

KLARA KRISTALOVA
The Cold Wind and the Warm

June 27–September 9, 2023
London



Klara Kristalova, *Shield*, 2023. Painted and glazed porcelain. 18.5 x 16.54 x 11.42 inches (47 x 42 x 29 cm). Photo by Carl Henrik Tillberg

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Following her inclusion at the critically-acclaimed Strange Clay exhibition at the Hayward Gallery, Lehmann Maupin presents *The Cold Wind and the Warm*, an exhibition of new work by Klara Kristalova and the artist's first solo presentation in London. Kristalova is best known for her figurative ceramic sculptures that incorporate both aspects of the human body and elements of nature. Across her oeuvre, Kristalova explores transitional states essential to both human and ecological life. Crafted in the artist's secluded studio in Norrtälje, Sweden, Kristalova's uncanny sculptures explore the tension between innocence and horror, conjuring an awkward yet powerful presence. Building a world that bridges humanity, ecology, and fantasy, Kristalova's work emphasises the omnipresence of change across all life forms.

The works in *The Cold Wind and the Warm* are often influenced by small details in Kristalova's immediate surroundings. Though she has always found inspiration in her environment, Kristalova began paying closer attention to the material details of her everyday life as a result of the immense environmental changes catalysed by recent global events. The result is an imaginative juxtaposition of scale where minute details reflect the monumental impact of constant global change.

Across the exhibition, Kristalova fuses quotidian and fantastical details, extracting strangeness from mundanity. Depicting hybrid figures that contain both anthropomorphic and animalistic qualities, many of the sculptures exist in a liminal space between humanity and nature—or perhaps challenge such distinctions altogether. For example, standing at the height of a human child, *Mighty Mouse* portrays a mouse-like figure sitting upright with its hands on its legs; the figure leans forward and appears inquisitive, as though listening intently. Throughout the body of work, the figures' postures mimic ordinary human movement, while their titles reveal the artist's wry sense of humour. Each sculpture is extraordinary; together, they memorialize the strangeness of everyday encounters, leaving ample room for identification and estrangement.

While they possess human qualities, many sculptures also contain the traces of ecological processes. *Lust for Life* comprises a figure with outstretched arms whose craggy body resembles a tree trunk, while *Fireplace* depicts a figure made of bricks, flickering flames erupting from her head. The artist constructs an ambiguity here: is the body resting or in the midst of decomposing? Is fire engulfing the figure, or is the figure itself producing the flames? Kristalova's uneven surfaces engender a sense of discomfort, mirroring the sensitive and porous state of mind one might find themselves in when weathering changes. In this sense, her rugged style reminds us that the sculptural process is inherently transformative, as natural materials are shaped into static and enduring forms.

Throughout *The Cold Wind and the Warm*, Kristalova's hand-built sculptures recall the fine line between construction and destruction, ultimately revealing that what lurks in the interstices is transition and change. As she draws connections between humanity and ecology, Kristalova suggests that we too are in a constant state of transformation. In her fictive world poised between birth and death, beauty and disgust, familiarity and discomfort, Kristalova's tactile and enigmatic forms locate the monumental in the ordinary. In this way, the exhibition explores the sense of anxiety and possibility inherent in the promise of change.



Klara Kristalova, *The Look*, 2023. Painted and glazed porcelain. 26.77 x 20.47 x 16.93 inches (68 x 52 x 43 cm). Photo by Carl Henrik Tillberg

Klara Kristalova (b. 1967, Czechoslovakia; lives and works in Norrtälje, Sweden) creates figurative sculpture, influenced by myths and fairy tales that recall childhood fantasy and nightmares. Exuding both innocence and horror, many of her works are based on the human body, taking on hybrid forms that incorporate aspects of nature—animals, insects, flowers, and trees. The ambiguity of the origin of the figure creates an open narrative that the viewer is invited to dictate or complete. Kristalova's figures are often depicted in the midst of transformation and thus exist in the liminal space between two physical or psychological states. They illustrate binaries such as innocence and danger, perfection and deformation, joy and despair, good and evil, masculine and feminine. The age of adolescence is of particular interest to the artist as a significant period of human transformation and growth, both physically and psychologically, when innocence and freedom are lost to societal pressures and decisions are made that impact the direction of one's future. Though Kristalova is primarily a sculptor, she also creates drawings, watercolors, and collages that allow her to fully investigate her sculptural forms.

