

Caroline Mesquita

Noctambules

Caroline Mesquita is one of the most intriguing young sculptors to emerge out of France in recent years, and the Blaffer Art Museum is proud to present her first solo museum exhibition in the United States. A jubilant disquiet presides over her multi-disciplinary work which navigates the increasing intimacy between man and machine as our forms, materials, and desires frolic. Mesquita's combinatory practice marries the physicality of altered, oxidized, and painted metal and paper with experimental filmmaking and theatrical reverie. Her ensuing voyages into metallurgy and mythology result in life-size figures interacting with one another in carnivalesque vignettes that slide between Hellenistic sculpture and surreal celebration.

In its world premiere at the Blaffer, the video installation *Noctambules* immerses the viewer in a dreamy cinematic encounter between the artist in slumber and her congregating sculptures. French for "night creatures," this baroque fantasia imagines the actions and desires of artworks if they had the opportunity to reverse the course of art making and re/sculpt their maker. The setting of this seductive chiaroscuro is a swirling bed that also assumes sentient properties, changing colors to reflect shifting emotional states before enveloping its chimerical passengers. To further amplify this uncanny arena, Mesquita populates both the stop-motion video and the surrounding gallery with doppelgangers and surrogates – casting a lookalike to "play" her on screen, alongside fairytale animals and entities that move between the real and imagined. As the objects of the artist turn back upon their author in this stirring Pygmalion allegory, we can't be sure who's dream we occupy, or whether their intent is intimacy or revenge. Questions of ownership and animation also gather within *Noctambules* as we mull the conundrum of who makes who, and how art lives when we close our eyes.

This exhibition is curated by Steven Matijcio, Jane Dale Owen Director and Chief Curator of the Blaffer Art Museum, and is on display until March 13, 2022. Lead support for *Caroline Mesquita: Noctambules* is generously provided by Etant donné s Contemporary Art, a program developed by FACE Foundation and the Cultural Services of the French Embassy in the United States, with lead funding from the French Ministry of Culture and Institut Français-Paris, Florence Gould Foundation, Ford Foundation, Helen Frankenthaler Foundation, Chanel USA, and ADAGP. The artist has also received instrumental support for this project from Institut Français + Ré gion Bretagne

Major funding is provided by Leslie & Brad Bucher and the John P. McGovern Foundation. Generous support is provided by Ingrid Arneberg, Andrew Schirrmeister, and Blaffer Art Museum Advisory Board members.

The following donors sustain Blaffer Art Museum in perpetuity by giving through endowments: Cecil Amelia Blaffer von Furstenberg Endowment for Exhibitions and Programs, Jane Dale Owen Endowment in the Blaffer Art Museum, Jo and Jim Furr Exhibition Endowment in the Blaffer Art Museum, Sarah C. Morian Endowment, and the Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation Blaffer Gallery Endowment.