

**CHRISTIANA SOULOU**  
**A Midsummer Night's Dream**

**21 January 2009 – 21 February 2009**  
**35 Heddon Street London W1**

With my series of drawings entitled A Midsummer Night's Dream, I try to give my own interpretation of Shakespeare's play. I believe that A Midsummer Night's Dream is a terrifying story and that its fundamental subject is the passage through bestiality.

The conflict with the bestial as necessary to being human is a theme that is also very dear to the German writer Heinrich von Kleist. In his famous essay on the duel between the fencer and the bear, Kleist presents the confrontation between human and beast as the only possible way for man to reclaim the lost paradise of innocence.



The beast, for Shakespeare as for Kleist, is the human soul, untouched by any affliction. Kleist, like Shakespeare, talks to us about humans through beasts.

At the same time, a beast can be an ugly being. Between a beast unaware of its ugliness and a human who knows of his beauty, Kleist, like Shakespeare, chooses the former.

In other words, in this series of drawings, whenever I wanted to assign some innocence to human characters, I gave them something of the bestial. And whenever I made the animals of the play, I tried to give them the human characteristics of vanity and stupidity, assigning them as I thought the heroines of the play imagined them.

from Relating Heinrich von Kleist and Shakespeare in my reading of  
 A Midsummer Night's Dream, Christiana Soulou, 2008

Christiana Soulou was born in Athens in 1961. She studied at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts, Paris, France. She has had two solo shows in Athens (2003, 2006 at Galerie 3), one in Paris (2004, Galeries Samy Kinge) and one at Sadie Coles HQ, London (2007). She has participated in group exhibitions including *Petite impertinence*, Cachan, France (1996), *Panic Room: Works from The Dakis Joannou Collection*, DESTE, Athens (2005), *Of Mice and Men, the 4<sup>th</sup> Berlin Biennale* (2006), *Dream & Trauma: Works from The Dakis Joannou Collection*, Vienna (2007) and *Fractured Figure: Works from The Dakis Joannou Collection*, Athens (2007). A book of the artist's writings was published by DESTE in 2007 to complement the foundation's exhibition *Fracture: Figure*. Sadie Coles HQ published *Christiana Soulou: Water* last year - a book documenting a series of drawings made from 1983 to 1985 with a text by Hans Ulrich Obrist. Soulou lives and works in Athens.

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 N.B. Opening hours Tuesday – Saturday 10am – 6pm