Kristalova studied at the Royal University College of Fine Art, Stockholm. Solo exhibitions of her work have been organized at Galerie Perrotin, New York, NY (2022); Norrtälje Konsthall, Norrtälje, Sweden (2022); Galerie Perrotin, Seoul, Korea (2021); Carl Eldh's Studio Museum, Stockholm, Sweden (2021); Lidkopings Konsthall, Lidköping, Sweden (2020); Galerie Magnus Karlsson, Stockholm, Sweden (2020); Kunstforeningen, GL Strand, Copenhagen, Denmark (2017); Norton Museum of Art, West Palm Beach, FL (2014); Bonniers Konsthall, Stockholm, Sweden (2012); Göteborgs Konstmuseum, Gothenburg, Sweden (2012); San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA (2011); and SITE Santa Fe, Santa Fe, NM (2009). Select group exhibitions featuring her work include *Beyond the looking glass*, United Talent Agency (UTA), Los Angeles, CA (2021); *Du Cheval a l'oeuvre*, Haras National du Pin, Le Pin-au-Haras, France (2021); ART ZUID Amsterdam Sculptuur Biennale, Amsterdam, the Netherlands (2021); *Human After All*, The Princessehof National Museum of Ceramics, Leeuwarden, the Netherlands (2020); *In the Name of Flower*, Pearl Art Museum, Shanghai, China (2020); *Signature women*, Artipelag, Stockholm, Sweden (2020); *Tant le moindre de mes atomes t'appartient intimement: Oeuvres choisies de la Collection Bailey*, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Montréal, Montréal, Canada (2019); *Shades of Existence*, Teckningsmuseet, Laholm, Sweden (2019); *Klara Kristalova, Marten Medbo, Per B Sundberg*, Steneby Konsthall, Dals Langed, Sweden (2019); *Figures de l'Animal*, Abbaye Saint-Andre/Centre d'art Contemporain, Meymac, France (2019); *Yellow Creature*, Kunstmuseum Luzern, Luzern, Switzerland (2017); *Les imaginaires d'un monde in-tranquille*, Abbaye Saint-Andre/Centre d'art Contemporain, Meymac,

France (2017); *Taskashi Murakami's Superflat Collection*, Yokohama Museum of Art, Kanagawa, Japan (2017); *Sisters of the Moon*, KMAC Museum, Louisville, KY (2016); *In Search of the Present*, Espoo Museum of Modern Art, Helsinki, Finland (2016); NO MAN'S LAND: Women Artists from the Rubell Family Collection, Rubell Family Collection, Miami, FL (2015).

Kristalova's work is included in numerous international public and private collections, including Bror Hjorths Hus, Uppsala, Sweden; The Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum, East Lansing, MI; Espoo Museum of Modern Art (EMMA), Espoo, Finland; Fonds National d'Art Contemporain (FNAC), Paris, France; Me Collectors Room, Olbricht Collection, Berlin, Germany; Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden; Nationalmuseum, Stockholm, Sweden; Norrköpings Konstmuseum, Norrköping, Sweden; Norrtälje Kommun, Norrtälje, Sweden; The Norton Museum of Art, West Palm Beach, FL; and NSU Art Museum, Fort Lauderdale, FL; Ordrupgaard Museum, Copenhagen, Denmark; Rubell Family Collection, Miami, FL; Skövde Konstmuseum, Skövde, Sweden; Statens Konstråd, Stockholm, Sweden; Sundsvalls Konstmuseum, Sundsvall, Sweden; Västerås Konstmuseum, Västerås, Sweden; Yoshitomo Nara: N's Yard, Nasushiobara City, Tochigi Prefecture, Japan; and the Zabłudowicz Collection, London, United Kingdom.



Portrait of Klara Kristalova in her studio, 2021. Photo by Magnus Karlsson

LEHMANN MAUPIN

ABOUT THE GALLERY

Rachel Lehmann and David Maupin co-founded Lehmann Maupin in 1996 in New York. Since Inception, Lehmann Maupin has served as a leading contemporary art gallery with locations in the U.S., Europe, and Asia. For over 25 years, Lehmann Maupin has been instrumental in introducing international artists in new geographies and building long-lasting curatorial relationships. Known for championing diverse voices, the gallery's program proudly features artists whose work challenges notions of identity. and shapes international culture. Today, the gallery has locations in New York, Hong Kong, Seoul and London, as well as a team in mainland China. In the past year with growing opportunities in new markets, the gallery has opened seasonal spaces in Aspen, Palm Beach, Taipei, and Beijing.



Lehmann Maupin London at Cromwell Place. Photo by Alex Delfanne