

Museum of Old and New Art
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655 Main Road Berriedale
Hobart, Tasmania Australia 7011

MEDIA RELEASE



Thursday 27 November 2013

HUBERT DUPRAT AT MONA
FIRST SOLO AUSTRALIAN EXHIBITION
December 7, 2013 – April 21, 2014
Curated by Olivier Varenne with Nicole Durling and Jane Clark

French artist Hubert Duprat creates in a world that MONA loves exploring - evolutionary and organic processes.

Hubert Duprat's self-taught practice exists in the space between artistic heritage and investigation of the natural world – a true collaboration of artistry and science. His experiments have formed a body of work over a number of decades that evokes both prehistoric symbolism and technical adaptation. His intention isn't to surprise or to create 'out of the blue'; each one of his pieces is the result of a precise and tangible moment that pinpoints a significant experience. He stands at the crossing of two worlds: the world of free artistic expression, and the world of rationally organised objects.

Duprat is an artist that sees the world as an inexhaustible repertoire of images; mineral, plant, animal and cultural. Whether he assembles branches of red coral held together with pieces of bread (1994) resembling nerve synapses and vein junctures, a mound of magnetite stone spindles (2008) that create their own sculptural design. Duprat's work is the creation of a metaphor of the form between being and becoming.

Since 1983, he has continued his work with endemic caddisfly larvae – a freshwater aquatic insect known to anglers. Intervening with the process of the caddis forming its protective metamorphic sheath, made of silk thread, twigs and gravel, Duprat removes these materials and replaces them with grains of gold dust, pearls and precious stones including turquoise, rubies and diamonds, forcing them to build a new case.

The aquatic larvae's gold-lined chrysalis becomes an elaborate and precious ornament, as Duprat subtly diverts the work of nature by creating the conditions necessary to display its talents. By altering its common conditions, the caddis becomes a goldsmith and jeweller and nature's power to surprise through the astonishing wonder of its workings is restored. Duprat's works are not just works of art in their basic acceptance; rather than merely judging this production on an aesthetic level, we try to reach

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out for it in a new field of knowledge. Beyond the sphere of functionality, these objects claim their simple 'Dasein', or at least their ability to create links with other materials.

For his first solo exhibition in Australia, Duprat's exhibition at the Museum of Old and New Art in Tasmania, from December 7, 2013 – April 21, 2014 will feature a selection of his works, utilising a variety of materials, natural and man-made, in symphony. The fully-illustrated catalogue, to be published early 2014, includes essays by David Walsh, British poet and novelist Adam Thorpe, Jane Clark and other international contributors.

MONA founder David Walsh says: 'Hubert Duprat co-opts nature in his art. He uses caddisflies to make his art. But they don't make *his* art, they make *their* art.'

MONA Senior Curator Olivier Varenne says: "Duprat considers his work a collaboration between himself and the caddis larvae; he is the architect of their environment, providing them with the gold and precious gems with which to build their protective cases. Hubert's practice often involves inviting skilled craftsmen with special expertise to work on the realisation of his sculptural creations. Materials not usually found in 'fine art' – ranging from modelling clay to crystals – are employed to create improbable forms. His great interest in natural phenomena and his vast knowledge are combined to create art that is truly unique."

MONA Senior Research Curator Jane Clark says: 'Duprat has described himself as an *amateur*, in the tradition of enquiry that does not compartmentalise by profession or discipline – and which dates back to classical antiquity via the Renaissance. In fact, his work to date suggests we consider a whole range of important and intricately interrelated questions: about the ownership of ideas, nature, and knowledge in general; about transformation and exploitation of the earth's resources (including these days the commodification of our own genetic material); about originality and uniqueness in the digital era; about taxonomy; and more.'

HUBERT DUPRAT

Saturday December 7, 2013 – Monday April 21, 2014

Museum of Old and New Art, Level B1

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CURATOR PROFILES

Olivier Varenne is MONA's Senior Curator for international art, based in London. He has curated Céleste Boursier Mougnot's *From Here to Ear* (2009); *The Heart Archive*, Christian Boltanski (2010); *Monanism* (2011 – ongoing); *Wim Delvoye* (2011 – 2012); *Chiharu Shiota's In Silence* (2011); *Theatre of the World* (2012 – 2013), *Theâtre du Monde* (2013); *Yannick Demmerle* (2012), *Beam In Thine Own Eye* (2013); *I Look to You and I See Nothing* (2013); the art component of *MONA FOMA* and *Dark Mofo* and *The Red Queen* (2013-2014).

Nicole Durling is MONA's Senior Curator, based in Melbourne. She has curated *Monanism* (2011 – ongoing); *Theatre of the World* (2012 – 2013), *Theâtre du Monde* (2013); *Beam In Thine Own Eye* (2013); *I Look to You and I See Nothing* (2013); the art component of *MONA FOMA* and *Dark Mofo*, *The Red Queen* (2013-2014), and *Todd McMillan, Ten Years of Tears* (2013).

Jane Clark is MONA's Senior Research Curator, based in Melbourne. Since joining MONA in 2007 she has been involved in all of the museum's exhibitions and publications; as well as contributing to journals, books and exhibition catalogues at the National Gallery of Australia, several state and regional galleries and in London.

MONA - Museum of Old and New Art

MONA opened in January 2011 to exhibit the private collection of founder David Walsh, and to explore new ways to encounter art. Since then we have welcomed more than 970,000 visitors.

Address: 655 Main Road, Berriedale 7011, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia.

Operating Hours: MONA is open Wednesday through Monday. Closed Tuesdays. Closed Christmas Day. Entry fee: \$A20/adult, concession \$A15; under 18 years free

Getting to Mona from Hobart: MRI fast ferry from Brooke Street Pier; or the *Mona Roma* bus, or bicycle. Go online www.mona.net or check [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) for updates.

@MONAMUSEUM

MEDIA CONTACT

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