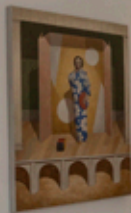


MICHEL REIN BRUSSELS



Christian Hidaka
Marabout
06.06 - 15.07.2017















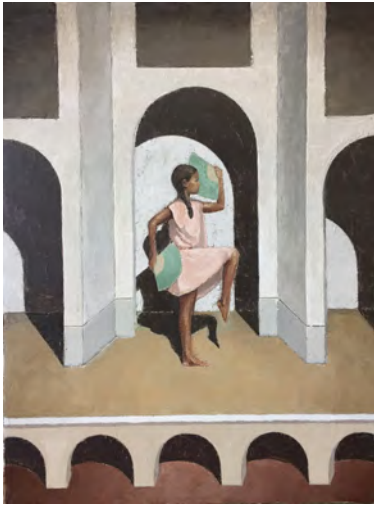
ARTWORK LIST

INV Nbr

PICTURE

TITLE

HIDA17203



Christian Hidaka
Dancer on Stage II, 2017
 oil tempera on linen
 61 x 46 cm / 24 x 18.1 in
 Unique artwork
 Courtesy of the artist and Michel Rein, Paris/Brussels

HIDA17204





Christian Hidaka
Figure on a stage, 2017
 oil tempera on linen
 190 x 152 cm
 Unique artwork
 Courtesy of the artist and Michel Rein, Paris/Brussels

HIDA17207



Christian Hidaka
Marabout, 2017
 oil tempera on linen
 179 x 232 cm
 Unique artwork
 Courtesy of the artist and Michel Rein, Paris/Brussels

ARTWORK LIST

INV Nbr	PICTURE	TITLE
HIDA17205		Christian Hidaka <i>Player</i> , 2017 oil tempera on linen 41 x 33 cm Unique artwork Courtesy of the artist and Michel Rein, Paris/Brussels
HIDA17206		Christian Hidaka <i>Small Players</i> , 2017 oil tempera on linen 77.5 x 155 cm Unique artwork Courtesy of the artist and Michel Rein, Paris/Brussels

Christian Hidaka

Marabout

01.06 – 15.07.2017



Small Players, 2017
Oil, tempera on linen, 77,5 x 155 cm

Harlequins, saltimbanques and the *commedia dell'arte*

It is hardly a surprise to find in recent paintings by Christian Hidaka, the recurring image of Harlequin, the legendary character from the *commedia dell'arte*, a figure that captivated Picasso throughout his lifetime. Circus imagery also appears to haunt Hidaka's current work, his art summoning up the harlequins, saltimbanques (acrobats) and itinerant players famously depicted on Picasso's *Parade* drop curtain of 1917, and influenced by the poetry of his friend and creative collaborator Guillaume Apollinaire. Circuses and saltimbanques were instinctively shared subjects of Picasso and Apollinaire between 1904 and 1905, and both painter and poet frequently combined circus, fairground and theatrical imagery in their works. Picasso's circus works of this time, and his monumental canvas *Family of the Saltimbanques* (National Gallery of Art, Washington, 1905), coincide with two draft poems entitled "Spectacle" ("Performance") and "Les Saltimbanques" ("The Acrobats"), which Apollinaire penned for Picasso on 1 November 1905, and featured travelling circus groups, fairground and theatrical imagery of nomadic performers of various kinds. Apollinaire later revised "Spectacle" under the title of "Crépuscule" ("Twilight") – which was published in *Alcools* in 1913 – by reworking the last stanza of the poem that he originally gave to Picasso in 1905 to include a reference to Harlequin Trismegistus. The verses that the poet wrote for his friend in 1905, "Spectacle" and "Les Saltimbanques", have since become two of the most popular poems of the twentieth century.

CRÉPUSCULE

Frôlée par les ombres des morts
Sur l'herbe où le jour s'exténue
L'arlequine s'est mise nue
Et dans l'étang mire son corps

Un charlatan crépusculaire
Vante les tours que l'on va faire
Le ciel sans teinte est constellé
D'astres pâles comme du lait

Sur les tréteaux l'arlequin blême
Salue d'abord les spectateurs
Des sorciers venus de Bohême
Quelques fées et les enchanteurs

Ayant décroché une étoile
Il la manie à bras tendu
Tandis que des pieds un pendu
Sonne en mesure les cymbales

L'aveugle berce un bel enfant
La biche passe avec ses faons
Le nain regarde d'un air triste
Grandir l'arlequin trismégiste

