

For immediate release

## MARCEL DZAMA

### Une Danse des Bouffons (A Jester's Dance)

September 9 – October 25, 2014

Opening reception: Tuesday, September 9, 6 – 8 PM

Press preview with Branwen Jones: 5 PM



Cover of 7-inch vinyl record designed by artist to coincide with exhibition at David Zwirner and *The Believer* magazine's 2014 music issue

David Zwirner is pleased to present an exhibition of recent and new work by Marcel Dzama, on view at the gallery's 525 and 533 West 19th Street spaces in New York. The exhibition will mark the United States debut of the artist's latest film *Une danse des bouffons* (or *A jester's dance*), which will be shown alongside related two- and three-dimensional work.

Described as a "Dadaist love story," *Une danse des bouffons* (or *A jester's dance*) is the artist's fictionalized account of the ill-fated, romantic affair between Marcel Duchamp and Brazilian sculptor Maria Martins (who served as the model for Duchamp's last major artwork *Étant donnés*). In Dzama's film, using a recreation of *Étant donnés*, a mythological trickster awakens Maria Martins (played by Kim Gordon and Hannelore Knuts) from the sculpture. Finding Duchamp held captive and forced to blindly recite chess moves, Martins enters into the unknown game in hopes of saving her love. The role of the trickster was partly inspired by the Nigerian mythological god Edshu, recognizable by his hat that was colored red on one side and blue on the other, provoking confusion and argument amongst members of a community who would disagree on the color he was wearing. His mischief, while appearing to have a destructive effect, could also be perceived as allowing people to see that more than one perspective or answer exists.

The corresponding colors of red and blue will be thematically reflected within the space at David Zwirner, with works distributed between two galleries, each showcasing compositions predominated by warm or cool hues. Previously shown as a 35-minute loop in black and white that alternates between Gordon and Knuts in the role of Maria Martins, *Une danse des bouffons* (or *A jester's dance*) will be installed in a new configuration for the exhibition. Here, each gallery will project one version with either a red or blue color filter, thus adding a new, dynamic dimension to the work.

With recurring themes of good versus evil, death and rebirth, love and lost love, multiple identities and doppelgängers, false prophets, the corruption of power, and tensions between reality and fiction, *Une danse des bouffons* (or *A jester's dance*) draws from a diverse range of art-historical references. The Minotaur-like figure of The Dancing Golden Calf was inspired by Francis Picabia's painting *Adoration of the Calf* from the early 1940s, which was itself based on a 1936 photograph by Erwin Blumenfeld titled *Dictator*. References to Francisco Goya's late eighteenth-century print *They've Already Got a Seat* (from the *Los Caprichos* series) appear through choices in costuming, notably in the upside-down chair affixed directly to Martins's head, and Joseph Beuys is evoked through the props of a felt blanket, wooden cane, and taxidermied animal. Some of the characters' masks bear resemblance to Oskar Schlemmer's theatrical costumes from his early modern dances, while its kaleidoscopic effects and stage production appear

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reminiscent of Busby Berkeley's Hollywood musical motion pictures. Viewing appropriation as a form of collaboration, Dzama incorporates his sources for imagery, narrative, and subject matter seamlessly, creating an aesthetic language that is at once universal and uniquely personal.

Commissioned by the Toronto International Film Festival and first shown at the Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art in Toronto in 2013, the film was on view earlier this year as part of *Hollow Laughter*, the artist's solo exhibition at Kunstmuseum Thun in Switzerland. The choreographed movement was created by Dzama with his longtime collaborator Vanessa Walters, who performs the original dance in the film. Conceived as a silent film without dialogue, it is accompanied by a musical score written and recorded by Will Butler, Jeremy Gara, and Tim Kingsbury, who also worked with Dzama on a 7-inch vinyl record produced to coincide with the exhibition at David Zwirner and *The Believer* magazine's Summer 2014 issue. Featuring original artwork and music, the record's cover and labels were specially designed by the artist and comprise a Red Side and a Blue Side.

Also on view will be sculptures and dioramas accompanied by flat, wall-mounted works on paper. Whereas the sculptures are based on central characters from his recent films and include papier-mâché heads and multi-faced masks composed from printed steel, the drawings and dioramas depict these new players standing besides figures from the artist's earlier repertoire, as if posing for a group portrait of his ever-expanding roster of protagonists past and present.

Installed in a space that connects the two galleries will be *Death Disco Dance*, Dzama's recent video filmed in Guadalajara, Mexico. Running simultaneously amongst several stacked monitors, the video is a four-minute loop featuring characters based on chess pieces from the artist's related film *A Game of Chess*. In *Death Disco Dance*, Dzama shows ballet dancers in masked, polka-dotted unitards performing a synchronized, but almost entirely improvised, dance, that was choreographed on the spot. The artist created the disco-like soundtrack himself using a small drum machine.

To watch the official trailer for *Une danse des bouffons (or A jester's dance)*, please visit David Zwirner's YouTube channel at [youtube.com/davidzwirner](http://youtube.com/davidzwirner).

**Marcel Dzama** was born in 1974 in Winnipeg, Canada, where he received his B.F.A. in 1997 from the University of Manitoba. Since 1998, his work has been represented by David Zwirner. The artist has had seven gallery solo exhibitions, including *Puppets*, *Pawns*, and *Prophets* that marked his first presentation at the London location in 2013 and was accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue co-published by Hatje Cantz, with an essay by Deborah Solomon.

In 2013, Abrams published the first comprehensive monograph of the artist's work, titled *Marcel Dzama: Sower of Discord*. Produced and designed in collaboration with the artist, it features contributions by Bradley Bailey, Dave Eggers, Spike Jonze, and Raymond Pettibon.

Since the late 1990s, Dzama has exhibited widely in solo and group presentations throughout the United States and abroad. In 2010, a major survey of the artist's work was presented at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal in Montreal. Other recent solo exhibitions include those organized by Kunstmuseum Thun, Switzerland (2014); Centro de Arte Contemporáneo de Málaga, Spain; Museo de Arte de Zapopan (MAZ), Zapopan, Mexico; World Chess Hall of Fame and Museum, St. Louis (all 2012); Gemeentemuseum, The Hague; Kunstverein Braunschweig, Germany (both 2011); Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich (2008); Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, England (2006); and Le Magasin – Centre National d'Art Contemporain de Grenoble, France (2005).

Work by the artist is held in museum collections worldwide, including the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; Dallas Museum of Art; Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Tate Gallery, London; and the Vancouver Art Gallery. Dzama lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.

**For all press inquiries and to RSVP to the September 9 press preview, contact**

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