BENOÎT MAIRE
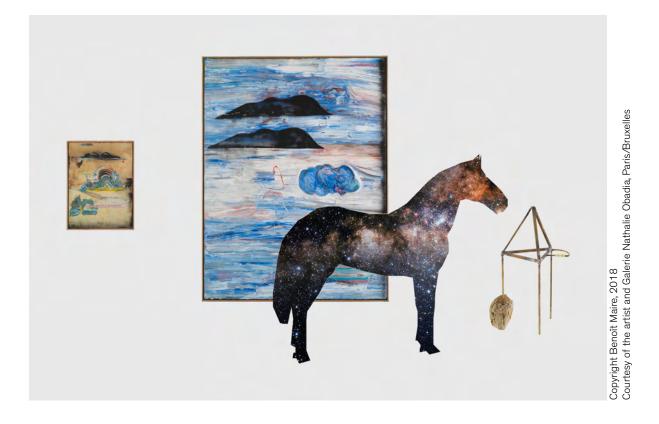
Un cheval, des silex

June 8 - July 21, 2018

3, rue du Cloître Saint-Merri, 75004 - Paris

Galerie Nathalie Obadia is very pleased to present *Un cheval, des silex* (One Horse, Some Flints), Benoît Maire's first solo show at the gallery. The artist, born in Pessac in 1978, creates work that is protean: at the intersection of aesthetics and visual arts, it questions the limits of representation. His work calls on painting, sculpture, photography, video, writing, and performance. He is at present the subject of a large exhibition at the CAPC Contemporary Art Museum of Bordeaux, until September 2, 2018, and his first monograph, published by the CAPC, will be out on May 19.

For this exhibition, Benoît Maire combines different works: *Peintures de nuages* (Cloud Paintings) hang on the walls, the *Sphinx* (Sphinxes) are suspended in mid-air, and *Châteaux* (Castles) sit atop pedestals or peculiar pieces of furniture. Some of his works levitate around us, while others seem to emerge from their bases to put themselves on display, but all co-exist to give body to an ambiguity (which, therefore, can be interpreted in two or more different ways).

The *Peintures de nuages* inscribe themselves in a series that the artist began in 2012. The works are oils on canvases, varying in format, upon which he depicts clouds, using a spray gun, paintbrush, or painting knife. The result is at times fluid and at others vaporous, with its translucent glazes. These paintings give birth to motifs that turn into figures who question the limits of abstraction by playing with the concept of pareidolia—a psychological phenomenon by which we recognize familiar shapes in landscapes, clouds, or ink stains. Through his careful composition and use of pentimenti, Benoît Maire invites us to project our imagination on these colorful backdrops and on these clouds with their blurry outlines.

The *Sphinx* and *Châteaux* are sculptures that confront natural objects with manufactured ones. The artist questions these elements by assembling different shapes, colors, and materials. Suspended shells float next to pieces of molded crystal; metal structures are affixed to bubble levels; a fossilized rock points at us. These simultaneously concrete and conceptual assemblages are polysemous: beyond *ready-mades*, Benoît Maire examines the nature and power of his objects, while at the same time bestowing upon them a quasi-anthropomorphic dimension.

In Benoît Maire's work, material is not just physical: it is also theoretical. Art and philosophy are inseparable. Concepts elaborated by Lyotard, Agamben, Bataille, or Lacan flood his works the way physical substances can. While it is the distinction between nature and culture that comes into question, Benoît Maire is also interested in the intrinsic qualities of the objects, which he chooses for their enigmatic power. His first exhibition at the gallery, *Un cheval, des silex*, rests on the axiom that "the plural of horse is flints." The artist, whose sense of humor suffuses his work, appears to be teasing us: what can he possibly mean by suggesting that the plural of horse would be flints? A conundrum prevails and hangs over the suspended landscape of this installation, and, while it remains unresolved, the enigma seems to go on forever.

Benoît Maire was born in 1978, in Pessac (France). He lives and works in Bordeaux (France).

About ten years ago, the artist began to write a manual of aesthetics, where images, objects, and texts come together to question contemporary aesthetics. Benoît Maire received his DNSEP degree from the Arson Villa in Nice (France, 2003) and a master's degree in Philosophy from Sorbonne, Paris 1 (France, 2002). He was granted a residency at the Palais de Tokyo, in Paris (France, 2005-2006).

