



ATELIER

Les Deux Garçons

VINGT-CINQ

Lannoo



TABLE *of* CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	7
<i>L'Américain</i>	8
A SYMBIOSIS OF ART AND LIFE	19
<i>Edwin Becker</i>	
<i>Le jour de pardon</i>	32
<i>Pure</i>	42
<i>Les immortels</i>	54
ANIMALIERS OF THE 21ST CENTURY	81
<i>Dick van Broekhuizen</i>	
<i>Le jugement de Darwin</i>	114
<i>L'adieu impossible</i>	132
TERRIFYING YET BEHOLDING	143
<i>Madelief Hobé</i>	
<i>L'heure de la vérité</i>	170
<i>Les immortels contemporains</i>	188
<i>La revanche</i>	202
INDEX	236



L'abstraction parfaite, 2021

On 3 May, 2000, a year that once sounded futuristic, we met for the first time at the end-of-year exhibition at the Maastricht Institute of Arts.

Although we had heard about the similarities in our work, we had never met in person. If it had been a staged event, our first encounter could have easily passed for a performance, as we were dressed in identical jackets, pants, and shoes. This only deepened our amazement as we couldn't help but wonder: "Who is this person who mirrors me in both work and appearance?"

Our initial surprise soon turned into curiosity as we began to discover even more kinship. Both of us had graduated in Visual Arts and Art History from the Art Academy. It was hardly coincidental that we had both skipped two years thanks to the progressive development of our personal styles and the recommendation of our teachers.

The magic truly began when we each set up shop in opposite corners of a shared studio. An effortless and natural exchange developed, and we soon realized that we were, in fact, collaborating on individual works of art. It became nearly impossible to determine whose work it was—Roel's or Michel's.



What had started as a spark of mutual admiration soon blossomed into a romantic relationship and marked the beginning of Atelier Les Deux Garçons.

Looking back, our artistic journey has felt like a Jules Verne adventure, where evolution and discovery have shaped the signature of our oeuvre. Major global issues, as well as smaller, local incidents have served as themes for our art and exhibitions, where titles play a significant role.

Serendipity, too, has remained an ever-present, unpredictable force. Our choice of materials—whether coincidental or intentional—continue to be a playful and rewarding aspect of our partnership as an artist duo.

At this juncture, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to all the patrons who, over the years, have supported our creative endeavours and provided them with both a stage and a home.

We would also like to extend our thanks to the three essayists: Madelief Hohé, Curator of Fashion & Costume at Kunstmuseum Den Haag; Edwin Becker, Head of Exhibitions at the Van Gogh Museum (Amsterdam); and Dick van Broekhuizen, Curator of Modern & Contemporary Sculpture at Museum Beelden Aan Zee (The Hague). Each contributed a thoughtful essay—one in the form of an interview, one from an historical perspective, and one based on personal experience. The collections of Museum Beelden aan Zee and Kunstmuseum Den Haag feature our work and our pieces have been exhibited in these esteemed museums. Edwin Becker of the Van Gogh Museum, a great admirer of our work, has frequently included our art in his role as guest curator.

