



WIFREDO LAM, Tous les possibles, 1977
Terracotta, Diameter: 52 cm. Unique

Fire Tongues. Ceramics by Wifredo Lam

The Galerie Gmurzynska is pleased to announce an exhibition of rare original ceramics by Wifredo Lam in St. Moritz.

Wifredo Lam (1902–1982) is one of the most distinguished and fascinating artists of the 20th century. He established a form of art that unites Western modernity with African symbols, as well as those from the Caribbean, and thus created his own unique language. Throughout his life Lam kept in touch with all the European avant-garde movements which primarily explored the unconscious in their art: Cubism, Surrealism and CoBrA.

Lam was born in Cuba in 1902 as the eighth child of Chinese-born Lam-Yam and Ana Serafina Castilla, a Cuban with African and Spanish roots. In 1938 Lam arrived in Paris where he met Picasso, and through him his artist friends Braque, Matisse, Miro, Léger, Eluard and Leiris. Lam also met the Danish artist and co-founder of the CoBrA group, Asger Jorn, in Paris. Jorn, who had turned his hand to pottery, introduced him to the location Albissola Mare on the Ligurian coast in Italy, where Lam later purchased a house and studio overlooking the sea. However, his first efforts with what was for him a new artistic medium remained tentative.

Albissola has been well-known since the first half of the 16th century for the manufacture of ceramics that have been traded all over the world. In the 1930s the

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futuristic movement reached Albissola, but only from the 1950s onwards did it become a meeting place for artists, intellectuals, writers and the most important personalities of the time. From 1958 onwards Lam and Jorn participated actively in the bustling local pottery scene. Lam was later appointed an honorary citizen of Albissola.

Between numerous trips Lam returned there again and again, such as in 1975, after he had travelled with his family to the North Cape, Norway, India and Greece. Having arrived in Albissola, he turned his hand again to the manufacture of ceramics, this time spurred on by the creative freedom that the medium allowed him and by the fruitful collaboration with the studio Le Ceramiche San Giorgio.

The manufacture of ceramics, the fusion of earth and fire, is one of the oldest creative practices of mankind. Wifredo Lam: "Often I couldn't sleep, waiting for the surprises of those unexpected tones." Within three years he produced over 400 vases and other ceramic pieces, a selection of which was exhibited in the Museo della Ceramica in Albissola Mare in August 1975.

Today Wifredo Lam's works appear worldwide in the most important museums, such as the Museum of Modern Art and the Guggenheim Museum in New York, or in the Tate in London. In 2011 the Grand Palais in Paris hosted the group exhibition "Césaire, Lam, Picasso, Nous nous sommes trouvés". Lam's works will also feature in the forthcoming Triennial in Paris under the artistic direction of Okwui Enwezor.

The exhibition, conceived with intensive work around Wifredo Lam's remaining pieces, unites approximately 30 of today's extraordinarily rare original ceramics chiefly from the period between 1975 and 1977.

The opening will take place on 20 February in the Galerie Gmurzynska in St. Moritz with the artist's son Eskil Lam in attendance. The exhibition will run until 20 March 2012.

A fully illustrated catalogue will accompany the exhibition with texts by Eskil Lam and art historian Anne Egger, including numerous historical documentation photographs. The documentary filmmaker Barbro Schultz Lundestam made a special film on the ceramics by Wifredo Lam.

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WIFREDO LAM, Balancier ailé, 1976
Terracotta and enamel, Diameter: 51 cm. Unique

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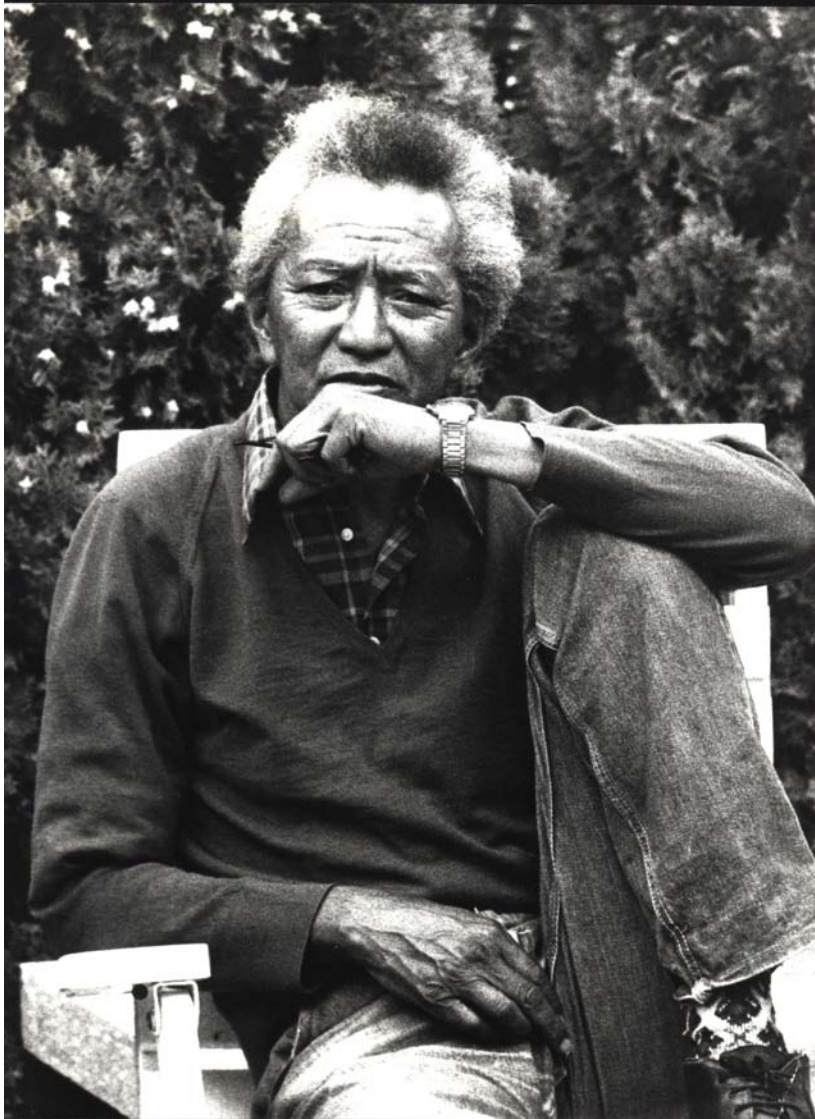
WIFREDO LAM, Chauve-Souris, 1975
Terracotta and enamel, Diameter: 52 cm. Unique

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Wifredo Lam in Albissola, ca. 1960

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Wifredo Lam, ca. 1975