

Paloma Varga Weisz**21 Oct - 19 Nov 2005**
private view, 21 Oct, 6-8pm

Sadie Coles HQ is pleased to host the first solo exhibition in London of work by Paloma Varga Weisz, a German artist living in Dusseldorf.

The works in this exhibition include a chorus of painted wood figures and a large group of works on paper. With their hands gently folded, their bodies truncated to the torso, the carved sculptures assume the role of mute, meditative observers. Carved in traditional lime-wood and painted with layers of softly polished paint, they recall the quiet decoration of choir stalls and pulpits in early churches, with a purity reminiscent of medieval sculptures. While connected to these protestant traditions the nondenominational character of the personages allows links to be forged with mysticism and eastern religions, the inclusion of the dog echoing the worship of non human deities. Or, heading in a more pagan direction, Varga Weisz' characters recall the cast of fairytales or the fanciful figures of *Alice in Wonderland*.



Varga Weisz' figures also represent a material version of emotional and psychological states, something that is revealed clearly in the drawings. They have a lightness and humour that often give way to a more melancholic feel once carved into wood. On paper, some of the figures portrayed are on occasion like sweet and confused gargoyles - many have sprouted double heads, multiple sets of eyes and comic expressions: physical manifestations of psychological states of pleasure or anxiety.

The plurality of references extends throughout Varga Weisz' work: the child who has grown a full body of feathers could be the progeny of the birdmen of fables, while a series of 'bumpmen', whose bodies have become a mass of protrusions, as if afflicted by some ghastly plague, arouse pity and repulsion in equal measure. Her large scale museum installations see figures swaddled in sheets for clothing, tied with ropes and bound to poles; crucified or lynched, they appear as desolate allegories of death and possible resurrection.

Paloma Varga Weisz lives and works in Dusseldorf, Germany. In 2004 she had a solo show at Museum Kurhaus Kleve; she was included in this year's Venice Biennale in the Arsenale in *Always a Little Further*, curated by Rosa Martinez; and in 2006 her work will be included in the Berlin Biennial. The exhibition in Kleve was accompanied by a catalogue of her work.

A new publication of the works on paper of Paloma Varga Weisz is available during the exhibition.