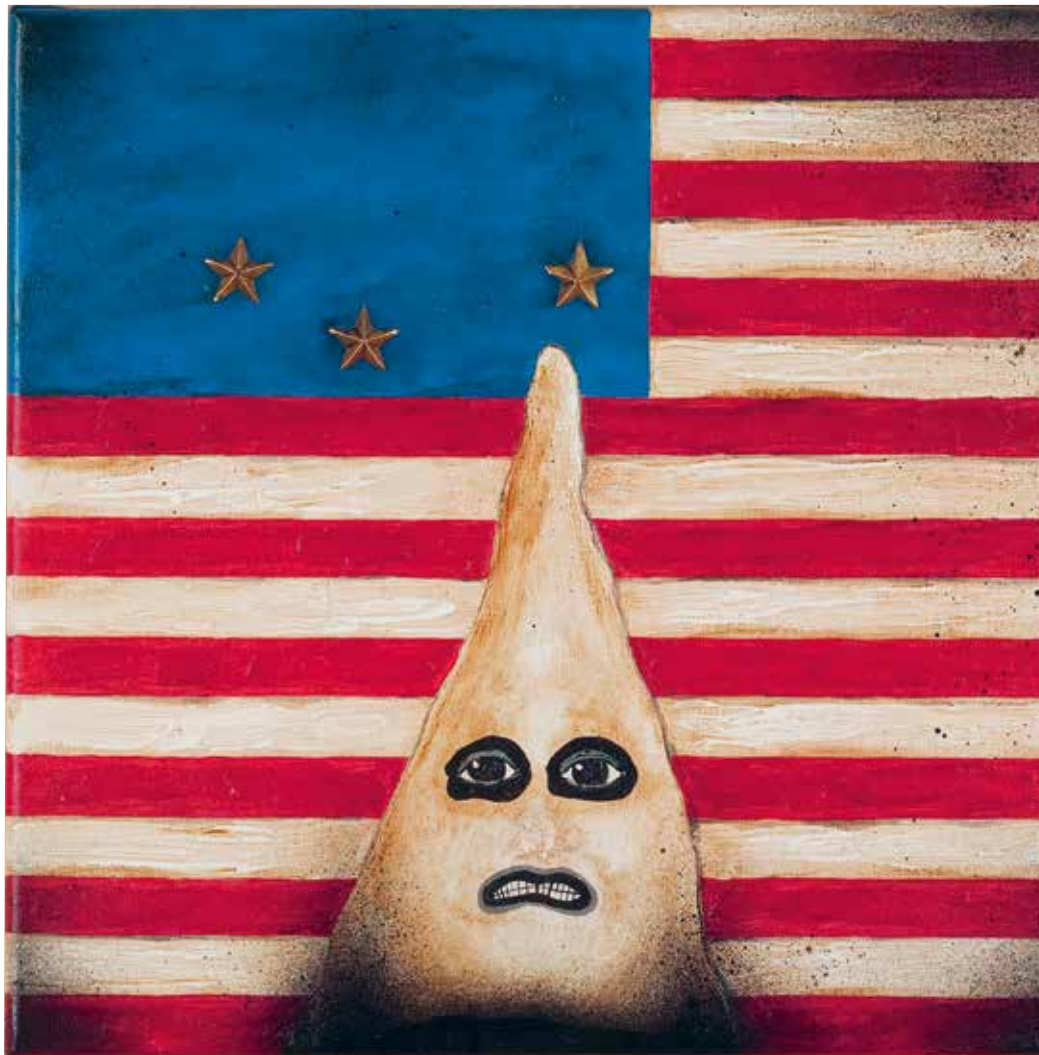
Now, as we celebrate our silver jubilee, we look forward to what the future holds. With minds overflowing with ideas and inspiration, we find ourselves with more projects than time.

