

Paloma Varga Weisz

Studio Paloma Varga Weisz

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MASSIMODECARLO Pièce Unique becomes *Studio Paloma Varga Weisz*.

Taking over the entire gallery, German artist Paloma Varga Weisz turns Pièce Unique into her workspace. Over the course of two weeks, she will carve, draw and paint in the gallery, filling it with studio furniture, tools and work in progress. Blurring the line between private and public, her intervention - the first of its kind at MASSIMODECARLO - gently challenges the notions of the studio's secrecy against the openness of the gallery space, finished and unfinished work, and the very paradigm of gallery exhibition.

"The different elements of my work create a kind of mental vertigo. I think about all the things I see while I move on to make new ones."

Deeply informed by her childhood memories – spending time with her father in his studio, her academic training and subsequent return to sculpture - her attention to material and relentless exploration of (art) history, Paloma Varga Weisz's work is a delicate fusion of intimate and surreal, unsettling and comforting, that comes together in a practice that is first and foremost sculptural, blossoming into the various mediums that most fit the shapes and sensations she seeks to materialize.

In her temporary Studio at Pièce Unique, Varga Weisz has chosen to surround herself with a variety of sculptures, ranging from glass and bronze to ceramic and limewood, as well as one of her cabinets.

"My cabinets are like a poem of space, or like words in a sentence; the sculptures are placed on the shelves to create a particular rhythm. It is the rhythm between order and disorder - like in a wardrobe, trying to keep things together, but the doors are open, despite my desire to hold onto things in the world that constantly drains itself of people passing away."

Enveloped in comforting melancholy, Paloma Varga Weisz's practice is brilliantly captivating. Her subtle, almost innocent and dreamlike alterations of the figures – both human and anthropomorphic - that she sculpts, molds and carves are systematically mysterious, as if on the verge of reality.

Altered by mysterious bumps or adorned with animal-like ears and balancing themselves in uncanny, sometimes uncomfortable poses, nothing is obvious in her figures. Varga Weisz's creatures seem suspended between slumber and movement, the fragility of the materials they are crafted in becoming the very physical markers of the artist's hand that created them.

By setting up shop in Paris, Varga Weisz not only experiments with the paradigms of the gallery's mechanisms, she will also importantly take this invitation to explore her personal past with the city of Paris. Indeed her father, Feri Varga, her first and foremost mentor, lived and worked in the Marais before moving to the South of France during the war. Nurturing fond memories of his tales of a France that she never knew, Varga Weisz will follow in the footsteps of her father, exploring the meanders of the past.

Studio Paloma Varga Weisz therefore sets itself as a double experimentation: both for the gallery and the artist, an invitation to delve into the yet to be discovered possibilities of introspection and interaction between place, work and history.

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Paloma Varga Weisz (b. 1966, Mannheim, Germany) lives and works in Düsseldorf, Germany.

Varga Weisz's artistic journey is influenced by familial ties, formal woodcarving training, and a nuanced exploration of various artistic expressions. She employs sculpture, watercolour, and drawing to delve into profound themes such as memory, mortality, and psychology. Her creations, whether on paper or three-dimensional, serve as extensions of her body and mind.

Steeped in a legacy of artistic inspiration, her father, Feri Varga, a Hungarian artist, played a pivotal role in shaping her early artistic inclination. Her father's stories of an unconventional life alongside luminaries like Jean Cocteau, Henri Matisse, and Pablo Picasso fuelled her innate artistic inclination from a tender age. As described by writer and art critic Jennifer Higgie: *"Varga Weisz's sculptures and works on paper acknowledge the uncensored daydreams of contemporary life; the kind that drift between the present, the future and the past with an ease that makes time-travellers of us all."*

Varga Weisz's figures, both sculptural and illustrated, encapsulate a myriad of personal and collective motifs, often embracing unconventional and grotesque forms. Motivated by a quest to capture the body's fleeting nature, the artist's vocabulary illustrates life with bold symbolism and evolving emotions.

Major solo exhibitions include Bumped Body, Bonnefantenmuseum, Maastricht and subsequently at the Henry Moore Institute, Leeds, UK; Glory Hole, Le Consortium, Dijon France, curated by Éric Troncy; Root of a Dream, Castello di Rivoli, Turin, Italy; Glory Hole, Salzburger Kunstverein, Salzburg, Austria; Museum Morsbroich, Leverkusen, Germany (with Rosemary Trockel); Skulpturenhalle, Thomas Schütte Foundation, Holzheim, Germany among others;

Selected *group* shows include Fourth Plinth Shortlist Exhibition, The National Gallery, London, UK; The Human Factor, Hayward Gallery, London; Exquisite Corpses: Drawing and Disfiguration, Museum of Modern Art, New York; Always a Little Further, 51st International Art Exhibition, Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy; Parcours, Art Basel, Basel, Switzerland; Of Mice and Men, 4th Berlin Biennale, KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin, Germany; Die Bildhauer. Kunstakademie Dusseldorf, 1945 bis heute (Sculptures from the art academy Dusseldorf since 1945), Kunstsammlung NRW Nordrhein-Westfalen, Dusseldorf, Germany; Lucas Cranach the Elder, Museum Kunstpalast, Düsseldorf, Germany, among others.