His work has been the subject of numerous solo exhibitions, including *Thebes*, now on view at the CAPC Contemporary Art Museum of Bordeaux (France, 2018); and recently *Disaster*, at Galerie Croy Nielsen in Vienna (Austria, 2017); *Cloud Paintings*, at the Arsenal in New York (USA, 2017); *Castled*, at José García in Mérida, Yucatán (Mexico, 2016); *Castling the Queen*, at Meessen de Clercq in Brussels (Belgium, 2016); *George Slays the Dragon*, at the Bielefelder Kunstverein (Germany, 2016); *Nuages et déchets*, at Galerie Thomas Bernard-Cortex Athletico in Paris (France, 2015); *Sticker Beings*, at Kiria Koula in San Francisco (USA, 2015); *Letre* at La Verrière-Fondation Hermès in Brussels (Belgium, 2014); *Spiaggia di menzogne (Lying Beach)* at Fondazione Giuliani in Rome (Italy, 2013); *Weapon* at the David Roberts Art Foundation in London (United Kingdom, 2013); *Soon the metal between us will turn into gold* at the Kunsthalle in Mulhouse (France, 2011); and *The Object of Criticism* at Vleeshal Center for Contemporary Art in Middelburg (Holland, 2011).

Benoît Maire was also included in important group shows, held at prestigious institutions, including, right now, *Nature Morte ou le préfixe conceptuel de l'art romantique*, which he also curated, at the Art Center of the Domaine de Château Chasse-Spleen in Moulis-en-Médoc (France, 2018); *Give Up The Ghost* - Baltic Triennal 13 in Vilnius (Lithuania, 2018), *Paris Peinture* at the Quadrilatère in Beauvais (France, 2018) *KEDEM-KODEM-KADIMA* at the CCA in Tel Aviv (Israel, 2018); *Sans Réserves* at Mac/Val in Vitry-sur-Seine (France, 2017); *Réponse*, at MACL Saint-Jérôme in Québec (Canada, 2016); *L'effet vertigo*, at Mac/Val in Vitry-sur-Seine (France, 2015); *L'anatomie de l'automate*, at La Panacée in Montpellier (France, 2015); *Là où commence le jour*, at Lille-Métropole Modern Art Museum (LAM) (France, 2015); *Nel Mezzo del Mezzo*, at the Museo Riso in Palermo, Sicily (Italy, 2015); *Transmissions*, at the Beaux-Arts in Paris (France, 2015); *After Dark,* at MAMCO in Geneva (Switzerland, 2015); *L'usage des formes*, at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris (France, 2015); *Ernesto and Seymour*, at CEAAC (European Center for Contemporary Art Projects) in Strasbourg (France, 2014); *Le musée d'une nuit*, at the Hippocrene Foundation in Paris (France, 2014); *A House of Leaves*, at the David Roberts Art Foundation in London (United Kingdom, 2013); *Collections contemporaines*, at the Centre Pompidou in Paris (France, 2011); and *Tableaux*, at Magasin in Grenoble (France, 2011).

Benoît Maire won MECA's "1% artistique" prize (a project which will be realized by the Nouvelle-Aquitaine region, in France), with his work "Un detail" (A Detail), a bronze sculpture representing half of Hermes's head. The work will be installed on the outside steps later this year. He was also awarded the Solo Prize at Art Brussels 2017 with the Meesen de Clerq Gallery. In 2010, he received the Fondation Ricard Prize.

His work is present in important public and private collections, including FRAC Ile-de-France (Paris, France), FRAC Aquitaine (Bordeaux, France), the KADIST Art Foundation (Paris, France), the David Roberts Foundation (London, United Kingdom), FRAC Franche-Comté (Besançon, France), the Artotèque of Pessac (France), the CAPC Contemporary Art Museum of Bordeaux (France), the Nomas Foundation (Rome, Italy), the Centre Pompidou (Paris, France), the FNAC Fonds National d'Art Contemporain (Paris, France), the Fondazione Giuliani (Rome, Italy), the Mac/Val (Vitry-sur-Seine, France), the Fondation Francès (Senlis, France), and the Vancouver Art Gallery (Canada).

Paris Bourg-Tibourg

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Benoît Maire
Un cheval, des silex
june 8 - july 21

Summer show
june 20 - july 21

Meuser
september 8 - october 27

Rina Banerjee
september 8 - october 27

Edi Hila
september 6 - october 27

Wang Keping
november - december

Nú Barreto
november - december