Atelier Les Deux Garçons, Michel & Roel

L'Americain



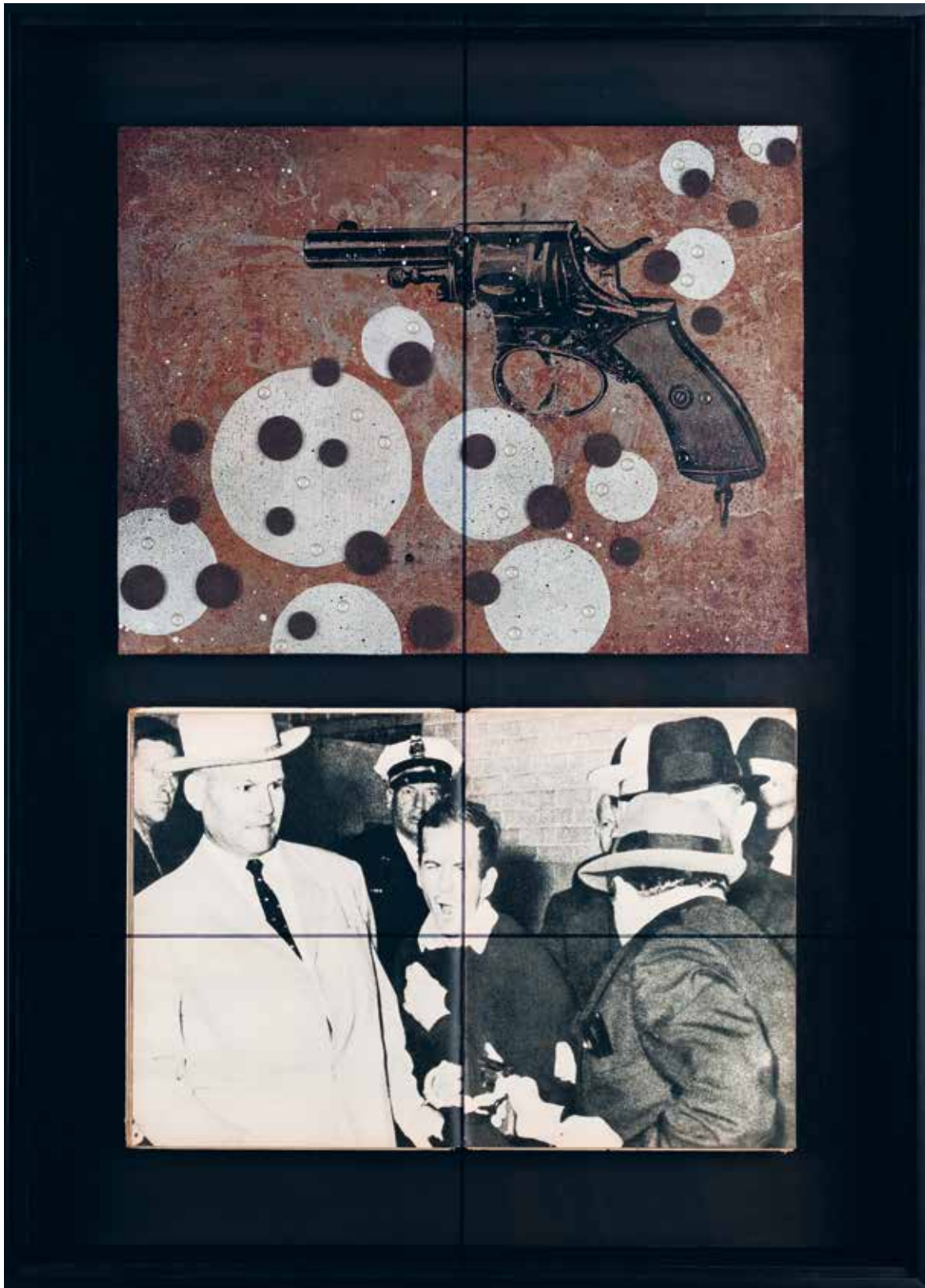
















L'Americain



ATELIER
les DEUX
GARÇONS:



A SYMBIOSIS
of ART
AND LIFE

*Edwin Becker, Chief Curator of Exhibitions
Van Gogh Museum Amsterdam*



Monsieur Messerschmidt, 2015

WAKE-UP CALL

The sculptures of Les Deux Garçons often depict a passionate struggle between humans and animals, playful humour and profound seriousness, refined aesthetics and startling confrontations. This duality feels especially fitting in our current era, where reflection and contemplation on fundamental issues are brought to the forefront. Their work mirrors the turbulence of our time, as we are constantly pulled between hope and fear, intimacy and indulgence, spontaneous joy and fierce defiance.

In their work, Les Deux Garçons masterfully integrate sculpture with meticulous attention to fabrics and skin, infusing even their most intimate pieces with a distinct twist—often humoristic, though sometimes tinged with bitterness. The duo embraces an almost decadent theatricality in their choice of materials, unapologetically drawing on baroque, ornamental, and decorative elements, enhancing its impact and positively influencing the viewer’s emotional state. The result is not merely aesthetic pleasure but often a wake-up-call, a summons to action.

Beneath the surface, their work delves into more profound themes than mere references to religion, legends, or myths.

The animals, who frequently assume the role of protagonists, seem to seize power and control—a response to the disastrous state of the human world, which we relentlessly exploit and abuse. Our self-destructive tendencies—marked by endless consumption, conflict, and an insatiable hunger for “more, more, more”—propel us toward an apocalyptic demise.

The sculptures suggest a poignant fiction: that the animals, in their wisdom or desperation, might prefer to take over the human world. If we persist in our carelessness, consumed by a blind pursuit of progress, this imagined narrative could edge dangerously close to reality.



