

GLADSTONE 64

Paloma Varga Weisz

Wundergestalt

130 East 64th Street, New York

January 12– February 16, 2019

Opening January 12, 4 – 6pm

“The subjects had, indeed, risen vividly on my mind. As I saw them with the spiritual eye, before I attempted to embody them, they were striking...”

—Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (1847)

Gladstone Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of new sculpture and drawings by Paloma Varga Weisz. Her idiosyncratic, anachronistic, and thoughtful wood carvings utilize traditional techniques, used for centuries in the creation of ecclesiastical sculpture. Varga Weisz, however, works against the grain of tradition in subtle ways through figures that draw on obscure references to art history, current events, and medieval iconography. Endowing each of these figures with a palpable psychology, her hand manifests different interior states and affective postures. Seen together with her drawings, Varga Weisz's practice seems populated with repertory company of surreal players, akin to neo-platonic intermediaries moving between imagination's hinterland to our reality via her intuitive touch.

For this exhibition, Varga Weisz creates fantastical animal-human hybrids that emerge from an imaginative terrain wherein the miraculous shapes of the title shed light on both the chimerical and the humane. These iterations of arcane relics transform the gallery space, inviting viewers into what critic Alessandro Rabottini describes as “the vastness of...inner experience, that nervous system of simultaneity which is out experience once it shifts away from the here-and-now and occupies a space in which memory, present, and imagination coexist.” Whether left in their original wooden state or surfaced with metallic leafing or polychrome, the figures emerge from this place of interior wonder through Varga Weisz's acuity for both craft and fine art traditions. Perhaps a collection of strange figures held in the wunderkammer of the mind, each sculpture possesses both a distinct bearing and semblance of relationships to each other—a family of characters that animate darker strata of being; a Janus-like head of multiplying faces recalls both mythological creatures from Northern European illuminations and Brancusi's curvilinear modernist sculpture. Often removing figures from their original context, Varga Weisz appropriates both well-known and fancifully idiomatic tropes and reconfigures them as a constellation of archetypes that elucidate representations of femininity, history, and the grotesque. It is in a strange time/place where her practice resides; the twilight liminality of dreams and realities where the known and the unknown meet and feel estrangingly akin to each of us.

Paloma Varga Weisz lives and works in Düsseldorf, Germany. Her work has been presented in major solo exhibitions at the Castello di Rivoli, Turin; Salzburger Kunstverein; Kunstmuseum Kurhaus Kleve; Skulpturenhalle, Thomas Schütte Foundation, Neuss/Holzheim, Germany; the Douglas Hyde Gallery, Dublin; the Museum Morsbroich, Leverkusen, Germany (with Rosemarie Trockel). She has been included in group exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Hayward Gallery, London; Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf; Whitechapel, London; the Venice Biennale; and the Berlin Biennale. She trained at Staatliche Kunstakademie, Düsseldorf. In the fall of 2019, she will be the subject of a solo mid-career retrospective at the Bonnenfantemuseum in Maastricht, Netherlands.

Claudia Comte
515 West 24th Street
January 11 – February 16

Ian Cheng
530 West 21st Street
January 31 – March 23

Guo Fengyi
12 Rue du Grand Cerf
January 22 – March 9

For further information, please contact Andrew Huff: ahuff@gladstonegallery.com
New York gallery hours: Tuesday–Saturday, 10am–6pm
Brussels gallery hours: Tuesday–Friday, 10am–6pm and Saturday, 12pm–6pm