

Marlborough

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THIERRY W DESPONT

Masks

April 11-May 13, 2006

The Directors of Marlborough Gallery are pleased to announce that an exhibition of sculpture entitled *Masks* by the renowned architect-designer, Thierry Despont, will be held from Tuesday, April 11 to Saturday, May 13, 2006. This will be Despont's third exhibition with Marlborough in New York and the first of his sculpture.

Brushes, brooms, cleavers and scissors are just some of the quotidian objects transformed by the artist into the mysterious sculptures featured in *Masks*. Consisting of over twenty such works which range in size from 16 x 11 x 3 inches to 35 x 21 x 8 inches, the exhibition celebrates the art of assemblage and the powers of the imagination. In a forward to the catalogue, Despont himself describes his process while creating the *Masks*:

As I wander the streets of our cities I keep stumbling across weird and discarded objects, old tools abandoned in the dark corners of foreign shops, hétéroclite bric-a-brac, wondrous rejects of our blind civilization.

The objects speak to me. I take them to my studio where I lay them down on old cutting boards found in a Parisian flea market. Suddenly a mask or a face appears – phantoms and strange beings from a poetic universe. Each mask is a small poem, a smile, an emotion...

Despont is well-recognized for his paintings on wood panel or on copper mounted on wood panel that depict nebulas and celestial bodies. These works are executed in mixed media with such materials as enamel, asphaltum, acrylic, ink, glue, epoxy resin, paper, alumichrom, and oil stick. The large-scaled paintings in this genre reflect the combination of Despont's three lifelong interests: those of abstract painting, formalism, and astronomy. In addition to this, Despont has exhibited a series of works on paper that depict the female figure, again in a variety of media. The sculptures in *Masks*, while seemingly a departure from Despont's previous subjects, continue his experimentation with mixed media, his unorthodox use of materials and his devotion to exploring form, both figurative and non-figurative, in its many varieties.

One of the busiest and most sought-after architects in the world today, Despont is known for his excellence and perfection in combining modernism with classicism. He has designed grand homes for a number of powerful clients such as Bill Gates, Leslie Wexner, and Calvin Klein, among others, as well as designing elegant public spaces like the rooms and interior of the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles and the exquisitely envisioned lobby, dining room and bar for Claridge's Hotel in London. Other notable projects are the completion of the restoration of Clayton, the Frick family mansion and art museum in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and the Centennial Restoration of the Statue of Liberty, for which he was the Associate Architect.

Along with painting and sculpture, Despont is a highly gifted draftsman working in pencil and watercolor, and his illustrations for Rimbaud's poem *Le Bateau Ivre* were published by Thornwillow Press in 1992. More recently, Assouline has published a lushly illustrated monograph entitled *Planets*, which explores Despont's visionary series.

Born and raised in Limoges, France in 1948, Despont is a graduate of the Ecole nationale supérieure des Beaux-arts in Paris and holds a Masters Degree in Urban Design and City Planning from Harvard University. He lives and works in New York and France.

An illustrated color catalogue of the show will be available at the time of the exhibition.

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