

Animal sculpture

A CENTURY OF CREATIONS

The 19th century was the century of animal realism, which during that era took on monumental dimensions. The many public commissions that characterised the world of French sculpture at the time encouraged Classicism rather than the personal expression of artists. However, some of them attempted to liberate themselves from this academism, following in the footsteps of Antoine-Louis Barye (1795-1875), the first sculptor to deliberately renounce any mythological pretexts in the representation of animals. The Animaliers movement (a 19th-century movement of artists specialising in the realistic portrayal of animals) was born during this period, out of a desire to represent animals as they were, as the Prehistoric artists had done.

A contemporary of the works of Darwin, Emmanuel Frémiet managed to combine a spirit of naturalist observation and a sense of the picturesque that left some room for fantasy. The themes that inspired the Animaliers were indeed sufficiently rich to enable them to find their model of original expression through naturalism and abstraction.

The Menagerie of the Garden of Plants provided a fabulous supply of inspiration and models for the 19th-century artists. It was closed to the public in the morning to allow them to study the subjects of their future works in peace.

The first exhibitions of the Animaliers took place at the Georges Petit Gallery under the patronage of Armand Dayot and Georges Gardet.

The post-war era saw a revival in animal art, which was in evidence in all the decorative arts, assisted by the conquests outside of Europe and the arrival of the colonial exhibitions, which gave the Animalier movement new relevance.

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(7th) Parvis of the Orsay Museum

Henri Alfred Jacquemart

Rhinoceros

Produced in the factories of J. Voruz Senior in Nantes, this bronze statue of imposing dimensions (2.29 m x 2.86 m x 3.78 m) was presented at the Universal Exposition in 1878. It is part of a group of four monumental bronze statues (a horse, a bull, an elephant and a rhinoceros), originally placed around the fountain in front of the Trocadéro Palace. Taken down in 1935 when the palace was demolished, Jacquemart's rhinoceros was installed at the Porte Saint Cloud until 1985. With the horse and the elephant, described below (the bull is in Nimes), this rhinoceros has since been installed on the parvis of the Orsay Museum.



(7th) Parvis of the Orsay Museum

Emmanuel Frémiet

Young Elephant Caught in a Trap

Emmanuel Frémiet (1824-1910) carried out patriotic commissions in a Neo-Classical style, while being recognised as an artist who excelled in the production of animal sculptures inspired by the Naturalist movement.

He was also associated with the Realist school. He became a member of the Academy of Fine Arts in 1892 and succeeded Barye as Professor of Animal Drawing at the Natural History Museum in Paris.

His life-size young elephant (2.22 m x 3.60 m x 3.12 m), which was dealt with in the same way as Jacquemart's rhinoceros, was acquired by the Department of Purchases from Living Artist for the Trocadéro Palace in Paris during the Universal Exposition in 1878.

Emmanuel Frémiet was also well-known for his statue of Joan of Arc on horseback, at Place des Pyramides in Paris, and for his monument to Ferdinand de Lesseps in Suez.



(7th) Parvis of the Orsay Museum

Pierre Rouillart

Horse and Harrow

Pierre Rouillart (1820-1881) was a Professor of Sculpture at the School of Drawing (now the School of Decorative Arts) from 1840 to 1881. One of his most notable students was the animal sculptor François Pompon.

He worked on decorative sculptures at the Paris Opera and the Louvre Paris as well as for the Saint Michel's Fountain. He also produced 24 groups of animals to decorate the Belerbeyi Palace in Constantinople (now Istanbul).

His horse (2.23mx 3.50mx 2.20m), made of cast iron, can now be seen rearing up on the parvis of the Orsay Museum in Paris.

The introduction of the cast iron technique led to the commissioning of many more public works from the Second Empire onwards, due to its lower production cost and the gain in raw materials associated with it.



(7th) Place de Breteuil

Alexandre Falguière

Monument to Louis Pasteur

Located at the centre of Place de Breteuil, this monumental marble statue was Alexandre Falguière's last work, which he made in 1900. In 1908 it was installed by the architect Charles Girault on the masonry base of the old monumental tower of the artesian well of Breteuil. Financed by a public subscription, the statue was finished by Victor Peter and Louis Dubois. It shows Pasteur sitting down, draped in a gown with generously sculpted folds. Around the base is Death, with its traditional attributes, powerless against the mother and her child, the convalescent young girl, the peasant's cattle and the shepherd's sheep, and even against the silkworms. This iconography is a reminder of the work of Pasteur: vaccinations against rabies and cholera, pasteurisation and the study of the diseases of silkworms.



