



# Bjorn Skaarup's Hippo Ballerina comes to Lincoln Center

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by Hamptons Art Hub Staff

Lincoln Center has one more reason for people to flock to the storied performing arts center in New York City: *Hippo Ballerina*. Standing over 15 feet tall, weighing over 2 and a half tons, cast in bronze, and clad in a copper tutu, *Hippo Ballerina*, 2016, by Danish artist Bjørn Okholm Skaarup makes her Broadway on February 7, 2017 and continues in her starring role through July 31, 2017. The public art sculpture can be found at Dante Park at the intersection of 64th Street and Broadway.

The installation is courtesy of the Art in the Parks program of the New York City Parks Department and Cavalier Gallery. A solo show of works by Bjørn Okholm Skaarup titled "Bronze Creatures Great and Small" opens at the 57th Street Gallery on February 7 and continues on view through March 17, 2017.



Rendering of "Hippo Ballerina," 2016, by Bjørn Okholm Skaarup installed in front of Lincoln Center. Courtesy of Cavalier Galleries and the

Inspired by Degas' *Little Dancer Aged Fourteen (Petite danseuse de quatorze ans)* and the dancing hippos of Walt Disney's *Fantasia*, *Hippo Ballerina* illustrates the artist's interest in reinterpreting subjects and themes in ancient myths, art history, modern animation and contemporary popular culture in playful ways that engage the viewer.

"I think a fun way to revitalize themes from art history that have been forgotten lately is through animal allegories, because we are so used to that through animation and fables," explained Skaarup in the installation announcement.

As a companion, the exhibition "Bronze Creatures Great and Small" will be on view at Cavalier Gallery to mark the artists's first New York City public sculpture installation. The exhibition presents over 12 animal bronzes, ranging from the small to the colossal. It remains on view from February 7 to March 17, 2017. Included is *The Majestic Lion*, 2008. Mounted on a wobbly rocking horse, the stately creature strikes a commanding pose donned with a bejeweled crown and the imposing armor of a magnificent monarch.

Many of Skaarup's bronzes are patinated in bright hues to appear more lifelike in the tradition of ancient Greek and Roman sculpture. For instance, *Dancing Bear*, 2013, is adorned in bright jewel tones. Dressed as the Ballets Russes star Vaslav Nijinsky, he perches atop one foot on a Fabergé egg, evocative of classical depictions of Fortuna, the goddess of luck, balancing on a ball.

Other acrobatically-inclined animals include a cheetah riding a razor scooter, a kangaroo hopping on pogo stick and a frog holding on to a bouncy ball in his quest to hop as high as possible.

### **Bjørn Okholm Skaarup**

Born in Rudkøbing, Denmark, in 1973, Bjørn Okholm Skaarup was an illustrator on staff at the Danish National Museum, Copenhagen, from 1994 - 2004, before moving to Florence and receiving a PhD from the European University Institute in 2009.

While in Florence, he studied the work of Renaissance sculptors Donatello, Cellini, and Giambologna. He also wrote and illustrated books on history, archaeology, and anatomy.

Recent solo exhibitions in the U.S. include *Carnival of the Animals* at the Washington National Cathedral, DC (September 21 - November 28, 2016), and at the Bruce Museum, Greenwich, CT (October 31, 2015 - January 3, 2016). In 2015, the Collectivité of St. Barthélemy (St. Barth's) acquired a suite of 10 animal sculptures for public display throughout the island.

Skaarup's sculptures have been exhibited at the Koldinghus Museum (Denmark); and in Italy at Museo del Cenacolo di Ognissanti (Florence); the Four Seasons Hotel (Florence); and Hotel Cipriani (Venice). Bjørn Okholm Skaarup lives and works in New York City. He is a member of the Royal British Society of Sculptors.

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**BASIC FACTS:** *Hippo Ballerina*, 2016, is installed at Dante Park at the intersection of 64th Street and Broadway from February 7 to July 31, 2017. "Bronze Creatures Great and Small" will be on view at Cavalier Gallery from February 7 to March 17, 2017. The gallery is located at 3 West 57th Street (Fourth Floor), New York, NY 10019. [www.cavaliergalleries.com](http://www.cavaliergalleries.com).

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