

Jan Fabre

Maskers

28 September – 9 November 2017

Opening: 28 September 2017, 7pm

*I'm getting better and better at drawing myself.
I'm starting to get to know my mug, my mask.
What is a self-portrait?
Someone who denies he's dead.*

Jan Fabre, Antwerp, 3 February 1980

Magazzino is delighted to announce *Maskers*, the gallery's sixth solo show by Belgian artist **Jan Fabre**, curated by Melania Rossi.

This project brings together some of Fabre's sculptural work that explores the theme of self-portraits, both as a form of enquiry into human nature and as an attempt to represent and liberate the various personalities that make up a person's identity.

When looking at ourselves in the mirror, do we really see ourselves? We may think we are able to seize our own image, but it's not something we are truly able to do. The human body is in a constant state of transformation. The many faces we possess change inexorably over the course of time. Jan Fabre explores the elusiveness of "self" in his *Chapters I-XVIII* (2010) series of gilded bronze and wax statues – busts in which the artist portrays himself with the addition of animal attributes. The metamorphosis of man into animal and of animal into man is a key feature in all Fabre's work. Here, in amongst the horns and ears from a multitude of species, the artist assembles a kind of anthropomorphic bestiary in which the perfection of anatomical details and a number of coloured elements conceal meanings that straddle the autobiographical and the symbolic.

Fabre appears to us as an impenitent and seductive satyr; as a merciless and diabolical dictator; as a brazen rebel; a proud and seraphic sage; and as a man defeated, forced into ridicule by wearing donkeys' ears. The result is theatricality that spans all genres of surreal narrative, veering from the grotesque to the ironic, the dramatic and even the fearful.

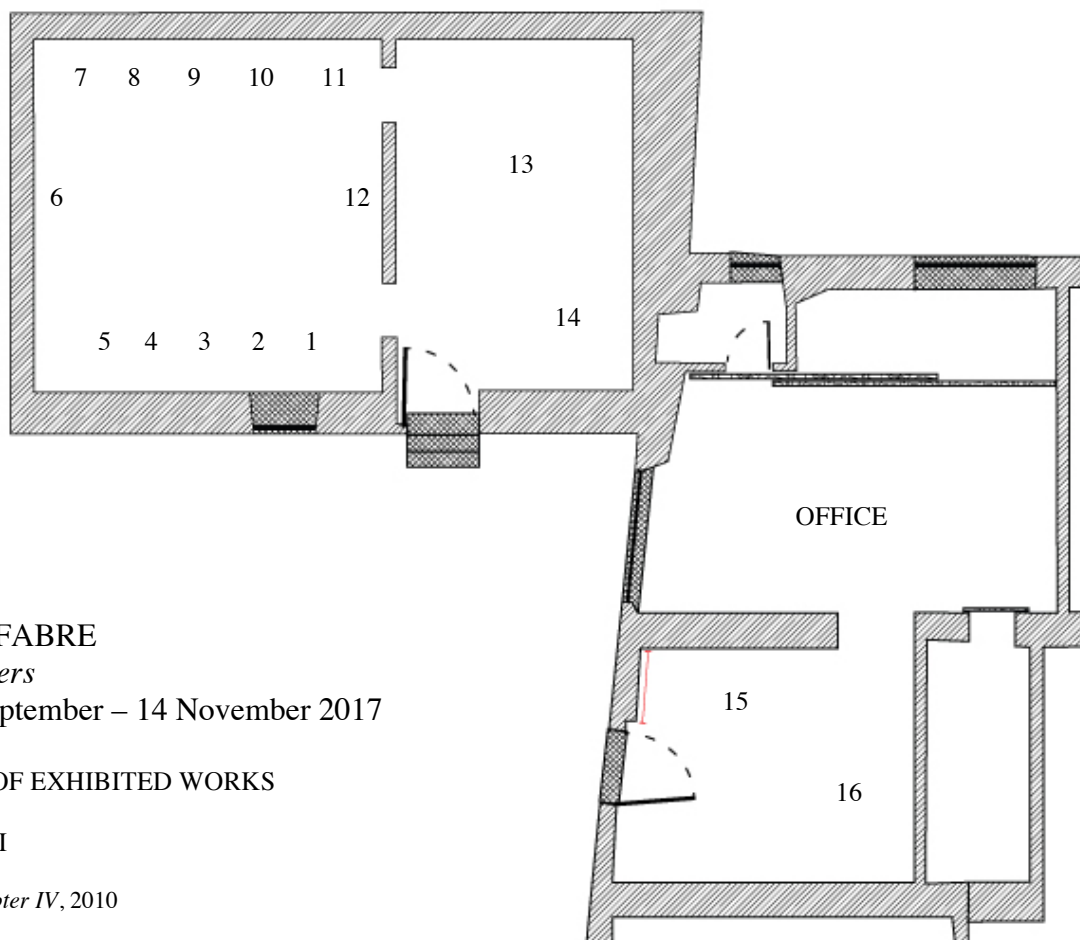
"My body is a reservoir that contains all human elements: memories, events and identities," wrote a young Fabre in 1986 in his *Night Diary*. Appearance, character, education and experience make us who we are. We can, however, potentially be everything; our identity is a carnival of characters who appear, disappear and cohabit. This series of self-portraits becomes an exposition of a complex personality, a struggle between a will to attack and the need for defence, a struggle between fury and vulnerability. A kind of ghost of a thousand faces, in which the apparently fixed features are actually never the same.

