
MCLEMOI GALLERY

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GEORGE RAFTOPOULOS

Opening Exhibition "BEAUX MONDE"

SAVE THE DATE: VIP Opening Friday - June 13th, 6-8 pm

The exhibition will be opened by H.E.the Ambassador of Greece
Mr Haris Dafaranos and Mrs Eva T. Dafaranos.

Gallery will be open Saturday and Sunday 14th and 15th of June from 12:00 to 6:00 pm



PRESS RELEASE

Unbeautiful Creatures: George Raftopoulos' Beaux Monde

The practice of George Raftopoulos – a kind of scavenging of the flotsam and

jetsam of life; a sorting through the accretions of the past and a re-imagining of his own memories of childhood, family, culture and ancestry – can be likened to salvage. Like a voyage to the past, his paintings are lushly layered investigations of identity: an archaeology of the self. Early works are filled with references to islands and journeying; to classical antiquity and mythology, and to the Greek language as half-remembered by a boy growing up in rural New South Wales. His later works became less architecturally constructed and controlled, more antic, filled with a sense of the importance of fleeting moments. An eccentric *dramatis personae* (including his legendarily larger-than life but physically tiny grandmother) play mysterious roles, striding – sometimes flying - across big canvases in an operatically theatrical narrative. A personal language of line and mark and a nervy, energetic calligraphy of gesture activate the surfaces of large works. Raftopoulos works fast, intuitively erasing, layering, rubbing back and re-working. His brush marks and scribbled lines convey a sense of urgency and tension. The resulting canvases are a palimpsest, revealing the history of their evolution. Raftopoulos has always rejoiced in the visceral, viscous sensuality of paint.

Never predictable, he is a restless artist who likes to keep us guessing. His new works in “Beaux Monde” are not so much about mapping his own memories as deftly subverting our collective cultural memory. Iconic works from the western canon by giants such as Velasquez, El Greco and Goya are appropriated and re-invented. He sardonically describes himself as an “art thief”. Like Duchamp attaching a moustache to that famous postcard of the Mona Lisa, Raftopoulos has ventured into taboo territory. This recycling is a savage rupturing of the holy icons of the artworld, reminiscent of George Grosz or Hannah Hoch skewering the pretensions and corruptions of the Weimar Republic. His versions of Spanish noblemen and clerics - the glitterati of their day - are ritualistically torn apart and reconstructed. A “Beaux Monde” in name only, they are seen to be a procession of distorted and disfigured creatures, revealing the ugliness beneath their silks and satins. It is as if they are wearing Picasso’s masks – those “emblems of savagery” – and have, ironically, in the process, been somehow *unmasked*. They snigger and smirk, wearing lips that are too big, eyes that dissemble, noses that drip and bleed. There is anger here. ‘Bitch on A Horse’ is the title of his version of Velasquez’ equestrian portrait of Queen Margaret of Austria. What dystopian world view is this? Perhaps it’s his entirely rational response to a world in which we can immerse ourselves in celebrity gossip and “reality” TV whilst choosing to ignore the reality of injustice. In addition to painterly reinventions of historical masterpieces, Raftopoulos playfully inserts himself into Picasso’s harlequins and saltimbanques, those marginalised members of a demi-monde existing outside the magic circles of Parisian privilege and propriety. “Self-portrait of the Artist as Outsider”? Perhaps, but like his earlier works these new paintings by George Raftopoulos revel in the sheer joy of painting: line, mark, luscious colour and seductive painterly surface.

by Luise Guest

BEAUX MONΔE Exhibition dates: June 13th - 24th of June

June 13th Vip Opening 6-8 pm

Saturday-Sunday June 14th and 15th from 12-6:00 pm

Monday/ Tuesday gallery closed (available by appointment only)

Wed - **Sunday** June 18th -22nd open from 2:00- 6:00 pm (other times by appointment only)

Monday 23rd of June gallery closed (available by appointment only)

Tuesday 24th of June- 11:00 am till 3:00pm - Exhibition closes

For appointments please call [+61430322093](tel:+61430322093)



MCLEMOI GALLERY and GEORGE RAFTOPOULOS are happy to support the McGrath Foundation through the sale of the art works in the BEAUX MONΔE exhibition.

10% of the proceeds from the sale of the works will go directly to the McGrath Foundation.

For sales inquiries, exhibition details and available art works at MCLEMOI GALLERY please email sara@mclemoi.com. Excuse our site as we are currently undergoing some routine and necessary maintenance.
