

# GLADSTONE GALLERY

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## Paloma Varga Weisz

December 9<sup>th</sup> 2008 – January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2009  
515 West 24<sup>th</sup> Street

Gladstone Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition of new work by German artist Paloma Varga Weisz. Her sculptures and works on paper skirt the issues of history and influence, melting and mixing sources, periods, and figments into an indistinct pool of images. In taming what she calls “the rapid pictures that arise in one’s head,” Varga Weisz tends to the metamorphosis of the images that move from mind to hand, from watercolor to wood, producing hybrids that recall at once history, folklore, contemporary media, and works of art. As Guido de Werd noted in his catalogue to her exhibition at the Kurhaus Kleve, the charmingly surreal figures that populate her work seem “like pictures belonging to an unknown fairytale.” In this manner, Varga Weisz sculpts an uncharted terrain, tracing the border of the familiar and the remarkable.

In this new body of work, she continues her investigation into the Gilded Age, a period of American history in which the extravagant lifestyle of robber barons stood in stark contrast to the poor whose energies and craft fed the booming industries. In contrasting tableaux, be-wigged and lidded metal-leafed sculptures stand apart from a pair of life-size figures woven from basket reeds. Seeming to align materials with industry and opulence, handicraft and leisure, Varga Weisz weaves allegory and critique into her quasi-historical recreations. Embracing barrels or basketry to create or house her figures, Varga Weisz breathes new life into these practical objects. The imaginative figures that emerge from these humble origins persist even in the face of growing industrialization, proving the long and continuing life of these craft traditions. Transcending pastiche, her installations do not find root in their source-material alone, but rather gain their meaning through their transformation of form, their evolution from the homely to the fantastic. Just as she creates imaginative interventions with the world that surrounds her and its history, Varga Weisz’s mis-en-scene become less a presentation of fact and more of a tale she weaves.

Paloma Varga Weisz was born in 1966 and raised in Neustadt an der Weinstrasse, Germany. After studying at the Kunstacademie Düsseldorf, she has continued to live and work there. She had a solo exhibition at the Museum Kurhaus Kleve and has been included in numerous group exhibitions at the Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin, and the Kunstverein Düsseldorf, as well as in the permanent collection of K21. She was included in the 2005 Venice Biennale as a part of Rosa Martinez’s exhibition “Always a Little Further,” and “Of Mice and Men,” the 2006 Berlin Biennial. Earlier this year, the Kunsthalle Wein mounted an exhibition of her recent work.

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**Also on view:**  
**Mario Merz, 530 West 21<sup>st</sup> Street**  
**Fausto Melotti 12 Rue de Grand Cerf, Brussels**  
**Opening Thursday, December 11th**