

Charles Fréger, « Wilder Mann » Exhibition from February 23 to May 26, 2013

Preview on Friday February 22 from 6:30 PM
Special press preview on Thursday February 21, 2013

Exhibition organized in cooperation with the Briqueterie, the Val-de-Marne's new Center for dance development, on the occasion of its inauguration.

Press Release

On the occasion of the inauguration of the Briqueterie, The Val-de-Marne's new Center for dance development, the MAC/VAL (Museum of Contemporary Art of the Val-de-Marne) is holding an exhibition of work by the photographer Charles Fréger.

Situated somewhere between mythology and medieval vestige, dressed in animal skins and plant matter, the « wild men » photographed by Charles Fréger praise the seasons and celebrate cycles of life. Together, they draw a map of ancestral European customs. Carnival, masked rituals, the feast days of Saint Anthony, Saint Nicolas, mardi gras, the full moon, the first Sunday of the year, and the eve of Easter are all occasions for celebrating the cycle of the seasons in religious or pagan settings, with figures ranging from the apotropaic to fertility symbols.

From its beginnings, the work of French artist Charles Fréger (born in Bourges in 1975) has long been anchored in representations of the social body and in the construction of identity and self-image. Since 1999, his « Portraits photographiques et uniformes » have covered diverse categories of individuals and, from time to time, their group portraits, notably in the publications *Majorettes* (2002), *Légionnaires* (2002), *Bleu de travail* (2003) (on 'blue collar' workers), *Rikishi* (2005) (on sumo wrestlers), and *Empire* (2009) (on royal and republican guards). Uniforms and work clothes, masques and disguises, the costumes and clothing – each of these second skins is endowed with a particular, unifying character captured in Fréger's typical full-length and frontal compositions.

Photography Series « Wilder Mann », 2010 - 2011



Caretos de Lazarim, Portugal



Certi, Czech Republic



Krampus, Austria



Babugeri, Bulgaria



Cerbul din Corlata, Romania

To create his most recent publication, *Wilder Mann ou la Figure du Sauvage* (2012, Thames & Hudson), Charles Fréger crisscrossed European continent, visiting 18 countries with an anthropologist's eye in search of the various contemporary incarnations of « wild men ». Every year, from France, to Bulgaria, from Finland to Sardinia, from Portugal to Greece, without forgetting Switzerland and Germany, men literally get into the skin of the 'savage' the time of a secular masquerade.

By becoming a bear, goat, deer, or boar, a straw man, devil, or monster with jaws of steel, these men celebrate the seasons and the cycles of life. Their costumes, created from plants and animal skins, decorated with bones or belts of bells, their headdresses with horns or deer antlers, astonish with their extraordinary diversity and remarkable beauty.

Also on exhibit :

« Émoi & moi »

Group exhibition from February 23 to April 28, 2013.

With works by:

Absalon, Pierre Buraglio, Pascal Convert, Simon English, Alexandre Gérard, Pierre Joseph, Joris Lacoste, Laura Lamiel, Dominik Lang, Robert Malaval, Annette Messenger, Daniel Pommereulle, Jean-Pierre Raynaud, Tatiana Trouvé, Mark Wallinger.

The film *Dancing* will be shown in the presence of its directors Patrick Mario Bernard, Xavier Brillat and Pierre Trividic on Sunday April 7, 2013 at 5:00 PM.

“Vivement demain”

The fifth exhibition of works from the MAC/VAL's permanent collection.

At the heart of « Vivement demain », the fifth exhibition of works from the MAC/VAL's permanent collection, Charles Fréger's portraits of « wild men » sublimate the temporary suspension of normality characterized by masquerade, revealing a little-known tradition of staggering variety.

Sunday April 14 at 3:00 PM.

Meet Charles Fréger at the MAC/VAL, followed by the Josef Nadj's « Création 2013 » at the Théâtre Jean Vilar in Vitry-sur-Seine at 4:00 PM.

Reservations with the theatre at +33 (0)1 55 53 10 60 or with the Biennale box office at +33 (0)1 56 34 09 75.

« Création 2013 » is a work commissioned by the Val-de-Marne's new center for dance development and will be premiered at the opening of the 17th Biennale, « Bestiaire et fantasmorgies ».

More details on events linked to the exhibition can be found at the MAC/VAL's website at www.macval.fr

MAC/VAL

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