(15th) Square Cambronne

Henri Fouques

A Drama in the Desert

When Henri Fouques died in 1891, his widow donated the plaster cast of the statue to the City of Paris. The City then decided to have it produced in cast iron, iron alloy and carbon, at the Darenne foundry. This monumental statue (2 m x 1.60 m x 2.50 m), located on Square Cambronne, weighs around 2,200 kg and is made up of three pieces and a lead joint, assembled with wrought iron nuts and bolts. The sculpture is painted with oil paints and has an orange minium undercoat. The statue is also called Arab in the Desert and may be related to the campaign in Algeria, the Franco-Moroccan war, and the African conquests and explorations that took place in the 19th century.



(15th) Square Blomet

Joan Miró

Lunar Bird

Joan Miró (1893-1983) was a Spanish painter, sculptor and ceramicist, considered to be a major figure in Modern art. He encountered the Dada movement in 1920 and André Breton, one of the founders of Surrealism, described him as "the most Surrealist of all of us". He set up his studio at 3, rue François Mouthon, near to what is now Square Blomet, where the Lunar Bird has been preserved. This bronze sculpture was made in 1966. Miró's sculpture work can be divided into two categories: assemblies of untreated objects, derived from Surrealism, and modelled sculptures inspired by the "mythical" world. The Lunar Bird comes under the second category and was a constant source of inspiration for Miró, as he created a whole series of painted and sculpted works on the theme of the mythological bird.



(15th) Square Saint-Lambert

René Pâris

Dog

A student of Georges Gardet and Victor Peter, René Pâris (1881-1970) was awarded a bronze medal for this sculpture in 1912 at the Salon of French Artists. In 1928 this stone sculpture was erected on Square Saint-Lambert. This square, which has a surface area of over 20,000 m², was created on the former site of the Vaugirard gas factories. This sculpture is also known as Wolfhound, and displays many alterations and oxidations caused by children on the square climbing on it, amongst other things. The City of Paris attempted to remedy this problem by adding a play structure in the shape of a dog, as a counterpart to René Pâris' sculpture.



(15th) Square Saint-Lambert

Victor Peter

Bear Cubs

This bronze sculpture shows two bear cubs playing. It is located on Rue Joseph Liouville and cannot be approached as it stands on a lawn behind a fence.

Victor Peter (1840-1918) began his career at the studio of the sculptor Théodore Devault before becoming the student, friend and collaborator of Alexandre Falguière. He became a professor at the Paris School of Fine Arts in 1901. He was particularly fond of animals. In fact he owned a bear and a young lion.



(15th) Georges Brassens Park

Auguste Cain

Bulls

Auguste Cain (1821-1894) was the son-in-law of the animal sculptor Pierre Jules Mène and, like him, specialised in animal sculpture. A number of his feline sculptures now adorn the Tuileries Garden and the Porte des Lions entrance at the Louvre. He was also a student of the sculptor François Rude.

The two bull sculptures on either side of the entrance to Georges Brassens Park on Place Jacques Marettte originally adorned the Trocadéro Gardens. They are a reminder of the original purpose of the site, which used to be a place for slaughtering animals.



(15th) Georges Brassens Park

François-Xavier Lalanne

Donkey

The only artist on this walk who is still alive today, François-Xavier Lalanne specialised in animal sculpture very early on. His bronze sculpture of a donkey, which is used as a play structure for children, is incorporated into the design of Georges Brassens Park.

The Vaugirard abattoirs were built between 1894 and 1897 by the architect Ernest Moreau, in a place called Les Morillons. They were in operation until 1976, while the horse market closed in 1978 to make way for the current park. The belfry, which was the central point of the auction market, and the horse market halls are the only architectural reminders of the origins of the place.

Monument to Louis
Pasteur
Alexandre Falguière

Bulls
Auguste Caïne

Horse and Harrow
Pierre Rouillarta



Throughout the capital, the Department of Cultural Affairs of the City of Paris maintains some six hundred commemorative monuments and statues which form part of the municipal heritage. These works, most of which date from the beginning of the Third Republic, are the result of an active policy of artistic commissions intended to decorate the squares and streets, in accordance with the wishes of the elected officials of Paris. They include some of the masterpieces of French sculpture: The Fountain of the Four Continents by Carpeaux and The Triumph of the Republic by Dalou.

The 20th century was for a long time more cautious in this respect, but over the last twenty years or so, the City of Paris has revived the tradition of commissioning public art. In 2004, it set up the Art Committee in the City, a consultative committee of elected officials and experts to provide an opinion on policy in this area. Together with this Committee, the City of Paris commissioned 35 permanent or temporary public works between 2004 and 2008.

From Exercise Tower by Wang Du (Paris 17th) to the Dance of the Emerging Fountain by Chen Zhen (Paris 13th) and the Forest of Candelabras by the Berlin collective Inges Idee (Paris 19th), all these works can be discovered throughout Paris.