

PRESENHUBER

Press release
October 2018

Jean-Marie Appriou
November

November 10 to December 22, 2018
Opening on Friday, November 9, 6 to 8 pm
Maag Areal, Zahnradstr. 21, CH-8005 Zurich

Perhaps duality is cyclical; moving spherically rather than linearly – perpetually rounding the bend. Invading the brief primacy of its opposing state. Mutually threatening each other with finitude. It is during the anticipation of approaching, tertiary states – at dawn, at dusk, in Spring, in Autumn – that the earth wriggles and wilts, bears its fruit.

For his first solo show with Galerie Eva Presenhuber, Jean-Marie Appriou asks us to consider the moment of the earth's seasonal cycle in which we presently find ourselves. It is November, a period of transition: the last days of the harvest. Death, all of a sudden, is a welcome and necessary impending state, signaling return – to the earth, to our plates, to darkness, to interior spaces.

Sunlight touches cast aluminum as we pass through daytime in Autumn. Fields of sunflowers and corn are flanked by the omnipresent face of the moon, a celestial reminder of inevitable, cyclical change. En masse, crops rotate toward the waning light, a gesture in the perpetual dance between the sun, the moon and the earth.

As the heart-shaped leaves of the sunflowers perform the role of ex-votos, their petals recede to give way to seeds arranged in fractal patterns. Nearby, a cornfield mimics another form of exquisite natural synchronicity: the periodic table of elements. The plants' forms are broken down into a sum of their parts: stalk, leaves, and cereal. Muted human faces pass between them, themselves preparing to traverse worlds as the weight of their yield signals their demise.

Further on (in time, in space), the corn has been flattened by the elements, the march toward harvest/death made evident by Charon's coins placed over their eyes. Light is as stunning as it is fleeting, and the coins begin to resemble protective eyewear to ward off apocalyptic rays: an eclipse, or a nuclear explosion. An improbable division. Darkness.

Night lengthens, and so we recede into caves – of tectonic time, of mystic time, of mythological time, of romantic time. In caves, time is measured in calcification: the slow collection of experience creating forms. Limestone is composed of the skeletal remains of marine life, carried over millions of years by tectonic movements, into ever-evolving stalactite and stalagmite forms. Here too, human hands emerge from these forms, enacting an unnamable ritual.

Outside the caves, cypresses ominously line the space. Appriou's work often refers to the Symbolists, and here he is referencing Arnold Böcklin's Isle of the Dead. Cypress trees carry the weight of the space between life and death, earth and sky. Their silhouettes are as gracious as they are haunting.

Day is followed by night, and night is followed by day. To leave the exhibition, the audience must inevitably pass through the cycle he is summoning, thus reminding us of the transience of states: even death is transformed into life – and light – again.

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Jean-Marie Appriou was born in 1986 in Brest, France, and lives and works in Paris, France. Appriou graduated from École régionale des beaux-arts de Rennes in 2010. In 2018, Appriou was featured as the inaugural artist in Fondation Louis Vuitton's Open Space program, which invites artists to create site-specific projects to appear within the Fondation's Frank Gehry designed building in Paris. Selected institutional group exhibitions include 'ENFANCE,' Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France, 2018; 'Voyage d'Hiver,' Château de Versailles, Versailles, France, 2017; 'MEDUSA,' Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris, France, 2017; 'Streams of Warm Impermanence,' David Roberts Art Foundation, London, GB, 2016; 'L'Usage des Formes,' Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France, 2015; and 'La solitude,' Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art, Oslo, Norway, 2014.

For further information, please contact Andreas Grimm (a.grimm@presenhuber.com) at the gallery.
For press images and information, please contact Naomi Chassé (n.chasse@presenhuber.com) at the gallery.