

BEN BROWN FINE ARTS



Les Lalanne

29 NOVEMBER 2018 – 25 JANUARY 2019

PRIVATE VIEW WEDNESDAY 28 NOVEMBER, 6-8PM

Ben Brown Fine Arts is honoured to present *Les Lalanne* in London, an elaborate and extensive exhibition celebrating the extraordinary *oeuvres* of Claude and the late François-Xavier Lalanne. Transformed into a fantastical tea party-like setting, the gallery space overflows with surrealist associations, characteristic wit and inspiration from the natural world. *Les Lalanne* creates a world of fantasy, reflecting the artist's delicate attempts at bringing nature into the home – visitors are invited to tea in a surreal room of Claude's foliage-framed bronze and copper mirrors, surrounded by whimsical Lalanne-inspired wallpapers, her delicate *Chaise Feuilles Bambou* (2009/2017) and *Chaise aux Branchettes*, (1996/2010) mounted on the walls, beckoning viewers to take their seats. Choreographed by interior designer Manfredi della Gherardesca, *Les Lalanne* brings together over 60 works by Claude and François-Xavier and offers a panorama of their artistic output from the 1960s to the present.

Ornate works by Claude include a rarely exhibited series of body molds created in 1975, which echo Yves Saint-Laurent's commission for his 1969 autumn-winter collection. Other works by Claude - *Choupatte* (2014-2015) and *Petit Lapin Debout à Colletterte* (2017) - take a seat at the table while her iconic *Banquette Crocodile* (2010) and *Trône de Pauline* (2007) sit nearby. Alongside these, visitors will encounter more austere works of her late husband François-Xavier Lalanne, including a duo of his fanciful dogs, *Petit Chien Héroïque* (Bibi and Loulou), his iconic *Mouton de Laine* (1965-1974) and the elegant, Brancusi-inspired *Petit Génie de Bellerive sur Pylône*.

A secret peep-hole beckons visitors to peer inside a strange a dreamlike room, where Claude's intricate handmade silver cutlery service comprised of twigs, shells, leaves, petals and other ephemera from the natural world is suspended over François-Xavier's incredible *La Boîte à Sardines* (1971), a bed of silver leather sardine cushions sitting sumptuously inside a giant sardine tin.

While *Les Lalanne* shared a studio and exhibited together throughout their careers, their *oeuvres* are entirely distinctive. Claude's work embodies a more sinuous and ethereal form with inspiration taken directly from nature while François-Xavier's works offer a gravity of form and functional ingenuity that redefine their original representation. Together, the Lalannes' works are at once playful, profound, elegant and evocative, and equally suitable for traditional and contemporary environments.

ABOUT CLAUDE & FRANÇOIS-XAVIER LALANNE

Claude Lalanne (b. 1924 in Paris, France) and François-Xavier Lalanne (b. 1927 in Agen, France; d. 2008 in Ury, France) have been known as 'Les Lalanne' since the 1960s. François-Xavier Lalanne moved to Paris at the age of 18 to study sculpture, drawing and painting at the Académie Julian. After renting a studio near Montparnasse, he met artists Constantin Brâncuși, Max Ernst, Man Ray, Marcel Duchamp and Jean Tinguely, who have all influenced his work significantly. It was not until 1952, when he met Claude (née Dupeux) at his first gallery show, that he abandoned painting for sculpture. Claude studied architecture at the École des Beaux-Arts and the École des Arts Décoratifs. She became friends with American artists Larry Rivers and Jimmy Metcalf, who helped her develop the techniques she continues to use today.

Only in recent years has the work of *Les Lalanne* achieved iconic status, propelled by the 2009 Christie's Paris sale of Yves Saint Laurent's collection and a major retrospective at Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris in 2010, curated by an ardent collector and admirer, Peter Marino. Their cult-like following has grown exponentially and now includes private collectors and luminaries from around the world such as Yves Saint-Laurent and Pierre Bergé, Tom Ford, Karl Lagerfeld, Marc Jacobs, François Pinault and Bernard Arnault. The Lalannes' works are represented in many prominent collections around the world including the National Design Museum (New York), Musée Nationale d'Art Moderne/Centre Georges Pompidou (Paris), Cooper Hewitt Museum (New York) and Musée d'Histoire Naturelle (Paris).

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