

BORTOLAMI

Ann Veronica Janssens and Michel François

The Song of the Araponga

28 June – 9 August 2019

Opening Friday, June 28 from 6:00 – 8:00 pm

Bortolami is pleased to announce a two-person exhibition with Ann Veronica Janssens and Michel François. Former partners and collaborators, their new and recent works create a poetic exchange between the two artists. François presents objects and their implicit origins: a constructed corner, copied and reimagined from a courtyard in India; a soccer ball assembled from a leather jacket; worn sandals cast in bronze. Interspersed, Janssens places smooth, translucent glass rolls and brilliant white glitter scattered across the floor, iridescently. Their assemblage creates a tableau that is both aerial and terrestrial.

The sound of the araponga, or three-wattled bellbird, is curious and metallic. Its cry recalls a shared memory for Janssens and François, during a visit to Sao Paolo for the biennial in 1994. Five years later, they would represent Belgium in the Venice Biennale in 1999, and would show together again in a two-person exhibition at Fondation d'entreprise Hermès in 2015.

The Song of the Araponga could be interpreted as the narration of a creative principle, from a mimesis to an artefact. At first an oddity, a common source of wonderment, let us look at the title as an invitation: a jumping-off point, with the intention of returning to it. At first one notices the unreasonable persistence of a replica, which dates back to Aristotle and his mimesis; reassuring but somewhat old-fashioned. Yet this scene is critical; it is where the narrative resides, giving the impression that it is from here that the artefact will emerge. We still use this mimesis but kept only its perspective—it has become a symbolic form. The artefacts created for *The Song of the Araponga* create impressions of distinct scenarios, developed to set the stage for the paradox between the old-fashioned and the magical nature of things, the invention of a split, one makes it a stylistic device, an oxymoronic, hallucinatory position to converse with the araponga.

Jean-Paul Jacquet
(Translated from French)

Ann Veronica Janssens (b. 1956 in Folkestone, UK) lives and works in Brussels. Her work has been the subject of numerous solo exhibitions at museums worldwide, including Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki; De Pont Museum of Contemporary Art, Tilburg, The Netherlands; The Baltimore Museum of Art; Nasher Sculpture Center in Dallas, Texas; S.M.A.K. in Ghent, Belgium. She will be the subject of a retrospective at Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk, Denmark in 2020, which will travel to South London Gallery.

Michel François (b. 1956 in Saint-Trond, Belgium) lives and works in Brussels. His work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at Total Museum of Contemporary Art in Seoul, Korea; FRAC île-de-France, Renteilly, France; Middelheim Museum, Antwerp; Fundación Casa Wabi, Oaxaca, Mexico; Fondation d'Enterprise Hermès, Brussels; Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, UK; S.M.A.K. in Ghent, Belgium; and Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris.