

Lifestyle

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2018



Ryokou the Australian Shepherd cross dog checks out a mixed media piece by artists Sabrina Clouden and Gali Basel at 'dOCUMENTA', billed as America's first art exhibition for dogs, in Los Angeles, California. The exhibition invited various artists to create works appealing to the canine sensibility through a variety of media, from sound and sculpture to kibble and squeaky toys. — AFP

Melting ice sculpture protests 'fake news' at US Capitol

Artists melted a ton of ice spelling out the word "truth" in the shadow of the US Capitol on Saturday, in a poetic protest at the caustic state of politics in the era of "fake news" under President Donald Trump. "Truth Be Told," measuring 10 feet wide by seven feet tall, is the sixth sculpture in the "Melted Away" series launched in 2006 by artist duo LigoranoReese. Marshall Reese and Nora Ligorano, both 62 years old, have collaborated on art projects for nearly four decades, including woven fiber optic mesh, video and new media in clocks, mirrors and books.

Their other temporary monuments shaped out of

ice have included the words "democracy," "economy," "middle class," "the future" and "the American dream." The artists decided to take their call for more transparency and honesty to Washington "because ice is a material that disappears, it's an urgent moment and truth is really melting," Ligorano told AFP, as crowds gathered around the sculpture. "It's speaking truth to power." Young and old alike touched the sculpture and snapped photographs under sunny skies.

A frozen T collapsed first. The first T and R then collapsed against one another in a big crash, leaving only "UH" for a moment until those letters, too, vanished. The artists collaborate with locals for their projects and here used sculptors at Ice Lab in nearby Baltimore to carve into the ice.

"It's the first time I've walked into one of these places and was greeted by a woman who was dressed as an Eskimo," Ligorano said of the sculpture's ice carver. The work and its hours-long melting process was streamed live online. On Friday, the artists organized a poetry reading with Washington-based poets and on Sunday will join a panel with journalists, watchdogs and other creatives focused on the "quest to uphold truth." "It's as much a Trump protest as a call for more transparency and a call for more honesty," said Ligorano. — AFP



An ice sculpture is seen spelling out the word "truth" by artist duo Ligorano Reese, with the US Capitol in the background, in Washington, DC. — AFP

With metal skulls and horns, Turkish artist re-interprets ancient stories

In a disused hangar in Istanbul, Turkish artist Ahmet Gunestekin uses thousands of metal human skulls and twisting, spiky animal horns to re-tell some ancient myths in a towering, fearsome installation. Gunestekin says his work "Chamber of Immortality" draws on the Epic of Gilgamesh - the Sumerian king who tried in vain to find the secret of everlasting life, and on the closely related Biblical story of Noah, whose ark some believe landed on Mount Ararat, Turkey's highest peak. The centerpiece is an enormous metal skull with a twisting animal horn jutting from its mouth, made up of 11,000 smaller skulls, all crafted by hand. Around it sit two curved walls made of yet more skulls, some of which sprout animal horns from their ears, temples and mouths.

The large skull represents Noah, while the tongue-like

horn that spills from its mouth represents animals, Gunestekin said. "In a way, it shows how the concepts of human and animal are nested within one another," he said. The structure, which took 4-1/2 years and \$1 million to create, is inspired by Gobekli-tepe, a 12,000 year-old temple in Turkey that this year became a UNESCO World Heritage site.

A self-taught artist, he is known for unconventional techniques to depict oral narratives, myth and legends mainly from Anatolian and Greek civilizations. "Chamber of Immortality" will travel to London, Berlin and New York after being exhibited in Contemporary Istanbul on Sept 20. — Reuters



Turkish artist Ahmet Gunestekin's artwork "Chamber of Immortality" is pictured in Istanbul, Turkey. — Reuters

IN STRIKING DEBUT, NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC MAESTRO EMBRACES NEW

Opening his era in charge of the New York Philharmonic, Jaap van Zweden could not have been clearer that he welcomes fresh ideas. The Dutch maestro started his tenure as the 26th music director of the leading US orchestra on Thursday with a bold statement—the world premiere of a stirring experimental piece that challenges the physical restrictions of music. "Filament," composed by 36-year-old Ashley Fure, is marked by haunting whispers from 15 "moving voices"—a

choir that circulates through the hall with megaphones, first on the balconies and finally in a meditative procession toward the orchestra.

Fure, an assistant professor at Dartmouth College who studies the relationship between music and motion, created a striking aural effect for the audience—many in black-tie and cocktail dresses for a season-opening gala—with the sound veering from remote and spatial to warm and intimate. "Filament" also took in instrumentation that is

highly unusual for the Philharmonic with a slew of objects to strike the percussion including beads, brushes and a toy ball.

Bassoon soloist Rebekah Heller performed from within the audience, holding her instrument like a guitar and slapping her tongue against the instrument's bocal tube with the double-reed removed. Van Zweden followed "Filament" with more classic fare—Ravel's "Piano Concerto in G Major," with star pianist Daniil Trifanov bringing the second movement to a serene tranquility, and Stravinsky's "The Rite of Spring," followed by an unexpected encore of Wagner's crowd-pleasing "Ride of the Valkyries."

'Obligation' to new work

Musical adventurousness was not the foremost trait expected of Van Zweden when the New York Philharmonic announced his appointment in 2016. A violinist who while still a teenager rose to concertmaster of Amsterdam's Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Van Zweden was predicted to be more interested in exacting performances of the classical canon than testing the frontiers of music. But the 57-year-old, who has also led the Dallas Symphony Orchestra and Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, said he felt a duty in his storied new position, where his predecessors include Leonard Bernstein, Pierre Boulez and Gustav Mahler.

"I think that the New York Philharmonic is still a leading orchestra in the world in bringing new music. If you compare it to some European top orchestras, they are still very much ahead," Van Zweden told AFP ahead of opening night. "At least we tried to make a healthy balance between the new works and old works, and the New York Philharmonic has an obligation, I think, and a great history of bringing new works," he said.

Van Zweden said he considered the leader in promoting new work to be the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the longtime home of the New York Philharmonic's new CEO Deborah Borda, who has quickly shored up the orchestra's long-uncertain finances.

Broadening audience

In a season full of new works, next week the Philharmonic will perform a new work by piano and violin prodigy Conrad Tao, which will transition immediately—without giving time for crowd applause—into Bruckner's explosive Symphony No. 8. In a new feature for the Philharmonic, the 24-year-old Tao will follow his premiere with a smaller, late-night concert—billed as featuring synthesizers and tap dancing—over drinks. Later in the season, the Philharmonic will offer \$5 tickets to New York-based first responders and community workers in a bid to broaden the orchestra's reach.—AFP



Music Director Jaap van Zweden performs at David Geffen Hall, Lincoln Center in New York. — AFP photos



Music Director Jaap van Zweden (left) and Russian pianist Daniil Trifanov receive the applause from the crowd at David Geffen Hall, Lincoln Center in New York.