

KETELEER GALLERY

KETELEER GALLERY is very pleased to present *Talking to an Angel*, a solo exhibition by Valgerður Sigurðardóttir (°1992. Iceland. Lives and works in Antwerp, BE). Sigurðardóttir's third solo exhibition with the gallery consists of a completely new series of large scale drawings and concrete and ceramic sculptures.

Talking to an Angel reveals a story in which Valgerður Sigurðardóttir subtly interweaves personal reflections and feeling with a collective consciousness. She previously focused on identity, memory and the relationship between people and their environment, but now she invites viewers on an in-depth journey through complex layers of her own experiences, with themes such as loss, birth, memories, displacement and enduring values.

Sigurðardóttir's work often transcends traditional artistic media and incorporates elements of sculpture and installation. Her art balances intriguingly between robust material such as concrete, cement and ceramics, and a seemingly naive style. The endearing drawings and reliefs radiate an illustrative and cartoonish charm, making the whole appear fresh and playful. Sigurðardóttir herself describes her creative process as follows:

"I often simply need to start. Sometimes I manage to somehow let things go, that's when I create the best. Almost as if I'm working cross-eyed. Creativity and ideas also often arise when I make mistakes. My 'incompetence' then leads to new ways of working and surprising ideas."

Beneath the seemingly simple surface of her drawings and sculptures, there's a profound complexity. Starting with scenes of the familiar, the domestic, the small and the everyday, the artist draws inspiration from dreams and emotions. In her exploration, she navigates the delicate balance between comfort and recognition on one side, and a sense of estrangement and the irrational on the other.

Sigurðardóttir's art contains not only mystery, but also expectation. The artist never reveals everything, leaving it to the viewer to ultimately shape the stories. By using simplicity in a meaningful way, her neutral though unique imagery stimulates the imagination. In doing so, she plays a refined game with our deep-rooted need for content, meaning and interpretation.

The heartfelt reflections on personal loss and the joyful sentiments surrounding the birth of her own child add a profound dimension to her light-hearted works. Varying between bright colours and black and white, she explores universal experiences of love, loss and the cyclical nature of life. Sigurðardóttir thus manages to capture the essence of fleeting moments. In *Talking to an Angel* she brings together past and present and confronts the complex emotions of being far from home, while evoking the enduring loving power of family bonds. Shared values transcend geographical distances as an echo of interconnectedness. The viewer is encouraged to ponder their own stories of kinship and draw parallels between the artist's personal journey and their own experiences.

The exhibition will be on view January 13 – March 9, 2024.

Valgerður Sigurðardóttir studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Reykjavik, the Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp and at KASK, Ghent. After finishing her studies she purposely chose Antwerp as the place to develop her artistic practice. In 2017 she and five other Icelandic artists founded ABC Klubhuis in Antwerp. Aiming to bridge the distance between Brussels, Antwerp, Ghent and even Dutch art scenes it also allowed her to establish a visible and active position in the local art scene. In 2019 ABC Klubhuis ceased to operate and from then on her sole focus was on her own practice.