

# PAUL KASMIN GALLERY

## FINANCIAL TIMES how to spend it

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Max Ernst's monumental late sculptures for sale in New York  
Trio of bronzes includes *Big Brother* and two flanking guardians

BY Christina Ohly Evans



Big Brother, 1967, by Max Ernst, price on request |  
Image: © 2017 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris.  
Photograph by Christian Baraja

Three enormous bronze sculptures will greet visitors to New York's Paul Kasmin Gallery from March 30 to May 13, with the arrival of the Max Ernst exhibition *Big Brother: Teaching Staff for a School of Murderers*.

With the collective French title of *Corps enseignant pour une école de tueurs*, the works are almost Mayan in their tribal, abstracted simplicity, and comprise three hulking figures. The central one, *Big Brother*, was inspired by George Orwell's dystopian novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, and plays on the idea that "Big Brother is watching you". Wearing a low-brimmed, flat cap – all the better for covert

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surveillance – it is flanked by two figures in protective poses (named *Séraphine Cherubin* and *Séraphine le Néophyte*, in reference to Christian iconography), each with a slightly protruding tongue and shrouded head.



*Séraphine Cherubin*, 1967, by Max Ernst, price on request |  
Image: © 2017 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris.  
Photograph by Christian Baraja

The dadaist conceived the pieces (price on request) in 1967, a time in his life when he became fully committed to sculpture, having dabbled in it throughout his career. Typically Ernstian – he was always a master of provocation – there’s a biting sense of humour here, from the wordplay to the overturning of artistic convention. There is also an unsettling, anxious commentary on postwar European society, embodying fears about authority and corrupt political surveillance that are perhaps as relevant now as they were then.

*For more upcoming exhibitions, click here.*

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