

TEMPLON



HERVÉ DI ROSA

DREAM IDEA MACHINE, 21 novembre 2025

ART CITIES: Brussels Hervé Di Rosa



A central figure of the French artistic movement Figuration Libre*, Di Rosa invents worlds where the grotesque contests the marvellous, where comic strips cross paths with the shadow of Brueghel, where African sculpture enters into dialogue with the Flemish Renaissance. In Brussels, he irreverently revisits Brueghel's monumental cycle of the seasons: snowy landscapes, fairy-like ruins, and chimerical architectures become the stage for an unbridled mythology, saturated with colour and populated by jubilant, often trivial figures.

By Dimitris Lempesis
Photo: Templon Gallery Archive

Hervé Di Rosa's solo exhibition "*Idolâtries*" in Brussels is the second chapter of a cycle initiated in Paris with "*Idoles et trésors*" and confirms the vitality of an oeuvre which, for more than forty-five years, has sought to dismantle disciplinary boundaries and to reconcile popular culture with the legacy of art history.

The exhibition extends beyond painting: ceramic sculptures created in Cameroon and Portugal are presented alongside vast canvases, abolishing any hierarchy between image and object, fine arts and so-called minor arts. In this deliberate polymorphism, Di Rosa scrambles the maps of artistic orthodoxy and reaffirms the legitimacy of all forms of expression.

A great traveller and keen observer, he summons memories of Mexico and Cameroon as readily as the visions of Piranesi or Hubert Robert to weave a fractured narrative, stripped of moral constraints. At the hour of the "twilight of the idols," the artist from Sète seeks "to reconnect with grand painting" and to assert himself anew as a reinvented master of landscape.

With his previous exhibition "*Idols and Treasures*", Hervé di Rosa showcased his journey as a painter over the past five years. The exhibition featured a series of around a dozen of medium-sized and large-format paintings created between 2020 and 2024. The artist paid tribute to nearly four centuries of cultural explorations which have shaped history, drawing from the rich traditions of painting, sculpture, music and literature. Each canvas invites visitors to immerse themselves in Di Rosa's lavish and deceptively naive world.

Rejecting all sense of hierarchy, the artist's canvases evoke Christopher Columbus' majestic caravels, Jules Verne's mysterious abysses, the imposing Mayan temples of Chichen Itza and the sumptuous sarcophagi of the most illustrious of Egyptian pharaohs. These complex compositions, situated at the edge of surrealism, unveil hybrid characters, ranging from historical figures to endearing four-eyed monsters and nurturing mother earth figures made of bricks. Di Rosa's enchanting microcosms thus establish a playful and constructive dialogue between the fine arts, applied arts, outsider art and cultivated art, as well as between Western and non-Western art. With this work Di Rosa, a dazzlingly unique artist, reveals a vision of art without borders, transcending cultural genres and geographical origins, effectively abolishing any hierarchy that values high culture over low culture.

*Figuration Libre is a French art movement which began in the 1980s. It is the French equivalent of Bad Painting and Neo-expressionism in America and Europe, Junge Wilde in Germany and Transvanguardia in Italy. Artists in the movement typically incorporate elements of comic book art and graffiti into their work. They use bright colors and exaggerated, caricature-like figures. The group was formed in 1981 by Robert Combas, Remi Blanchard, François Boisrond and Hervé Di Rosa. The term 'Figuration Libre' was coined by Fluxus artist Ben Vautier. Between 1982 and 1985, these artists exhibited alongside their American counterparts Keith Haring, Jean-Michel Basquiat, and Kenny Scharf in New York City, London, Pittsburgh and Paris.

Photo: Hervé di Rosa, L'ÉTÉ DES IDOLES, 2025, Acrylic on canvas, 110 × 205 cm — 43 1/4 × 80 3/4 in, © Hervé di Rosa, Courtesy the artist and Templon Gallery



Hervé di Rosa, IDOLES AU PRINTEMPS, 2025, Acrylic on canvas, 111 × 206 cm — 43 3/4 × 81 in, © Hervé di Rosa, Courtesy the artist and Templon Gallery