

# GALERIE MITTERRAND

## CLAUDE ET FRANÇOIS-XAVIER LALANNE

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PRESS RELEASE

The Galerie Mitterrand is proud to present its new exhibition devoted to Claude and François-Xavier Lalanne, celebrating 40 years of collaboration between the artists and Jean-Gabriel Mitterrand, and 25 years with the gallery. This exhibition is the opportunity to discover—or rediscover—the art works of this internationally renowned couple of sculptors.

Since the 1960s, Claude and François-Xavier Lalanne have created parallel oeuvres full of humour and poetry on the themes of animals and nature, yet working each with their own *modus operandi*. Their sculptural vocabulary is made up of surreal combinations, such as the *Pomme-bouche* [Mouth-apple] (1980), the *Choupatte* [Cabbage with legs] (1978), the *Gorille de Sûreté* [Security Gorilla] (1970) or the *Rhinocrétaire* [Rhinodesk] (1964); it demonstrates the great creativity and imagination they have developed throughout their careers. Claude Lalanne's style is driven by her ornamental and baroque spirit, though keeping this intuition free from the technical constraints it requires. As for François-Xavier, his works include a mischievous bestiary bearing aloof attitudes, placing his sculptural work in line with that of 20th-century artists like Pompon or Brancusi (who was his neighbour in their Montparnasse workshop). The Lalanne's both have their own production, their own workshop and their own techniques. Claude uses electroplating, a technique that congeals natural forms, which she can instinctively transform into sculptures, tables, chairs, benches or mirrors. François-Xavier's technique of hammered metal enabled him to "combine the elegance of the drawing to the rigor of forms" (Claude Lalanne, 2000)<sup>1</sup>. Even if they have rarely worked four-handed, they nevertheless remain indivisible.

### REDISCOVERIES, NEW CREATIONS AND HITHERTO UNSEEN WORKS

The exhibition at the Galerie Mitterrand presents a selection of historical pieces and more recent works by both artists. François-Xavier's memorable *Moutons* made of epoxy stone and the *Fontaine aux oiseaux sur la plage* (1995) have been gathered along with *Table aux pieds de Cerfs* and *Moyen Mouflon*, shown here for the first time. Claude's recent works—*Nouveau Choupatte* (2014), *Jules & Jim* (2015)—are shown alongside new sculptures created especially for the exhibition at the Galerie Mitterrand: *Berces Adossées* (2015), a pair of *Fauteuils Entrelacs* (2015), *Petite Table Crocodile* (2015), *Marcassin* (2015), as well as a new series of six *Miroirs* (2015).

Claude Lalanne was born in Paris in 1925, she lives and works in Ury. François-Xavier Lalanne was born in Agen in 1927 and died in 2008 in Ury. François-Xavier studied painting at the Académie Julian before turning to sculpture; he worked with Claude from the mid-1950s onwards. For a long time, they collaborated with gallery owner Alexandre Iolas; they began working with the Galerie Mitterrand in the early 1990s and together have organized over a dozen exhibitions. Thanks to the great success of the Yves Saint Laurent and Pierre Bergé sale, the public discovered the important place that the Lalanne couple occupied among the masterpieces gathered by the two collectors during their lifetime. In 2010, the Musée des Arts Décoratifs of Paris curated a retrospective of their oeuvres. Their works have also been shown in many group exhibitions, such as *Decorum, tapis et tapisseries d'artistes* [Artist decorum, carpets and tapestries] (Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, 2013 and Power Station of Art in Shanghai, 2014).

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<sup>1</sup> *Claude et François-Xavier Lalanne – Fragments*. Edition Acatos, 2000.