

APPEARING AT .. SOFA sculpture objects
functional art and design
LOCATION .. NAVY PIER, CHICAGO, IL
DATE .. OCT. 31 - NOV. 3
BOOTH .. B44
FEATURING .. MIKE RENARD SCULPTURES
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Sculptures by Mike Renard **SOFA Chicago • October 31-November 3, 2019**

KessArt is pleased to exhibit a series of sculptures by Ukrainian artist Mike Renard at the gallery's Sculpture Objects Functional Art and Design (SOFA) Fair booth in Chicago. Known for his hybrid cast bronze sculptures of aesthetic and thematic duality, Mike Renard pushes the extents of perception and meaning in sculpture, testing the medium's inherent three dimensionality with a transformative approach to viewer perception. Mike Renard's works contain two distinct characters that seamlessly bleed into one, manifesting the skillful utilization of bronze to sculpt a sharp social commentary with a poetic approach to the solidness of the medium, which the artist describes as "the material of eternity."

In *Rich Yorick* (2014), a Hamlet'ian skull morphs into a piggy bank, complete with a slit for the coins. The pig's pointy nose and meaty robustness contrast the skull's lifeless and drained expression, emphasized by its hollow eyes and haunting jaw. The skeleton's potential to remind the viewer of mortality and demise instills notions of greed and gluttony associated with pigs, as well as crumbling socio-economic dynamics. Mike Renard's ability to capture disparate objects' similarity in form and posture yields *Don't Miss* (2016), which renders a commentary on unjust social dynamics and humanity's urge to destroy, is encapsulated within the form of a boxing glove and owl united at their backs. The artist parallels the bird of prey's piercing eyes that locate its target, ready to strike its prey, while the boxing glove's fleshy texture and crossed stitches recall sutures on a victim's lacerations. The dramatic accents on the sculpture's façades imbue temporality and humanness into bronze, prompting viewers to trace the surprising malleability Mike Renard achieves with the medium.

SOFA gives KessArt the opportunity to unveil two new sculptures Mike Renard recently completed at his Kyiv studio. Of the two, *Bull and Bear* (2019) pays direct reference to economic uncertainties and effects of fluctuating financial gaps on society with the artist's signature use of details and an ability to convey a distinct character in bronze. The artist pays homage to the fair's home, Chicago, where several financial exchanges project great impact on the country's economic stability. The second sculpture, *Dark Swan* (2019), delves into beauty and its subjective definition of aesthetics that play a critical role in our daily perceptions of social interactions. A gentle swan on one side and a gory squid on the other, the work questions ingrained notions of beauty, kindness, and empathy through two animals with variant cultural connotations.

"The duplicitous, double-sidedness and Dual-Faced Bilateralism, as I like to say, helps reveal the meaning of the sculpture. Ideas for creating sculptures are born in different ways and with different motivations. For example, the idea of the *CraBird* (2016) came to me in California, when I found a fragment of a crab claw on the beach. Suddenly, I discovered how similar it is to the bird's beak," explains Mike Renard about his expansive search and discovery of inspiration from mundane flows he finds in urban and natural environments. KessArt celebrates its participation in SOFA with an expansion of the artist's sculpture outside the booth. Placed in front where the public converges with KessArt, *The Big* (2018) offers a primary introduction to Mike Renard's arresting visual lexicon, welcoming visitors into the gallery's booth where they will engage with the artist's bronze sculptures on nature's equilibrium and social wit.

Art has been part of Mike Renard's life since early childhood. He started attending art school at the age of ten when sculpture captivated his interest. His talents were recognized and he planned to attend the Ukrainian Art Academy, but life took an unfortunate turn as financial resources were lacking and he needed to earn a living and support his family. Renard abandoned his ambitions to become a sculptor and focused all of his efforts on becoming a very successful businessman that made him a "man of the universe". Twenty years later, Mike Renard decided to return to his roots and childhood passion to pursue his dream to become a sculptor and he started to relearn his craft. He studied, became an apprentice and learned from skilled artisans to develop his talent. Good fortune and good luck smiled on Mike Renard once again, and with a team of professional molders, casters and chisellers began to create sculptures at his foundry in Ukraine.

To understand Mike Renard's life is to understand the uniqueness of his sculptures, as Renard lives two lives, with two different vantage points, that is only understood with a 360 degree view. One view is objective and rational and the other is subjective and through his creativity he blends them to tell a story with several hidden meanings and messages.

Mike Renard's sculptures have been acquired by art collectors worldwide.

On Friday, November 1, KessArt will host a special Lecture-Presentation about Mike Renard's unique sculpting process, from 1 to 2 pm in the SOFA Lecture Series room on the SW side of the main floor.

On Saturday, November 2, a new catalogue signing by the artist will take place at the KessArt booth, from 4 to 5 pm.

KessArt will be at Booth B44 at the SOFA Fair in Chicago, 31 Oct-3 Nov.

For additional information please contact:

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Dates and Times

Opening Night Preview
Thursday, October 31, 2019
VIP Preview | 5 - 9 pm
Public Preview | 7 - 9 pm
General Admission
Friday, November 1, 2019 | 11 am - 7 pm (10 - 11 am VIP hour)
Saturday, November 2, 2019 | 11 am - 7 pm (10 - 11 am VIP hour)
Sunday, November 3, 2019 | 12 - 6 pm

Location

Festival Hall, [Navy Pier](#)
600 East Grand Avenue
Chicago, IL 60611

Image credit, Mike Renard "*Dark Swan*"