



# THE LALANNE AT TRIANON

Exhibition from 19 June to 10 October 2021

Versailles, 10 May 2021  
Press release

This summer the Château of Versailles, in partnership with the Galerie Mitterrand, is presenting the works of sculptors Claude and François-Xavier Lalanne. Their surreal, poetic, essentially animal sculptures will enter into a dialogue with the bucolic world imagined by Marie Antoinette. In the course of a tour from the Petit Trianon to the Queen's Hamlet and the English Garden, the public will discover the greatest group of Lalanne works ever brought together.

## CLAUDE AND FRANÇOIS-XAVIER LALANNE

Inspired by nature, since the 1950s Claude and François-Xavier have elaborated two parallel bodies of work made up of playful associations full of humour and poetry, but each according to their own *modus operandi*. Running counter to the fads and fashions, outside the artistic groups and schools of their time, and not far from the Surrealists, the Lalanne continued to extol nature throughout their lives and work, evoking its fauna and flora through sculpture.

The works of **Claude Lalanne** (1925 - 2019) were made using techniques associated with imprinting, casting and electroplating. This process enabled her to freeze natural forms in order to transform them into sculptures, furniture or mirrors. While Claude Lalanne's style reflects an ornamental and baroque spirit, the work of **François-Xavier Lalanne** (1927 - 2008) stands out for his synthesis of the simplicity of drawing and the rigour of execution. More often than not, he invented a function adapted to each animal. His works range over a mischievous bestiary with hieratic postures that align him with a tradition of 20th century artists.

This exhibition will be an opportunity to discover or rediscover the couple's major works, like a *Wapiti* (Grand), 1996, an *Âne Bâté* (Stupid Ass), 1985, or *Le Très Grand Ours* (The Very Large Bear), 2007, and a flock of iconic *Moutons* (Sheep) by François-Xavier, in resonance with Claude's famous *Pomme de New York* (Apple of New York), 2006, the *Nouveau Lapin de Victoire* (New Rabbit of Victory), 2007, and the emblematic *Choupatte* (Giant), 2016.

Thanks to the Lalanne family, some collectors and the Galerie Mitterrand, a large number of works have been brought together to constitute a pathway through the gardens, reflecting the impressive diversity of the



François-Xavier Lalanne, *Les Nouveaux Moutons, Bêlier, Brebis et Agneau* (1994-1996) et *Âne Bâté* (1985) - Courtesy Galerie Mitterrand - © Capucine de Chabaneix

Lalanne sculptures created over a period of fifty years.

## THE QUEEN'S BUCOLIC WORLD

In 1774 King Louis XVI presented the Petit Trianon as a gift to his wife, Marie Antoinette, who made it into her private hideaway where she escaped from the etiquette of the Court. As early as 1777 the queen completely transformed the gardens, creating a totally new Anglo-Chinese garden with a grotto, waterfall and various features, with the help of her architect Richard Mique. This large garden presents an illusion of nature untouched by human hand, providing promenades of great diversity.

The Queen had the Hamlet built between 1783 and 1786. Designed as a chateau fragmented into several rustic constructions, the Queen's House was built on the banks of the Great Lake, forming a scenic décor. In keeping with the taste of the time, the spirit and aesthetic of this creation borrows from the drawings of Hubert Robert and the writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who advocated a return to nature.

CHATEAU DE VERSAILLES PRESS CONTACTS  
Hélène Dalifard, Elodie Mariani, Violaine Solari, Elodie Vincent  
+33 (0)1 30 83 75 21 / [presse@chateauversailles.fr](mailto:presse@chateauversailles.fr)

GALERIE MITTERRAND CONTACTS  
Marie Dubourdieu  
01 43 26 12 05 / [marie@galeriemitterrand.com](mailto:marie@galeriemitterrand.com)

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