

Bat Opera Hong Kong

Monster Chetwynd

MASSIMODECARLO is pleased to announce the first exhibition in Hong Kong of British artist Monster Chetwynd, opening on September 16th, 2021.

On display are two installations and sixteen paintings titled *Bat Opera*, part of an ongoing series the artist started in 2003 during her MA at RCA in London when she explored what is a worthy subject matter in art and animals' contradictory qualities.

This subject has since thrilled Monster Chetwynd, an artist whose name and identity has changed through the years (Christened as Alalia Chetwynd, became Spartacus in 2006, then Marvin Gaye and finally Monster since 2018).

While the majority of people find these animals fearful, the artist interprets them as ecowarriors capable of correcting the balance of the world, essential players on the mission of empowering the planet, with all of their incredible biodiversity to continue surviving.

Investigating the important role of bats in human economies and excited by the exceptional qualities they have, their echolocation, flight, being nocturnal pollinators and insectivores, Monster wishes to glamorise these animals and lift them into a more glorious position. Not only bats are integral in many economies but they also share several common aspects with human.

Begun in 2003, this series was initially intended as a satirical parallel of heads and torsos resembling the portraits of worthy burghers or religious leaders of the 16th century but during her MA at RCA the artist started to portray bats in immersive and colourful landscapes, inspired by the covers of music albums or by the scenery of great old master's painters of the National Gallery of London.

With a practice that encompasses a variety of medium, from performance to video, sculpture and painting, for her premiere in Asia, Monster's miniature paintings are accompanied by two major larger works. Overlooking the canvases depicting bats in varying settings and grouping, there are two installations (Spear nosed Bats). These works are part of an ongoing research in which the artist presents animals in enlarged forms, often realised as large sculptures or gigantic costumes moved by performers in colourful dances. References to the performance *Bat Out Of Hell Performance for the 2004 Liverpool Biennial* or the recent *Ruhr Ding Klima Bat installation and performance* (2021) in Recklinghausen in Germany. These human-sized creatures command the space with confidence and, in a gesture of self-empowerment, draw attention to their sustainable and future-proof qualities.

Monster Chetwynd was born in 1973 in London, United Kingdom; she lives and works in Glasgow and Zurich.

Monster Chetwynd works across painting, sculpture, textiles, performance, video and installation. Her work references folk culture whilst touching on contemporary and historical political themes.

Her solo shows include: *Monster Rebellion*, Villa Arson, Nice, France (2019); *Toxic Pillows*, De Pont Museum of Contemporary Art, Tilburg, Netherlands (2019); *The owl with the laser eyes*, Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Torino (2018); *The Science Lab & The Green Room*, Art Basel Parcours, Basel (2017); *Dogsy Ma Bone*, Tate Exchange, London (2017); *Bergen Kunsthall*, Bergen (2016); Bonner Kunstverein, Bonn (2016); CCA, Glasgow (2016); Studio Voltaire, London (2014); Nottingham Contemporary, Nottingham (2014); Tate Britain, London (2012); *Tears*, Art Basel Messenplatz, curated by Giovanni Carmine (2012); New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York (2011); Le Consortium, Dijon (2008).

Her group shows include: *Ruhr Ding: Klima*, Urbane Künste Ruhr, Bochum (2021); *16th Istanbul Biennial*, Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts, Istanbul (2019); *Experience Traps*, Middelheim Museum, Antwerpen (2018); Now, National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh (2018); *Tate Exchange*, Liverpool Biennial Tour, London (2017); *Coming Out*, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool (2017); *L'Almanach 14*, Le Consortium, Dijon (2014); *Aquatopia*, Nottingham Contemporary, Nottingham (2013); *Tate Triennial*, curated by Nicolas Bourriaud, Tate Modern, London (2009); *The Perfect Man Show*, curated by Rita Ackerman, White Columns, New York (2007); *A Comedy of Errors*, Artspace, Sydney, Australia (2007).