Stephen Ongpin Fine Art



Arianna FIORATTI LORETO (1967 -)

Kraken

Pen and black ink.

Signed and dated Arianna Fioratti Loreto, 2018 on the verso.

1505 x 975 mm. (59 1/4 x 38 3/8 in.)

Arianna Fioratti Loreto's exquisite pen and ink drawings, usually on a large scale, celebrate the wonders of the natural world, and depict all manner of mammals, reptiles, birds, amphibians, insects and molluscs, as well as algae and unicellular organisms. As she has noted, 'My love of nature was first ignited as a young child by Jacques Cousteau's films. I was obsessed with the sea, and first scuba dived at age eight…While I was studying Romanesque sculpture…I found that I was most interested in the patterns and the decorative motifs found in the works of art…Thinking about patterns and the method of printmaking led me to try my hand at making my own "engravings" but in pen and ink. I found that animals had the most interesting patterns in nature. An owl's feathers, a boar's fur or an insect's wing are all fascinating examples of patterns.'

In 2017 a large exhibition of Arianna Fioratti Loreto's pen and ink drawings, numbering some ninety works, was mounted at the Museo 'La Specola', the museum of zoology and natural history in Florence, where the works were displayed among the animal specimens in the museum's collection. As the artist wrote in an essay in the catalogue of that exhibition, 'my eye is trained to find the decorative, the play

between light and dark, the patterns that Nature so beautifully creates. A love of pattern, the bizarre and exotic, mingle within me alongside a basic, instinctive love of animals. My drawings are humane animal trophies, a way to preserve and possess them, to learn to understand them without doing harm…The process of drawing an animal, of interpreting its essence in pen and ink in two dimensions, leads to a deeper understanding of the animal itself. It is not only about representing an animal on paper; of capturing its likeness for posterity, or its beauty for a purely aesthetic pursuit or even its bizarre nature as a novelty exercise, but by drawing it I communicate how I feel about the animal.'

Entitled Kraken by the artist, this remarkable and very large drawing is a tour de force of penwork. As Fioratti Loreto has noted, 'I…love the idea of finding the beauty in animals which were considered ugly or dangerous by society.' The kraken is a colossal squid-like sea monster of Scandinavian legend, said to live off the coasts of Norway and Greenland and to terrorize sailors in the North Atlantic. It is thought that accounts of the kraken may have derived from sightings of the giant squid (Architheutis dux), which can grow up to twelve or thirteen metres in length. Only rarely seen alive by humans, the giant squid is found in most of the world's oceans and is thought to live at depths of between 300 and 1,000 metres.

Artist description:

A painter, draughtsman and textile designer, Arianna Fioratti Loreto was born in New York and studied at Harvard University (where she served as president of the two-century old social club known as the Hasty Pudding Club) and Princeton University, where she completed a thesis on Romanesque sculpture and gained a doctorate in art history in 1992. She began her career as a textile and fabric designer, between 1993 and 1997, and has also illustrated children's books and designed furniture. Her first solo exhibition of drawings was held at the Ursus gallery and bookstore in New York in 1999, and was followed by further exhibitions at commercial galleries in both New York and Atlanta between 2011 and 2016. Today she lives and works near Florence in Tuscany.