The iconography of Apollinaire's poems are therefore intimately bound up with the imagery of Picasso's *Family of the Saltimbanques* painting, and as a symbol of the poet's and painter's fraternal complicity. Picasso forever kept his great friend's blue postcard (Musée Picasso, Paris) inside a 1905 sketchbook: a sketchbook filled with images of harlequins, saltimbanques and other travelling players, and underpinning both the poet and painter's creative partisanship. These were poems that Picasso secretly guarded throughout his life, celebrating Harlequin but based on the great mythological character Hermes, and conflating Harlequin Trismégiste with the magical figure Hermes Trismegistus (Thrice Great), keeper of the underworld, god of fertility and author of the occult treatise and creation myth *The Emerald Tablet*, which was adopted as a seminal text by European alchemists. As art historians have observed, the poems "Spectacle" and "Les Saltimbanques" take the arts of magic and illusion as their main themes. These poems eulogize Picasso as the magical, demonic figure Harlequin Trismegistus. For the poet was well aware of old Walloon legends regarding "her-lequin" – a soul departed from hell. In "Spectacle", Harlequin (Picasso) is identified as a sorcerer whose magical power over nature helps him to bind heaven and earth with the supernatural act of unhooking a star. Meanwhile, the hanged man, who gives Harlequin his theatrical cue to begin the performance, takes the symbol of a traditional Tarot card. In "Les Saltimbanques", however, Picasso is portrayed as Harlequin Trismegistus the alchemist, who transforms the "doors of grey inns" into a scene of "drums and gilded hoops", so as to draw a poetic analogy between art and alchemy.

This poetic symbolism is most clearly expressed in *Small Players* (2017), which, to my eye, evokes the theatrical setting of *Parade*; the tantalizing equilibrium of *Acrobat on a Ball* (Pushkin Museum Moscow) and *Circus Family* (Baltimore Museum of Art), the latter images described by Apollinaire in *The Cubist Painters* (1913) as "Adolescents sisters, each one acrobatically balancing high on a ball, lightfootedly set the spheres spinning radiantly as the planets." Apollinaire here intimates a direct connection between the heavenly spheres and the acrobatic displays of Picasso's entertainers: "They can leap into the air and their best turns are movements of the mind." Hidaka's acrobats and players likewise mimic the subtle balance between the artist's inner and outer world, his musical *Player* – who has one foot between the boundary of the subliminal and the wider universe – majestically conjuring up the eternal mysteries of artistic creativity. Equally in *Marabout*, Hidaka's dark magician/instrumentalist represents the artist as divinity, beauty and art his universe. "The spectator should be devout and respectful", warns Apollinaire, "for they are celebrating silent rituals with painstaking agility."

This imagery also held a personal meaning for Picasso and, as the artist told Josep Palau i Fabre, depictions of circus performers first began to appear in his work after he happened upon a troupe of wandering acrobats on the Place des Invalides, traditionally a site for fêtes foraines (fun fairs) in Paris. Apollinaire, nevertheless, took the credit for sowing the seed of the circus "in Picasso's soul... whence it grew into marvellous works of art." We know from Fernande Olivier and Picasso's other friends that the artist loved visiting the Cirque Médrano, mingling with acrobats and clowns in the circus bar, and listening to the tales of the Spanish owner "Boum-Boum" (Géronimo Médrano), as well as other compatriots on the road. Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and Georges Seurat had earlier depicted the same circus (then called Cirque Fernando), but, whereas their paintings show performers and the audience in a ring or beneath canvas, Picasso preferred to highlight their itinerant, gypsy-like qualities by placing them outside.

The significance of the subject is not only poetic, but has a fundamental bearing on the driving forces behind the opposing values of Picasso's later Synthetic Cubism, especially seen in the processes of his assemblage sculpture. This is something not lost on Hidaka, whose pixelated flames, magical circles, balls, and strange cubistic set pieces in *Small Players* et al, become an embodiment of his own *commedia dell'arte*. The legendary characters and magical symbolism present in Hidaka's paintings are an unintentional self-portrait also – a representation of the immortal artist-cum-performer as a meditative and insular visionary. As one scholar has observed of Picasso's harlequins and saltimbanques – something equally true of Christian Hidaka's paintings – "For Apollinaire, the acrobats' painstaking and ritualistic performances epitomise [that]... the human potential to outreach our mortal condition is most gloriously realised in the timeless work of Picasso, the painter in whom slumbering deities are reincarnated; with all-seeing eyes, outstaring the sun, he remakes the world in his art."

John Finley
May 2017

Christian Hidaka

www.christianhidaka.com

Born in 1977 in Noda, Japan
Lives and works in London, UK

COLLECTIONS

Centre National des Arts Plastiques, France
FRAC Corsica, France
FRAC Pays de la Loire, France
MUDAM Collection, Luxembourg
Zoe and Joel Dictrow Collection
The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, Israel
The Frederick R. Weisman Collection, Los Angeles, USA
The Saatchi Gallery, London, UK
Simmons and Simmons, London, UK
Scorpio Trust, Geneva, Switzerland
Cranford Collection, London, UK
Zabludowicz Trust, London, UK
UBS Collection, London, UK
Collection Honart Museum, Tehran, Iran
Goss Michael Foundation Collection, USA
Sigg Collection, Switzerland

EDUCATION

1999 - 2002
Royal Academy Schools, London, UK

1996 - 1999
BA of Fine arts, Winchester School of Arts, Winchester, UK
Undergraduate Fine arts, Parsons School of Art and Design, New York, USA

