Venice Biennale (1972, 1978, 1984, 1986, 1995, 2003).

MATTHEW MONAHAN

Matthew Monahan was born in Eureka, California in 1972. He lives and works in Los Angeles. Recent solo exhibitions include: Museo Nazionale Romano in Palazzo Altemps, Rome (2016); Vancouver Contemporary Art Gallery, Vancouver, Canada (2012); *Mineral Spirits*, Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, (2010); Focus: Matthew Monahan, Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (2007). Group shows include: Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing (2014). Matthew Monahan’s work was featured at the 53th Venice Biennale (2009).

ZHAO GANG

Zhao Gang was born in Beijing in 1961. He lives and works between Beijing and New York. Recent solo exhibitions include: *Zhao Gang Solo Exhibition*, Tang Contemporary Art, Hong Kong (2017); *Sick Man – Zhao Gang Solo Exhibition*, Today Art Museum, Beijing (2011). Group exhibitions include: *Yokohoma Triennale*, Yokohoma, Japan (2009); *Yi School: Thirty Years of ‘Abstract Art’ Preview in Beijing*, Wall Art Museum, Beijing (2007); *Origin Point: ‘Star Group’ Retrospective Exhibition*, Today Art Museum, Beijing (2007).

Hard Facts:

Massimo De Carlo, Hong Kong
3d Floor Pedder Building, 12 Pedder Street, Central, Hong Kong
From July 14th
Open Tuesday to Saturday, 10:30am – 7.00pm
Opening: Thursday 13th July 2017

For further information and materials:

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