

## Johan Creten

### *Dark Continent*

10 Impasse Saint-Claude : 9 January - 13 March, 2010

The Gallery Emmanuel Perrotin presents **Johan Creten *Dark Continent***, an exhibition of monumental and unseen works, from **9 January to 13 March, 2010**.

The title, inspired by Freud's famous metaphor, reveals all of the complexity of the universe of Johan Creten. The artist is fascinated by the woman and her convolutions. She is embodied in all the traits of the mother. She is nurturing and devouring, simultaneously creator and destructor. Johan Creten discovers the hidden power of the earth behind the apparent fragility of ceramics. He has preferred this polymorphous method since 1984 and continues to develop the art of metamorphosis. The artist uses, most notably in his large pieces, the technique of lost-wax bronze casting or the handmodeled and glazed stoneware, which he had previously explored in his exhibition *Contrepoint 2* at the Louvre in 2004, in order to imitate the delicate folds of the earth. The works of Johan Creten seem to have escaped from fables, fairy tales and symbolistic wonders. They borrow from the Renaissance grottos, where the artifice of nature reigns, from the Mannerist style of Arcimboldo and Bernard Palissy, and also from the «cabinets de curiosité» that he reproduces in his highly esteemed exhibition in 2008 at the Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature.

*Le Rocher*, 2010 from the series « Odore di Femmina » is renewed from the theme recurrent in his work since 1986 of the «femme fleur». This immense bronze bust measuring 2m75 and weighting nearly a ton, finished with a black patina and forming a multitude of flowers, suggests the female vulva, and is situated at the entrance of the gallery. Thought-provoking, this sculpture carries within its breast a hive of gilded bronze waiting to receive an active swarm. Like an abundant and buzzing fruit, she looks desirable and unattainable.

*Le Génie*, 2009 an ectoplasm seems to emerge from an oval base after being rubbed, like the genie in *The Thousand and One Nights*.

*The Collectors*, 2008-2009, feature three enigmatic squirrels, in glazed stoneware of exceptional height (2m), and made with the support of European Ceramic Work Center in the Netherlands. They resemble male caryatids or Egyptian gods. Keepers of old wisdom, the squirrels offer the visitors their precious objects.

*The Cradle*, 2009, incorporates the model of the wicker baskets found in the painting of The Flemish Primitives. Here, the gilded bronze object signifies a kind of alcove or the Christian cross of the Passion on top of a phallic and iconoclastic base. This technically astounding «trompe-l'œil» reveals the artist's fascination with intimacy, the bonds of family and individual destiny.

In the piece *I am a Good Horse on a Soft Brick*, 2005-2009, a woman with voluptuous curves, divine and sensual, sits atop a shape reminiscent of the Hindu lingam, a symbol of the union between masculine and feminine power.

The mural pieces evoke with their forms and their iridescent and shimmering glazes the ocean floor or the oversized vulvas like *Dark Continent*, 2009.

The baroque and brutal art of Johan Creten, one of vanities, unveils allegorically the human feelings in a world of plants and animals.

Johan Creten was born in Belgium. He works & lives in Paris & «wherever one wants him».

Solo Exhibitions: Galerie Saint Severin, Paris; Galerie Emmanuel Perrotin, Miami, USA ; Musée archéologique Henri-Prades, Lattes, France ; Keramiekmuseum Princessehof, Leeuwarden, Pays Bas ; Musée de la Chasse, coproduction avec la Manufacture Nationale de Sèvres, Paris, France ; Royal Museum of Mariemont, Morlanwelz, Belgium ; Stedelijk Museum de Lakenhal, Leiden, The Netherlands; Transit Galerie, Mechelen, Belgium ; De Garage, Mechelen, Belgium ; Bass Museum of Art, Miami, USA ; J.Johnson Gallery, Jacksonville, Florida, USA ; Elaine Baker, Boca raton, Florida, USA ; Robert Miller Gallery, New York, USA ; Riva Yares Gallery, Scottsdale, AZ and Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA ; Arte Actual Mexicano, Monterrey, Mexico ; MAMCO, Genève, Switzerland ; USA ; Musée des Arts décoratif, Paris, France

Group Exhibitions : Manufacture Nationale de Sèvres, Grand Hornu, Belgique ; Musei Capitolini, Rome, Italy ; Villa Giulia, Verbania, Italy ; Eglise Saint Jean, Le Monastier organisée par le Fonds Régional D'Art Contemporain Auvergne ; Sonsbeek, Pays Bas ; The Parrish Art Museum, Southampton, NY, USA ; Château de Jau, Fonds régional d'art contemporain, Languedoc-Rousillon, France ; Petit Palais, Paris ; Saint-Tropez, France ; Wallace Collection, London, England; Musée des Beaux Arts, Rouen, France ; Musée du Louvre, Paris, France ; C.U. Art Museum, Bolder, Colorado, USA ; MACO, Oaxaca, Mexico.



*The Collectors*, 2008-2009  
Glazed stoneware (Production at the European Ceramic Work center, Netherlands)  
6.6 feet x 23 1/2 inches x 33 1/2 inches / 245 x 70 x 90 cm



view of the exhibition *Dark Continent* à la Galerie Emmanuel Perrotin, 9 January - 13 March 2010.



*The Cradel (De Bakermat)*, 2009-2010  
Partially gilded and patinated, welded and cast bronze sculpture, lost-wax casting on an integrated bronze base.  
245 x 70 x 90 cm