AWARDS & GRANTS

2003
The Lexmark European Art Prize, UK

2002
St. James' Fellowship, Royal Academy Schools, London, UK

SOLO SHOWS

2017
Marabout, Michel Rein, Brussels, Belgium

2016
Christian Hidaka & Raphaël Zarka, La famille SCHOENFLIES, Instants Chavirés, Montreuil, France, 2016
Desert Stage, Le Grand Café Centre d'art contemporain, Saint Nazaire, France

2015
The Fool, Galerie Michel Rein, Paris, France

2013
Meeting House, Centre d'art contemporain - la Synagogue de Delme, Delme, France

2012
Souvenir, Galerie Michel Rein, Paris, France

2011
Red Desert, Galerie Michel Rein, Paris, France
Waterfall At The Top Of The River, Max Wigram Gallery, London, UK

2010
Galerie Michel Rein, Paris, France

2008

Max Wigram Gallery, London, UK

2007

Patricia Low Contemporary, Gstaad, Switzerland

2005

Black sun, Max Wigram Gallery, London, UK

2003

Inside the Island, MWprojects, London, UK

1999

Pilgrimage, The Small Mansion, London, UK

GROUP SHOWS

2016

Aurélien Froment / Raphaël Zarka, Les abattoirs FRac Midi-Pyrénées
A Question of Perspective (cur. Jane Neal), Grimm gallery, Amsterdam, Netherlands

2015

Don't shoot the painter - UBS Collection - Villa Reale's Galleria d'Arte Moderna, Milan, Italy

2014

Landscapes, Galerie Michel Rein, Brussels, Belgium

2013

Salient, (cur. Gabor Gyory & Nick Jensen), Dye House, London, UK
The Stairs (cur. Sebastian Black & Mathew Cerletty), Albus Greenspon Gallery, New York, USA

2012

On the Beach, Galerie Commune, Tourcoing, France
BY_ME_BY_YOU_BY_WE, Twelve Around One, London, UK

2011

In the Gardens, Utopian Slumps, Melbourne, Australia
Polemically Small, Charlie Smith, London, UK
Walking Through... MUDAM, Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean, Luxembourg
Polemically Small, Torrance Art Museum, California, USA
Galerie Michel Rein at Florent Tosin, Berlin, Germany

2010

La gamme Pérouse, MOHLL148, Aubervilliers, France
John Moores Contemporary Painting Prize, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, UK
Summertime Love, Michel Rein, Paris, France
Panorama, Michel Rein, Paris, France
The Library of Babel- In and Out of Place, 176 Zabudowicz Collection, London, UK
5th Anniversary Exhibition, Patricia Low, Switzerland

2009

Eat Me-Drink Me, The Goss-Michael Foundation, Dallas, Texas, USA
Elements of Nature, The Weisman Art Museum, California, USA

2008

Park Avenue, Southampton City Art Gallery, Southampton, UK
Imaginary Realities, Max Wigram Gallery, London, UK
INSIDEOUT, Gallery Moriarty, Madrid, Spain
UK Pavilion, 2008 Beijing Biennale, Beijing, China
Art and Illusion: Selections from the Frederick R. Weisman Art Foundation, Roseville Arts!, Roseville, California, USA
Reflections from the Artist's Eye: Contemporary Art from the Frederick R. Weisman Art Foundation, Frederick R. Weisman Museum of Art, Pepperdine University, Malibu, California, USA

2007

Off the Wall, Rental Gallery, New York, USA
The Eclectic Eye: Selections of Fantasy and Illusion from the Frederick R Weisman Art Foundation, Contemporary Art Center, New Orleans, USA
The Eclectic Eye: Pop and Illusion, Taylor Museum, Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, Colorado Springs, Fine Arts Center, USA

2006

Récurrentes Dérobées, Bétonsalon, Paris, France

2005

Art and Illusion: Selections from the Frederick R. Weisman Art Foundation, Carnegie Art Museum, Oxnard, California, USA
Fuckin' brilliant!! Maji-yabai!, Tokyo Wonder Site Shibuya, Tokyo, Japan
The Tower of Babel, Limehouse Arts Foundation, London, UK
The Future Lasts a Long Time, Le Consortium, Dijon, France
Curvaceous, Andrea Rosen Gallery, New York, USA
Future Primitive, One in the Other, London, UK
Faux Realism, Rockwell Gallery, London, UK
Ideal Worlds, Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt, Germany (cat.)
Faltering Flames, Graves Gallery, Sheffield, UK (cat.)
Yabadabadoo, Cell Project, London, UK

2004

Expander, Royal Academy of Arts, London, UK (cat.)
Secrets - The Spectacle Within, Queens Gallery, New Delhi, India
The New Romantics, Greene Naftali Gallery, New York, USA

WOrLD.B, Flaca gallery, London, UK

2003

Three London Painters, millefioriartspace, Athens, Greece

Selected Paintings, MWprojects, London, UK

The Boiler room, Saatchi Gallery, London, UK

Rockwell Project, Rockwell Gallery, London, UK

Good Bad Taste, Keith talent Gallery, London, UK

Friction, London Print studio, London, UK

Otaku, Michael Goedhuis, London, UK