

Tony Matelli: *Timelines*

January 19 – February 9, 2023

Avenue Louise 430, 1050 Brussels

American sculptor Tony Matelli makes his triumphant debut at MARUANI MERCIER's Brussels gallery for his first solo exhibition, featuring a fresh and humorous take on classical sculpture on a monumental scale, and grungy, life-mimetic, mirrored works. Entitled *Timelines*, Matelli questions the notions of past and present while further exemplifying his finesse and mastery of the bronze medium.

"[*Timelines*] presents the results of Tony Matelli's ongoing search for the magic in trompe-l'oeil realism. It features garden store and cemetery sculptures bedecked with lifelike fruits, vegetables, and other foodstuffs as well as exacting recreations of grimy, graffitied mirrors. Full of technical feats and imaginative leaps, the works showcase an evolving, open-ended quest to, as he says, "reweird" ordinary life—to discover the uncanny life of familiar objects and scenarios," writes Toby Kamps, one of the contributing authors of Matelli's exhibition catalog to be released at the opening.

The figurative Garden Sculptures open a dialogue on the transience of time, life, and death. This is metaphorized by the visual juxtaposition of ancient sculpture that has lasted for centuries, and perishable foods that have a limited shelf life. "Matelli's perfectly rendered bronze bananas and peels are irreverent reminders that *ars longa, vita brevis*—that art is long, and life is short", writes Kamps.

Similarly, the Dirty Mirrors series plays with time, but rather immortalizes spontaneous gestures. "[The works] are a record of the human compulsion to mark being and experience in images and words. It reminds us that the simplest and most likely the first-ever art-making gesture, the trace of the finger, whether on a cave wall 20,000 years ago, or a bathroom mirror last night, brings with it endless mind-expanding possibilities."

Matelli presents painstaking details in his ressemblant sculptures. His works—characterized by hyperrealism and a twisted depiction of everyday objects often straddle the boundaries of absurdity and humor, raising broader existential questions. Concerned with how we define ourselves as human beings, and what constitutes meaningful relationships, Matelli chronicles these ideas through a playful lens whilst pushing the boundaries of his bronze and marble medium. The result is a subversive dialogue that deepens the conversation surrounding the possibilities of sculpture.

Matelli's work has been extensively exhibited in notable institutions including the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Uppsala Museum, Sweden, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, The Davis Museum, Wellesley, MA, Kunsthalle, Vienna, and Bergen Kunstmuseum, Norway. One of his most iconic works, *Sleepwalker*, has been prominently featured at The High Line in New York and the campus of Wellesley College in Massachusetts. Born in 1971 in Chicago, IL, Matelli is based in New York.

Practical Information

Avenue Louise 430, Brussels 1050

Monday – Saturday, 11:00 – 18:00

+32 2 512 50 10

www.maruanimercier.com

Public Opening

January 19, 2023, 11:00 – 19:00

Exhibition Duration

January 19 – February 9, 2023

Press inquiries may be directed to

Alana Voldman, alana@maruanimercier.com



Image Credit Line: Courtesy of Tony Matelli Studio and Maruani Mercier Gallery