

# BEN BROWN FINE ARTS



François-Xavier and Claude Lalanne. Image courtesy of Ben Brown Fine Arts

## LES LALANNE: MAKERS OF DREAMS

28 April - 29 July 2022

Ben Brown Fine Arts London, 12 Brooks Mews, London W1K 4DG  
AND Claridge's ArtSpace, Brooks Mews, London W1

Ben Brown Fine Arts is honoured to announce ***Les Lalanne: Makers of Dreams***, an extensive survey of the work of the late legendary French artistic duo François-Xavier and Claude Lalanne - known collectively as 'Les Lalanne.' Choreographed by famed Italian designer Manfredi della Gherardesca, this unprecedented body of over 100 works includes some of the most known pieces to date and will create a Les Lalanne magical menagerie spread across the iconic Mayfair locations, Ben Brown Fine Arts and newly opened Claridge's ArtSpace. Ben Brown Fine Arts has exhibited the work of Les Lalanne for nearly two decades, yet this will mark their first show at the gallery following Claude's passing three years ago.

Della Gherardesca's exhibition choreography combines the heavenly and the bucolic, constructing a dreamlike equilibrium of Yin and Yang across the two spaces. In both, the nature-based style of Les Lalanne is the *leitmotif* and several of the welded sculptures 'float' with a surreal weightlessness above the clouds. While the flagship gallery takes on the guise of a nocturnal sky, a reverent nod to the late artists, the pure bright white of Claridge's ArtSpace is a vision of Heaven that alludes to the possibility that their works have entered this realm.

Following the recent Les Lalanne exhibition at the Château de Versailles as well as the major retrospective at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in 2010, this will be the most extensive grouping of major sculptures by the duo to be shown in a gallery setting. The exhibition will feature Claude's never previously displayed *Lit Hibou et 2 Tables de Chevet* - a bespoke bed and two side tables commissioned for a collector - and such

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masterpieces as François-Xavier's ingeniously functional *Hippopotame I*, a life-size hippopotamus in blue resin which opens up to reveal a full bath suite, alongside the astonishing *Hippopotame II (Bar)*. All four iterations of Claude's surrealist *Choupatte* will be presented with its superbly detailed veined cabbage leaves atop whimsical chickens' feet, with sizes ranging from a tabletop piece to a towering 180cm sculpture. François-Xavier's *Sauterelle Bar* is one of only two examples with the other version being kept in the Royal Collection as a donation by the French president in 1972; this is undoubtedly another one of his masterpieces and has rarely been shown publicly.

The exhibition showcases both recognizable and rarer works by each artist, touching upon all aspects of their oeuvre, with highlights including: Claude's fanciful ginkgo tables and chairs, flora-adorned mirrors, electroplated copper and bronze chandeliers, candelabra and lanterns, her widely celebrated *Pomme* and a silver cutlery service; François-Xavier's iconic *Mouton*, with examples in both stone and wool and other fantastical bronze bestiaries including a pair of wild boars, a monumental standing bear and a horned wild goat; and the artists' collaborative *Singe aux Nénuphars*, for which Claude created the tabletop that rests upon the outstretched arms of François-Xavier's monkey.

The enduring appeal of Les Lalanne lies in their playful ingenuity, taking inspiration from nature and creating from it a world of fantasy. Their works blur lines between functional design, fine art and the decorative arts, and are always suffused with surrealist associations, a characteristic wit and timeless elegance. While the duo shared a studio and exhibited together throughout their careers, their bodies of work are observably distinctive. Claude's work embodies a more sinuous and ethereal form with inspiration taken directly from nature, while François-Xavier's sculptures offer a gravity of form and functional ingenuity that redefine their original representation. While François-Xavier was drawn to the angularity of animals, Claude focused on the textures of flora and fauna. However, their works are inextricably linked and best appreciated when experienced collectively, evident as they transform the galleries into enchanting ethereal worlds.

*"The work of Les Lalanne has become renowned the world over. The ways in which these artists created such discombobulating yet beautiful contradictions are part of their enduring appeal. It's a privilege having worked with the artists and now their legacies to be exhibiting such a widescale body of works."* **Ben Brown**

Claridge's, the legendary hotel in the heart of Mayfair, unveiled a newly created Claridge's ArtSpace in 2021. This space is accessed by an entrance on the newly restored Claridge's façade on Brooks Mews, and was designed by John Pawson. Claridge's invites its long-standing friends and gallerists within the art world to stage rotating exhibitions and shows, and has approachability at its core, with free access to all.

## **ABOUT BEN BROWN FINE ARTS**

In 2004, Ben Brown Fine Arts opened its first location in the heart of Mayfair, London. The gallery quickly established itself on the international art scene with exhibitions of long-term gallery artists Candida Höfer, Tony Bevan, Claude & François-Xavier Lalanne, and Heinz Mack, amongst others, as well as momentous exhibitions of 20th century masters including Lucio Fontana, Alighiero Boetti and Gerhard Richter. In 2009, Ben Brown Fine Arts opened an exhibition space in Hong Kong, becoming the first international gallery to move to the city that would soon become a major international art hub. In Hong Kong, the gallery introduced notable exhibitions of Pablo Picasso, Sean Scully, Frank Auerbach and Miquel Barceló, as well as survey exhibitions of Chinese contemporary photography, the Düsseldorf School of Photography, 20th century Italian art, and the ZERO movement. Both the London and Hong Kong galleries regularly exhibit and develop programming for our renowned stable of international, multi-disciplinarian artists, including the aforementioned as well as Yoan Capote, Rob and Nick Carter, Kitty Chou, Awol Erizku, Nabil Nahas, José Parlá, Enoc Perez, Ena Swansea, Hank Willis Thomas, Gavin Turk and Jan Worst. Ben Brown Fine Arts is also recognized for our depth of expertise and inventory in 20th century European and American art. Ben Brown

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Fine Arts participates in major art fairs worldwide, including Art Basel, Art Basel Hong Kong, Art Basel Miami Beach, The Armory Show, Frieze Masters, TEFAF Maastricht, TEFAF New York and West Bund Art & Design.

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## **ABOUT CLAUDE & FRANÇOIS-XAVIER LALANNE**

Claude Lalanne (1924 - 2019) and François-Xavier Lalanne (1927 - 2008) 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. François-Xavier and Claude met in 1952, at which point François-Xavier abandoned painting for sculpture. Claude studied architecture at the École des Beaux-Arts and the École des Arts Décoratifs. The Lalannes' works are represented in prominent private and public collections around the world including the National Design Museum (New York), Cooper Hewitt Museum (New York), Musée Nationale d'Art Moderne/Centre Georges Pompidou (Paris), Musée des Arts Décoratifs (Paris) and Musée d'Histoire Naturelle (Paris).

## **ABOUT CLARIDGE'S**

At the centre of London's Mayfair, Claridge's, part of Maybourne Hotel Group, embodies grand English style, timeless glamour and impeccable, intuitive and highly tailored service. It is London's art deco jewel, and home to elegant rooms and suites. From London's finest afternoon tea in the Foyer, to vintage champagnes at Claridge's Bar and the Fumoir, and bespoke cocktails at The Painter's Room, all are part of the hotel's unique splendour and charm.

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