

Paloma Varga Weisz

Condition I-VI

Paloma Varga Weisz & Sophie von Hellermann

Blue Room

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MASSIMODECARLO is pleased to present *Condition I-VI* and *Blue Room*, two distinct yet interwoven exhibitions by Paloma Varga Weisz and Sophie von Hellermann, marking Varga Weisz's first solo presentation in Hong Kong and the first-ever collaboration between the two artists. Conceived as parallel acts within a single narrative, the exhibitions unfold across adjoining rooms: one introspective and sculptural, the other theatrical and immersive.

The first room is dedicated entirely to Paloma Varga Weisz and her *Condition I-VI* - a series of six ceramic heads that at first appear almost identical, but slowly reveal their differences. The first five sculptures depict the same subject repeated across different days, colours, and moods. Subtle shifts in expression, the pressure of a fingertip here, a dent in the clay there, suggest variations not in identity, but in state. It's less a portrait than a process, doing the same thing again and again, and watching how it quietly changes. The repetition becomes a form of attention - a way of staying with a form until it reveals its emotional register.

Each head carries its own set of marks, made visible through touch: fingerprints, ridges, and unglazed surfaces that preserve the immediacy of the making. They don't try to be perfect. Instead, they feel close, not just to the artist, but to the moment they were made. "Same, same, but different", as Paloma puts it.

The sixth sculpture in the series stands apart. It breaks the rhythm, as this character has distinctively different facial features. While the first five works feel emotionally porous, this figure seems fully present, unyielding, and composed. It doesn't belong to the same emotional loop as the others, and that's precisely the point. Paloma describes it as a "disturbing element" in the sequence - not disturbing in appearance, but in its difference. A kind of interruption.

She created it while reflecting on her first time exhibiting in Asia - a personal invitation toward a culture she does not yet know. As with many of her sculptures, there's a sense that these figures have arrived from another time - ancient, maybe sacred,

but also unmistakably contemporary. They hold a kind of stillness that belongs only to the present.

If the first room is all introspection - a kind of slow-motion study of a face as it changes ever so slightly - the second, the *Blue Room*, is a complete reversal. Here, Varga Weisz invites Sophie von Hellermann to transform the gallery into a painterly reverie. They've never collaborated before, though their artistic friendship spans decades - first as students orbiting each other in Düsseldorf, then reconnected through shared friends and parallel paths across London and beyond.

Von Hellermann paints directly onto the gallery walls in watery shades of blue - a colour both artists love - evoking imagined lives and scenes from an old Hong Kong flat with a harbour view. A kind of dream-salon begins to take shape: family portraits, surreal landscapes, fragments of myth. The mural functions like painted wallpaper, though nothing is repeated, and everything is alive.

At the centre of this fictional room stands one of Varga Weisz's marionettes, clad in a tartan skirt found in Hong Kong. Part puppet, part collector, part spectre of colonial residue, it anchors the room like a character in a story that's still being written. Around it, von Hellermann's paintings, Varga Weisz's sculptures - including her *Cabinet* - and small details that reward close attention.

Together, their works share a kind of soft theatricality, weightless but grounded, playful but serious. The figures shift, the room breathes, the fantasy never fully resolves. But in this dense, mysterious setting, what emerges is a shared language - one rooted not in similarity, but in deep understanding.

If *Condition I-VI* is about intimacy and raw immortalisation, *Blue Room* is all maximalist imagination. Together, the two rooms form a complete universe, inviting viewers to step outside of fixed categories and wander, instead, through stories, impressions, and slight shifts.

Paloma Varga Weisz

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.

Sophie von Hellermann

Sophie von Hellermann lives and works in London and Margate, United Kingdom.

Working quickly with pure pigment on unprimed canvas, von Hellermann paints in fluid, translucent washes that give her images a sense of spontaneity, like memories surfacing or scenes from a dream. Her works operate in a register of intuition and sensation, hinting at narrative without ever fixing it in place. Figures appear and dissolve, landscapes melt into

atmosphere, and the everyday mingles with the archetypal. Her work draws from a wide range of sources - classical myths, everyday encounters, philosophy, and current events - yet what emerges is never illustrative.

Sophie von Hellermann (b. 1975, Munich) received her BFA from Kunstakademie, Düsseldorf and an MFA from Royal College of Art, London.