In its form, the naturalism of Fabre's works follows the Flemish tradition of his ideal Belgian masters: of Pieter Paul Rubens who painted many self-portraits during his lifetime; of James Ensor, painter of masks and of death, to whom Fabre's vitalistic "memento mori" bronze skull *Vanitas Compass* (2011) would appear to refer.

Also on show are a number of Fabre's real helmet-masks, some of which are bronze versions of headgear Jan Fabre wore in his performances. Together with the mask-faces from his *Chapters* series, they both reveal and conceal the ramifications of the artist's self and of the human soul.

For over thirty-five years, Jan Fabre (Antwerp, 1958) has been one of the most innovative and significant figures on the contemporary arts scene. Committed to the visual arts, a theatrical creator and more, Fabre proposes a clear and tangible reflection on life and death, on physical and social transformation, and on a raw and intelligent representation of animals and human beings. The artist has created a personal world with its very own rules and laws, its own characters, symbols and recurring motifs. He invites us into his universe through nocturnal writings and notes that he has published in a number of volumes, under the overarching title Night Diary. An all-round artist, Fabre combines performance art with the theatre. Indeed, he has succeeded in modifying the mode of expression itself by bringing to the stage real actions undertaken in real time. Jan Fabre was the first contemporary artist to have a solo show at the Louvre Museum in Paris (2008). Many of his installations have appeared in public spaces, including at Tivoli Castle in Mechelen (1990), the Palais Royal in Brussels (2002), the Musée Royaux des Beaux-Arts in Brussels (2013), and at Antwerp Cathedral (2015). He has exhibited at the world's top museums: Palazzo Benzon, Venice (2007), Kunsthaus Bregenz (2008), Arsenale Novissimo, Venice (2009), Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (2011), Nuova Scuola Grande di Santa Maria della Misericordia, Venice (2011), and MAXXI, Rome (2013). In 2016, for his Spiritual Guards exhibition in Florence, Jan Fabre exhibited over eighty works in Piazza della Signoria, Palazzo Vecchio and Forte di Belvedere. His exhibition at the Hermitage in St Petersburg, which concluded on 30 April 2017, attracted 1,160,000 spectators.

MAGAZZINO



JAN FABRE

Maskers

28 September – 14 November 2017

LIST OF EXHIBITED WORKS

Room I

1. *Chapter IV*, 2010

Bronze

25 x 64 x 27 cm

2. *Chapter IX – Watusi Bull*, 2010

Bronze

29 x 78 x 74 cm

3. *Chapter XVIII – Flemish Giant*, 2010

Bronze

32 x 51 x 31 cm

4. *Chapter I – Goat*, 2010

Bronze

35 x 44 x 25 cm

5. *Chapter XVII – Red Deer*, 2010

Bronze

22 x 127 x 67 cm

6. *Chapter X – Kudu*, 2010

Wax

53 x 116 x 64 cm

7. *Chapter VI – Water Buffalo*, 2010

Wax

31 x 64 x 32 cm

8. *Chapter XVII – Moose / Taurotragus*, 2010

Wax

25 x 100 x 26 cm

9. *Chapter VII – Oryx Gazelle*, 2010

Wax

25 x 93 x 63 cm

10. *Chapter III – Jacob four-horned Sheep*, 2010

Wax

29 x 78 x 74 cm

11. *Chapter XVIII – Flemish Giant*, 2010

Wax

32 x 51 x 31 cm

12. *Chapter VIII – Mouflon of Flanders*, 2010

Bronze

37 x 48 x 23 cm

Room II

13. *Oryctis Rhinoceros (Helm voor Jan)*, 2011

Bronze

45 x 21 x 42 cm

14. *Punaise varken/Thumb-tack Pig/Porc Punaises*, 2012

Bronze

43 x 30 x 28 cm

Room III

15. *Vanitas Wijzer*

Bronze

20 x 14 x 18 cm

16. *Vanitas Licht*, 2011

Wax

20 x 14 x 18 cm