



# BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

## PRESS RELEASE

**Inspired by the famous fairy tale, a contemporary art exhibition about the encounter between man and nature in the context of the 2017 Venice Biennale**

The contemporary art exhibition “*Beauty and the Beast*” will be shown in the context of the 2017 Venice Biennale at **Palazzo Tiepolo Passi**, a magnificent 16<sup>th</sup> century palace overlooking the Grand Canal, from **May 13<sup>th</sup> to November 26<sup>th</sup> 2017**.

Inspired by the famous fairy tale, the exhibition will present works by Judi Harvest and Quentin Garel in a narrative framework that speaks of the fate of mankind.



**Beauty and the Beast aims to address a highly topical and very important subject: the relationship established by human beings with the rest of nature.**

**The powerful works of Quentin Garel** (drawings and wooden or bronze sculptures of wild animals and fossil skeletons of prehistoric creatures) **embody man in the form of the Beast**, which simultaneously alludes to two aspects: on one hand the inseparable and ancestral kinship which connects us to other species, and on the other the loss of the “humanity” of our race. Mankind, essentially comprising generous beings who want to be loved by other living creatures, is caught in an evil spell, the desire of power, and whose aim is to confront nature to its goals, opening up the road to its destruction, which turns out to be self-destruction.

**The extraordinary works created by Judi Harvest represent the kingdom of bees, and embody the Beauty of nature as a cooperative and balanced relationship**, but at the same time fragile and wonderful. Bees are nature's messengers, the environment's antennas. The life of bees and our own depend on their incredible work, which determines the existence and proliferation of a huge number of plants. A large part of our day-to-day survival is linked to pollination by bees: our food, about one bite in every three of the food we eat, or our clothes, such as in the case of cotton for textiles.

**The “Beauty and the Beast” exhibition explores the themes of love and redemption, presenting the encounter between Man/Beast and Bees/the Beauty of Nature.** The harmonious and positive example of bees could break the spell that human beings are under, but will the message only be strong enough once the danger of extinction is irreversible, getting through only at the point of their sacrifice? Will it be an irreversible catastrophe for the human race too?



**The exhibition route will be set out in a Y-shape. In the first room** on the main floor of Palazzo Tiepolo Passi, visitors will come face to face with **Quentin Garel's** large sculptures, representing the Beast, which all human beings can identify with to some extent.

**Moving to the second room, which represents the intersection of the Y, the visitors will assist to the meeting between Garel's ape sculpture** (gorilla with its deeply human eyes, beyond any "beastliness") **and a work of Harvest**, inspired by bees and their hives. An exchange of looks in the Venice sunlight filtering through the windows overlooking the Grand Canal.

**The two next rooms, one on the left and one on the right, represent the different outcomes of the dialogue between man and nature.** By going left, visitors can enjoy the positive development of the relationship. A world of potential harmony and extraordinary beauty embodied by the works of Harvest, including a special installation with hundreds of different seeds made from Murano glass using three different production techniques. To the right, visitors can instead witness the continuation of the evil spell, which will lead to an uncontrolled manipulation of nature by man (Garel's two-headed calf). Harvest's honey jars will be displayed in a setting reminiscent of the enchanted forest found in many fairy tales, with branches almost enveloping the artworks like grabbing hands. But the vases will stand as symbolic time capsules, free to carry beauty and hope into the future.

By adopting a narrative paradigm, the "*Beauty and the Beast*" exhibition is intended first of all to be understandable and enjoyable for an audience of any age, including children. **Through multiple levels of interpretation, the exhibition transcends art itself and aims to offer a conceptual, artistic and visual experience of an important topic for the future of the human race.**



### **Exhibition promoter**

**Fondation Valmont - Patron of the arts and beauty**

#### **DIDIER GUILLON: ART IS IN THE BLOOD**



Art is something that is handed down within the Guillon family. A worthy successor in a long line of art collectors, aesthetes and patrons, Didier Guillon continues the family tradition through the Fondation Valmont, the 4<sup>th</sup> pillar of Valmont Group dedicated to contemporary art. It began with Charles Sedelmeyer, father of his great-grandmother, a notorious art dealer on the Parisian scene at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. Another Guillon family art figure is Stanislas Lami, Didier Guillon's great-grandfather and sculptor. Immersed in this world where rarity and beauty reign,

Didier Guillon very quickly developed a honed taste for art. His artistic sensibility was fed and forged through visits to art galleries, artists' workshops and exhibitions, which he attended as a child at his grandfather's side. It is a passion that runs like a thread through his life, and a torch that Didier Guillon has himself passed on to his three children, Capucine, Maxence and Valentine.

