

Jean-Marie APPRIOU

*Cura,*

*Jean Marie Appriou Exonaut Horizon*

*November 2024*

## Jean Marie Appriou — CURA.

C. [curamagazine.com/digital/jean-marie-appriou-2](https://curamagazine.com/digital/jean-marie-appriou-2)



I have always found myself in a certain state of perplexity regarding the concept of touch as it pertains to art; the participatory idea of the *touching* as awakening a sensory effect, or igniting a sort of desire to merge two entities – the one observing with the other being observed; resulting in the uncertainty of knowing, ultimately, who truly is observed – into one. In fact, I have steadfastly avoided touching works, preserving the symbolic distance that separates myself from the tangibility of what lies in front of me.

On a Saturday, I stand at Perrotin, unsettled by the throngs that fill the space – sculptures retreating into the background, obscured by an eager mass. Here, they await to physically engage with the two most imposing creations of Jean Marie Appriou, unveiled in his first Parisian exhibition with the gallery. The sculptures (*Soul Gate*, 2024; *Constellation Abyssale*, 2024) rise in the heart of one of the exhibition's rooms like allies; a colossal spider with blood-red eyes standing next to a similarly grand octopus. They are both higher than me, rather frightening. Nevertheless, the space between the spider's legs offers ample room for children to scurry beneath it. At the same time, in front of her, a small group stands patiently, drawn by the allure of the octopus's tentacles; awaiting the moment to run their fingers along its undulating forms, impatient to decipher the rhythm of its undulations and, ultimately, to become part of the whole. This isn't sensual, nor defiant, at first; more so the result of an uncanny *curiosity*.













Jean Marie Appriou is an artist whose work interrogates the nature of the visitor, engaging with the metaphysical essence of what is constructed through a series of movements – these perpetual births – that culminate in a circumstance that gradually recedes to renew itself. A sort of perpetual transformation. In *Exonaut Horizon*, these

elements manifest as organic forms; animals – such as beetles, an octopus, and a spider – and human figures – a couple of cosmonauts, figures ensconced in cocoons; each referencing the ancient symbols present in Egyptian iconography (that of the scarab (*Lava*, 2024; *Le Gardien de Souffle*, 2024) – a symbol of power and rebirth –, of the spider – of patience and persistence –, or even of the octopus – intelligence and cunning – to the reinterpretation of postures; that of the seated couple – here two astronauts – or the frescoes – found in Event *Horizon (Primordial Vessel)*, 2024, or *Vessel of Time (Infinity)*, 2024). Each element is intricately interwoven, weaving narratives in which every part implies the others, all of which resonate with the fundamental question of humanity; of what emerges through the interplay of time and space, provoking the *alive*.

This inquiry perhaps relates to the *touching* I question above; the profound meanings generated by hearing, seeing, and feeling, and reflecting on what this visitor reveals about us, constrained in this space to grasp themselves as communicative figures in relation to the elements surrounding us. These constructs are fashioned from materials that echo that living (that *alive*) – be it lava, glass, or stone – imbuing them with a conceptual framework of existence and memory. This dialogue engages with the terrestrial and the habitats we inhabit, ultimately directing our attention to the very locus of our bodies and the realities they confront, intricately tied to fear, desire, and dreaming. To that which burns, cuts, and erases. Or, perhaps; the ephemeral and the enduring in our existence.

I do not believe in the existential potential of Jean Marie Appriou's sculptures, remaining perpetually distracted by their kind of beauty; a sort of lushness that reveals itself in the use of noble colors (gold, silver) and associated with the delicacy of glass and stone. Yet, I do discern an underlying desire to delve into what unfolds within the realm of metaphysics; a yearning to grasp the beliefs surrounding what transcends our immediate perception, and to explore how the elements surrounding us – here and now, in our contemporary world – inform us about it. This fantastical dimension raises a fundamentally central question: that of the Anthropocene, framed within a context where every element engages in a fragile dialogue with one another, vulnerable to the movements that disrupt their equilibrium, and laden with an inherent fear of extinction. Such interactions never solidify into permanence; they are contingent upon a rhythm, a breath that is itself ephemeral and delicate. A contemplation of our own existence, emphasizing the transient and interconnected nature of life as it unfolds within the intricate tapestry of our environment.

Jean-Marie APPRIOU

Exonaut Horizon

Perrotin, Paris

October 12 -November 16, 2024

Review by Hugo Bausch Belbachir



Credits:

Views of Jean-Marie Appriou's exhibition 'Exonaut Horizon' at Perrotin Paris, 2024.

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