
THE MODERN DOG PAINTER

WITH ANTOINE D'AGATA, FRANÇIS ALÿS, TRISHA BAGA, FRANÇOIS-MARIE BANIER, CLAUDIO COLCORTI, ANTHONY CUDAHY, DIANE DAL-PRA, CHARLES HASCOËT, MARTIN D'ORGEVAL, FRANÇOISE PÉTROVITCH, PUPPIES PUPPIES, ROBERT ROEST, MARION SCEMAMA, YANN SÉRANDOUR, TURSIC & MILLE, ABDUL VAS, DANH VO, DAVID WOJNAROWICZ

CURATED BY CHARLES HASCOËT AND MARTIN BÉTHENOD

Had the human being followed a different path, could he not have ultimately achieved the greatness of the dog?

Clifford Simak

That's me. One day I saw myself on the street like that. I was the dog.

Alberto Giacometti

You know what? I'm happy.

Droopy

In Wim Wenders' film *Tokyoga*, Miyagawa, who was Ozu's cinematographer, explains with deep emotion how the director wanted to use tripods as close to the ground as possible in order to be at the level of the "dog's eye. This process gave a particular tone to the drama played out on the screen, as if the goodwill of the dog's gaze immediately allowed for empathy and the suspension of judgment.

This new show of The Modern Dog Painter's project takes us to Beijing in 1860, when the English and French sacked the Summer Palace. Among the incredible treasures which the looters take with them are 5 Pekingese. The most charming of them, named Looty, was offered to Queen Victoria. A photograph shows her lying on a small throne, the very image of the sadness and solitude of beings abandoned in the midst of the storms of history.

It also takes us to Mexico, the country of Xolotl, the dog-god who goes with the souls of the dead into the afterlife, guardian of the thresholds between life and death, the sacred and the profane, servitude and freedom, violence and tenderness.

The abandoned Pekingese and the Mexican psychopomp -cousin of the ancient Cerberus or the Korean Komainu- are two of the many characters, mythological, symbolic, protagonists of the great history and of our intimate stories, heroes or figures in the corner of the picture... that have illustrated more than 35,000 years of co-evolution of the canine and human species.

A subjective look at the height of the dog, The Modern Dog Painter brings together paintings, sculptures, photographs, films and installations by present-day artists. We find Looty and the stray dogs of Mexico, but also bichons of salon, dogs forgotten by the art history and tagged dogs. A tribute to our companion species, it bears witness to what has never ceased to mark our shared history: this joy of interdependence, symbiosis, and fluidity between domesticated nature and hairy culture.

Charles Hascoët and Martin Bethenod