This true commitment to creation is now embodied by the Fondation Valmont, the 4<sup>th</sup> pillar of Valmont Group, an entity in its own right dedicated to collecting works of art and discovering new talent. More than 200 works of art, almost thirty artists and as many talents have been unearthed and supported by the Fondation Valmont. During exhibitions that take place across the globe, Didier Guillon questions mainstream art circuits, tears up the rulebook and assumes the role of curator to reveal and defend a new art scene.

## Artists

### **JUDI HARVEST**

Born in Miami, Florida, Judi Harvest lives and works in New York and Venice. Harvest creates sculptures, paintings, videos and installations inspired by the fragility of life and the search for beauty. According to this extraordinary artist, there is no difference between art and life. Over the course of her career, Judi Harvest has been the protagonist of 15 solo exhibitions in Venice. From 1987 to 1992, she lived and worked in Venice where she studied Murano glass production techniques in detail. Worried about the environmental issue of Colony Collapse, she became a beekeeper in 2006. Judi Harvest permanently exhibits at IVAM, the Valencia Institute of Modern Art in Spain. She has created three public works of art made from Murano glass, exhibited in Venice: “*Fragmented Peace*”, 2003, installed at the Vallaresso vaporetto stop, “*Luna Piena / Full Moon*”, 2005, and “*Venetian Satellite*”, 2006, exhibited for the first time at Caffè Florian in Piazza San Marco, and currently on display in New York in the lobby of the West Chelsea Arts Building.



### **QUENTIN GAREL**



Quentin Garel was born in 1975 in Paris, where he currently lives and works. After graduating from the National School of Fine Arts in Paris, and following a scholarship at the Art Institute in Chicago and a two-year stay at Casa de Velázquez in Madrid, Quentin Garel currently works in Paris on highly prestigious works, and his talent has been recognised on an international level.

His most recent solo exhibitions include “*Le Magicien d’Os: Sculptures par Quentin Garel*” at the National Museum of Natural History in Paris in 2016, and “*Bestiary*”, at the Bertrand Delacroix Gallery in New York in 2014. An installation of three large sculptures, was unveiled in Parc du Chemin de l’Isle, just outside Paris, in October 2005.

## Curators

### **FRANCESCA GIUBILEI - LUCA BERTA**

Francesca Giubilei is an independent art curator and creator of cultural initiatives. In 2015, she curated the “*Within Light / Inside Glass. An intersection between art and science*” exhibition, initially shown at the Institute of Sciences, Literature and Arts in Veneto and then at the Millennium Foundation in Lisbon.



Luca Berta, PhD, is the author of scientific publications in international journals and of various books on art, aesthetics and the philosophy of mind, including “*In Bed with Mona Lisa. Contemporary Art for Commuters and Curious Minds*”, London, 2014 (written with Carlo Vanoni).

Luca Berta and Francesca Giubilei often make up a curatorial duo. Together they have curated two collateral events to the 2015 Venice Biennale. In 2016 they curated the solo exhibition of Joseph Klibansky, “*Beautiful Tomorrow*”, at the Veneto Institute, and launched the first edition of the design festival, “*Design.Ve: design Walks Through Venice*”. Luca and Francesca are members of the ICF, the International Curators Forum based in London.

## **The Magic of Venice: Palazzo Tiepolo Passi**

The “*Beauty and the Beast*” exhibition is being held in the exclusive setting of Palazzo Tiepolo Passi, Venice. This historic 16th century palace, decorated and embellished over the centuries by important Venetian families and still lived in today, is opening its doors to an artistic event. The grand exterior shows an elegant contrast between the grey stone and the whiteness of the large arches across the long balconies made from Istrian stone. Palazzo Tiepolo Passi, with its ceiling frescos, rooms overlooking the Grand Canal, and secret terrace gazing over a lush garden, epitomises all the charm and magic of Venice.



## **How to get there**

The “*Beauty and the Beast*” exhibition, held at Palazzo Tiepolo Passi, is a 10-minute walk from the Rialto Bridge and close to the San Tomà vaporetto stop. Take the Line 1 or 2 vaporetto and get off at the San Tomà stop. From Campo San Tomà head towards Calle dei Nomboli. At the corner of the Casa Goldoni Museum, turn right onto Calle Cent’Anni. Palazzo Tiepolo Passi is at the end of the street, on the left.

## **Information and opening times**

### **“Beauty and the Beast”**

Palazzo Tiepolo Passi, San Polo 2774, Venice

From May 13<sup>th</sup> to November 26<sup>th</sup> 2017

Opening times: 10am - 6pm, closed Mondays

Free entry

[www.beauty-and-the-beast.org](http://www.beauty-and-the-beast.org)

## **Press office**

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