

## *Song of the Chimeras* Yuval Avital

24 February - 23 April 2022

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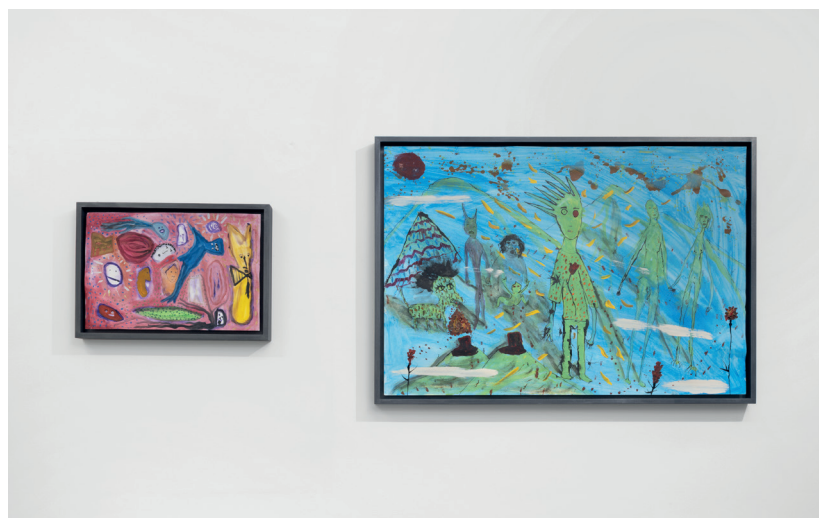
*Song of the Chimeras* by Yuval Avital is the third exhibition at the gallery's new space at Grand-Rue 23 in Geneva. This is the artist's first solo presentation with Gowen.



Yuval Avital, *Foreign Bodies n.1/Icon-sonic episode n.33*, video, audio

Incorporating pieces from Avital's most significant series of works, the show immerses the viewer in a multi-sensory experience through sculpture, sound, painting, drawing, photography and video. By exploiting these different mediums, Avital investigates new veins of expression with an atmospheric intensity. His 'Singing Tubes' and 'Singing Masks' challenge the viewer with their spatial presence, their sound effectuating mysterious revelations. Paintings and drawings which assume a freedom in their instinctive, expressive lines and forms explore surreal compositions in bold colors.

The exhibition takes its title reference from mythology: born in Ancient Greece, the Chimera is the daughter of Typhon and Echidna, described in detail as a "monster of divine origin, having a lion's head, goat's breast, and serpent's tail; and from its mouth it spewed horrendous flames". It belongs to the family of hybrid entities like the sirens, whose singing lured unwary sailors onto the rocks, or the Minotaur, who devoured those sent into his labyrinth. They can also be noble creatures such as the centaur Chiron, teacher of Heracles.



Yuval Avital, *Balahot n.25*, 2020, Mixed media on paper, 33 x 47.5 cm

Yuval Avital, *What a great son*, 2021, Mixed media on paper, 69.5 x 99.5 cm

During the second half of the twentieth century, interspecific chimeras 'escaped' the bounds of mythology and literary invention to become intentionally-created subjects studied in life sciences faculties around the world. Chimeras, contrary to transgenic animals, are not created by the insertion of one, or multiple, exogenous genes. They are beings formed by combining whole cells of genetically varied organisms into one single organism.

*Song of the Chimeras* explores human nature in its combination of oneiric, animal, physical and spiritual qualities, and as a synthesis of past, present and future. By deciphering this deep-rooted and complex theory, Avital has returned to the primeval relationship between man and nature. In an excerpt from his photographic and video series *Foreign Bodies*, the artist's examination of body and mind, staged in spectacular natural settings or unsettling, hostile environments, expresses this intricate liaison in both a disruptive and spiritual manner. In doing so, he addresses the idea of the earth as the mother of humanity, connecting body with soil, simultaneously merging and struggling to break free from it.

Avital transposes the traditional functions of tribal masks, such as enabling dialogue with a hidden truth, into his own narrative. The masks were created by the artist in dialogue with master craftsmen whose voices are incorporated into their sonority. The effect is a coexistence of past and present with ancestral echoes.

Taken from his sound sculptures series, the first room presents Avital's 'Singing Tubes', a grouping of abstract, animal-shaped forms which directly call to the concept of hybridity. These sculptures, as well as his drawings and paintings, transcribe, in an immediate visceral language devoid of judgemental value, the essence of man and his complex relationship with his own chimeras, be they his monsters, his instinctive urges or his dreams.

In today's language, the term 'chimera' is also used to designate a utopia, something unattainable, a desire, which is, perhaps, the vector that brings to life a work of art.



Yuval Avital, *Leviatano n.5*, 2019, marble stucco, 70 x 30 x 10 cm



Yuval Avital, *Canto n.3*, 2019, silver mesh, 50 x 45 x 25 cm

**Born in Jerusalem in 1977, multimedia artist, composer and guitarist Yuval Avital has exhibited his works in a variety of spaces from public venues to industrial archaeological sites, theatres and museums including the Museo Marino Marini, Florence; the Macro Museum, Rome; La Fabbrica del Cioccolato, Blenio (Switzerland); the Saint Antoine Church, Istanbul; Manifesta13, Marseille; la Fabbrica del Vapore, Milan; the GAM, Turin; The Museum of Tel Aviv; Loop Festival in Barcelona and the Palais de Tokyo, Paris. Avital lives and works in Milan.**

