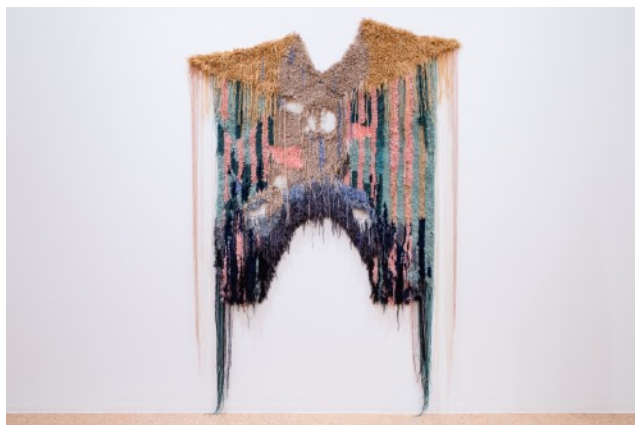


Caroline Achaintre: *Fantômas*
2 September - 4 November 2018
Be-Part, Waregem



Be-Part presents the first solo exhibition in Belgium by Caroline Achaintre (° 1969, Toulouse, lives and works in London). The exhibition, entitled *Fantômas*, includes a dozen new ceramic sculptures and four large, hand-tufted wall hangings, in addition to a selection of drawings that have never been shown before.

Achaintre's visually striking, witty ceramic sculptures and hand-tufted wall hangings evoke the subversive spirit of Carnival, creating an atmosphere that is simultaneously playful and absurd. Her works incorporate diverse references such as catwalk fashion, carnival, and death-metal iconography, as well as Primitivism and Expressionism – early twentieth-century Western art movements that borrowed heavily from non-Western and prehistoric imagery to find new ways of representing the modern world. At times menacing, sexual and playful they also present many contradictions between art and design, fashion and taste, abstraction and figuration.

The title of the exhibition refers to the mask worn by the eponymous shape-shifting French criminal, invented by writers Marcel Allain and Pierre Souvestre in 1911. In the 1960s, a TV adaptation of the novel was made, in which *Fantômas*' face was hidden by a rigid-looking blue mask. For Achaintre, whose work often resemble masks, the mask is a place where fantasy and reality can exist at the same time. Appearing in cultures throughout the world, masks have the potential to take on a life of their own, conjuring 'characters' in the mind of the viewer.

Fantômas was originally developed for the De La Warr Pavilion, Bexhill-on-Sea, and is presented in an expanded form at Be-Part. The ceramics were created whilst the artist undertook a joint residency between the De La Warr Pavilion and West Dean College, an arts and conservation college founded by the British Poet Edward James, a keen art collector known for his patronage of the Surrealist movement.

Caroline Achaintre: *Fantômas*
2 September - 4 November 2018
Opening: 1 September, 17:00
Be-Part, Waregem
Westerlaan 17,
8790 Waregem

More press information:
Micha Pycke
Club Paradis
+32 (0)486 680 070
micha@clubparadis.be

Caroline Achaintre's hand-tufted wall hangings



Achaintre initially started making tufted objects as a way to translate drawings into real space. To make her work, she tufts each individual piece of yarn into a woven canvas base, a process which she likens to painting in wool. The length, texture and colour of each thread takes on the qualities of expressionist painting. Achaintre uses wool because of its physicality, its attractive but sometimes also repulsive attributes. Its natural fabric suggests something primitive, but also the technological precision and connoisseurship of post-industrial craft. These ideas are reflected in her compositions, which look like futuristic tribal masks.

Though Achaintre's process is highly technical and labour-intensive, she develops her work quite spontaneously. Because she has to tuft the wool from the back side of the canvas, her compositions are developed largely through intuition. The holes in the canvas allude to the unseen space behind the face; these enhance the works' sculptural form and also give a sense of 'false' presentation or apparition. Achaintre considers her work as part of a tradition of tapestry; her works' theatrical images function as both pictorial illusion and concrete (and potentially usable) object.

Caroline Achaintre

Caroline Achaintre was born in 1969 in Toulouse. She spent her formative years in Germany where she studied Fine Art at Kunsthochschule in Halle/Saale from 1996 to 1998, followed by postgraduate studies in Fine Art and Combined Media at Chelsea College of Art & Design, London, from 1998 to 2000 and an MA in Fine Art at Goldsmiths College, London, from 2001 to 2003.

Selected solo shows include FRAC Champagne-Ardenne, Reims, 2017, BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead, 2016, Tate Britain, London, 2015.

Selected group exhibitions include the 13th Baltic Triennial, Vilnius/Tallin/Riga, 2018; Ungestalt, Kunsthalle Basel, 2016; Making & Unmaking, Camden Arts Centre; London, 2016; More Material, Salon 94, New York, 2014; Decorum, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris, 2013; The London Open, Whitechapel Gallery, London, 2012; Newspeak: British Art Now, Saatchi Gallery, 2010.

