

Paloma Varga Weisz HOMEWORK

Sadie Coles HQ HOMEWORK #5 14 July – 24 July 2020

Paloma Varga Weisz *HOMEWORK* comprises a new series of drawings populated by a cast of mythic and surreal subjects drawn from imagination, folklore and the artist's own personal history. The presentation marks the fifth iteration in our ongoing series of online exhibitions featuring new works from the homes and studios of artists.

Made variously in watercolour, coloured pencil and graphite, Varga Weisz's drawings have formed an integral part of her practice from the beginning, as well as serving as a rich insight into her oeuvre at large. In these new figurative works (all made during 2020), imaginary beings proliferate – hybrid anthropomorphic creatures which recall the surreal bodies of dreams and mythology – address themes of transformation, metamorphosis and the uncanny. Set apart from the muted, predominantly earthy tones of her sculptural works in wood and ceramics, the fantastical scenes within her drawings are transposed as playful multi-hued realms that pulsate, almost psychedelically, with colour.



The title HOMEWORK made me smile, I associate it strongly with the housewife, homeschooling and managing daily life with my kids, which became my focus during the few weeks of lockdown as my kids were at home.

The whole idea of isolation became a challenge and changed the concept of what a family is, what being a family is all about. In my house, the school system moved more and more into the background and the children's individual characters came more to the fore. There was no space to escape. It became the opposite of isolation, as we all sat together around the table and each of us pursued our own interests. One of my children disappeared into a utopian lego city of his own making, while my other child discovered the sewing machine, created his own fashion brand. I escaped frequently with my dog out of the city and for the first time in a long time I was able to enjoy the spring as it arrived and to watch nature exploding to life. This awakening was powerfully symbolic for me during the first phase of the pandemic and over the course of these few weeks, drawing also became a process into which I could escape from the world.

The images found their way out of my mind and onto the paper without anything to block their path. My drawings exist in a parallel world that have much more of a lightness than when compared to my sculptures that demand more focus, concentration and organization. Being out in nature is definitely a relief for me as it is a place where I can hide away. Being surrounded by animals has always been important and it is something that has become more and more important over the years. In this new bunch of drawings, I have definitely chosen a more vibrant and colourful pallet, the format is larger too and I have used colour on more of the paper's surface than I have previously. It wasn't a choice that I made in advance, it just happened, I really wanted to cover the paper in colour. As a person, my filter for information coming from the world around me is really open, whether it is films, books, podcasts, documentaries etc. It seems to be a relief for me to process this abundance of information and to get it out visually. I definitely like the confusion evoked by the multi-eyed figures in both my sculptures and drawings, they make it more difficult to focus. Maybe that disturbance is what interests me most?

– Paloma Varga Weisz, 2020

Paloma Varga Weisz (b. 1966, Mannheim) trained at Staatliche Kunstakademie, Düsseldorf. She has exhibited internationally, with major solo exhibitions including *Bumped Body*, Henry Moore Institute, Leeds (2020); *Bumped Body*, Bonnefantenmuseum, Maastricht (2019); *Wild Bunch*, Sadie Coles HQ, Davies Street, London (2018); *Skulpturenhalle*, Thomas Schütte Foundation, Holzheim, Germany (2017); *Kabinetstück*, Fürstenberg Zeitgenössisch, Donaueschingen, Germany (2016; curated by Moritz Wesseler); *Glory Hole*, Salzburger Kunstverein, Salzburg, Austria (2015); *Root of a Dream*, Castello di Rivoli, Turin, Italy (2015); *Krummer Hund*, Kabinett für aktuelle Kunst, Bremerhaven, Germany (2013, travelling to the Douglas Hyde Gallery, Dublin in 2013); *Maison de Plaisance*, with Rosemarie Trockel, Museum Morsbroich, Leverkusen (2012); *Spirits of My Flesh*, Chapter, Cardiff (2011), and that at the Douglas Hyde Gallery, Dublin (2006). Forthcoming and recent group shows include *in a breath? A name? the ways of worldmaking*, Biennale Gherdëina 7, Val Gardena, Dolomites (2020); *Animalesque / Art Across Species and Beings*, BALTIC Center for Contemporary Art, Gateshead (2019); *MASK. In Present-Day Art*, Aargauer Kunsthaus, Aarau (2019); *ISelf Collection: Bumped Bodies*, Whitechapel Gallery, London (2018); *Lucas Cranach the Elder*, Museum Kunstpalast, Dusseldorf (2017); and *NO MAN'S LAND: Women Artists from the Rubell Family Collection*, Rubell Family Collection/Contemporary Arts Foundation, Miami (2015) amongst others. She lives and works in Düsseldorf, Germany.

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