



June 20 to September 13, 2015

David Altmejd



This major exhibition, the first collaborative undertaking between the Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris and the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, provides a critical, retrospective survey of the work of internationally renowned Québec artist David Altmejd. It was first presented in Paris, from October 10, 2014 to February 1, 2015. Between Paris and Montréal, MUDAM Luxembourg welcomed an abridged version, reconfigured by the artist, from March 7 to May 31, 2015.

The presentation at the Musée features some thirty works produced over the last fifteen years, in addition to a new, site-specific piece. One of the key works in the show, *The Flux and the Puddle*, 2014, brilliantly sums up the main motifs and concerns that fill Altmejd's remarkable, vigorous imagination.

His spectacular sculptures, meticulously crafted out of a wide assortment of components and materials, draw on a hybrid, cumulative aesthetic to conjure up the powerful forces of decay and regeneration, and to establish a metaphorical dialectic between the human world and the animal realm.

Altmejd quickly earned a reputation for his baroque depictions of the enigmatic figure of the werewolf, which constantly undergoes transformations. However, he does not offer stories or scenarios but, rather, reveals inspired iterations of a unique spirit and sensibility, in tune with the meanderings of a lucid dream.

Bringing together a minimalist structural rigour contrasted with unfolding fields of energy, Altmejd recognizes the primacy of the conceptual approach in shaping the cycles that run through his work: heads, constructed, architectural pieces, werewolves, bird men, giants, bodybuilders, guides, watchmen... The abrupt changes in scale (from the minuscule to the monumental), profusion of materials (crystals, mirrors, synthetic hair and fur, resin, wood, metal) and the various devices he uses to occupy the space (platforms, display cases, oversized cabinets) are all strategies that position the artist as a creator of all possibilities.

Universal in its scope, Altmejd's work merges the self and the other in the constant, repeated echo of the mirror image and the intensity of the primal, human, animal presence at different moments in the cycle of life.

Born in Montréal in 1974, David Altmejd lives and works in New York. He represented Canada at the 52nd *Venice Biennale*, in 2007, and won the Sobey Art Award in 2009. Other exhibitions include the 8th *Istanbul Biennial*, in 2003; New York's *Whitney Biennial*, in 2004; and the first *Québec Triennial* at the MACM, in 2008. Altmejd's work may be found in the following collections: Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal; National Gallery of Canada; Art Gallery of Ontario; Montreal Museum of Fine Arts; Les Abattoirs, Toulouse; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; MOCA – Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; and MUDAM – Musée d'art moderne Grand-Duc Jean, Luxembourg. He was recently made a companion of the Ordre des arts et des lettres du Québec.

This exhibition was organized by the Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris / Paris Musées and the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal.

Josée Bélisle, Curator of the Collections

Flux

The Flux and The Puddle (detail), 2014
Plexiglas, quartz, polystyrene,
polyurethane foam, epoxy clay, epoxy
gel, resin, synthetic hair, clothing,
leather shoes, thread, mirror, plaster,
acrylic paint, latex paint, metal wire,
glass eyes, sequins, ceramic, synthetic
flowers, synthetic branches, glue, gold,
domestic goose feathers (*Anser anser
domesticus*), steel, coconuts, aqua resin,
burlap, Sharpie ink, wood, coffee
grounds, lighting system including
fluorescent lights
328 × 640 × 714 cm
Photos: Lance Brewer
Courtesy Andrea Rosen Gallery,
New York