



"Snow mom", 2016
Glazed stoneware and porcelain
86 x 130 x 46 cm / 33 7/8 x 51 3/16 x 18 1/8 inches



"The artist as a dog", 2016
Glazed porcelain
52 x 24 x 37 cm / 20 1/2 x 9 7/16 x 14 9/16 inches

KLARA KRISTALOVA "HELLO STRANGER"
Galerie Perrotin, Hong Kong / May 11 - June 25, 2016
Opening: Wednesday, May 11, 6-8pm

Galerie Perrotin, Hong Kong is pleased to present "Hello Stranger", the first solo exhibition dedicated to Swedish artist Klara Kristalova in Hong Kong, and her fifth solo show with the Gallery.

The importance of being prepared

Klara Kristalova's first name means *cope* in Swedish and the individuals in her art try to cope, just as Klara herself does. The connection between her name and the verb may seem meaningless, but in fact has a very palpable charge. Klara has had to cope since a young age, and this is reflected in her art. There is reason to regard her individuals, her creatures, as messengers from her past – as refugees and migrants moulded by her hands, but most of all by her fate and her dreams, linked to her as the candle is to the flame.

Klara's hands work the stoneware clay quickly. It's as if she's sketching, impulsively and immediately – only in three dimensions. When the sculptures emerge from the kiln after the first firing, blind and unseen, Klara sets to work on them with base glazes and soft brushes, as if they were delicate watercolours and not corporeal clay figures. The application of colour brings them suddenly to life, giving them expression and context (Klara has a solid background as a painter). Finally she drenches them in transparent finishing glaze, as if to cool down the intensive working process before the figures are fired again. When they emerge from the kiln a second time, they're like strangers to Klara's eyes: the transformation is complete, unpredictable and eagerly awaited. The ever-surprising encounters with these unknown figures are at once the price and the reward for all her toiling with heavy clay in the blasting heat from the kiln – and she copes with that too.

If Klara's figures could speak they would find that they speak many languages, just as many refugees do. As her parents did, who made the decision to flee with Klara in 1968, when she was barely one year old

克拉拉·克莉斯塔洛娃 《HELLO STRANGER》
貝浩登 (香港)
2016年5月11日至6月25日

貝浩登(香港)很榮幸為瑞典藝術家克拉拉·克莉斯塔洛娃舉辦香港首展《HELLO STRANGER》，此次也是藝術家第5次與畫廊合作個展。

就是要準備

克拉拉·克莉斯塔洛娃，這名字在瑞典語解作「應付」，而她所創造的人物，也確實要應付各種生存問題，就如藝術家自己一樣。把名字與行動連繫起來，看似無關重要，卻自有深層意義。自小克拉拉便要應付生存問題，這自然也反映在她的藝術裏。可以說，她所創造的人物、作品，都是過往經歷的傳遞者。塑造一個個難民、移民人像的，不單是克拉拉的雙手，更是她的命運和夢想；這些作品與藝術家緊密相連，就如蠟燭與燭光一樣。

克拉拉捏製陶泥，速度可媲美以直覺即興速寫，卻比速寫來得立體。塑像經過第一次燒製，既粗糙又無色彩，需上底釉並以軟刷加工，就像處理水彩畫。塑像上色後，有了表情和內容（全賴克拉拉的繪畫背景），頓時散發生命；然後，以透明飾面釉浸透、冷卻，再放入爐裏燒。燒完第二次後，出來的作品脫胎換骨，令人意想不到，對克拉拉來說，感覺是既陌生又驚喜。她與陶泥拼搏，忍受火爐高溫，最終應付過去，為的是與這些無名人像相遇。

人像如能說話，一定是說各種語言，因為難民都來自不同國族。克拉拉的父母也操不同語言，早於1968年，當華沙公約國入侵捷克，鎮壓「布拉格之春」運動，他們便決定舉家離開，當時克拉拉只有1歲多。數以萬計難民逃往歐洲非共產國家，她們一家人經過幾年漂泊，最後到了瑞典，在斯德哥爾摩群島一間荒廢學校安頓下來。母親不久病逝，死因竟是感冒。過了幾年，一場

and the Warsaw Pact invaded their homeland, Czechoslovakia, during what became known as the Prague Spring. Hundreds of thousands of refugees were scattered across the free nations of Europe. After several itinerant years, the young family finally settled down in an abandoned school on an island in the Stockholm archipelago, in Sweden. Some time later her mother died unexpectedly of the most ordinary of illnesses – the common cold. One day a few years later the school was gutted by fire, and the remaining family was once again bereft of everything, even though it had already lost all it had.

The greeting of the exhibition title, *Hello stranger*, could be directed at Klara herself, as if the things she makes with her own hands welcome her, one by one, into their circle – rootless survivors, capable, dreaming, loyal to each other and to others as only those can who have lost country and language, love and context. Those who have lost everything, but who have therefore also been able to win everything back.

A lone, human-like dog who resembles Klara is wading waist-deep through existence, seeking her flock. She pricks up her ears mid-stride and cocks her head to one side.

It was the sailor who called to the stranger. He's jostling with the other figures who have huddled like castaways on a raft, a life raft. When the Medusa sank in the Atlantic in 1816, its corrupt commander abandoned his crew and left everyone to die on a raft. His perfidy upset the whole world, and echoes can still be heard in our era. The French painter, Théodore Géricault, painted *The Raft of the Medusa* in 1819, depicting the moment when the last survivors sight the Argus on the horizon – the ship that finally managed to rescue a few remaining crew members. Klara reminds us that the last corrupt commander has yet to be born.

When Ulysses, the Greek hero-king of Ithaca, returned to his island from journeys to places where no-one had gone before, his faithful dog Argus was the only one who recognised his master. Klara is like Argus, the faithful dog who recognises the figures on the raft, her masters. They are her masters, the figures on the raft, for an artist doesn't own her works since the work masters the artist. The artist as dog.

Klara has made her odyssey, and has returned to settle near her home island, in her archipelago. Just like Ulysses, she really has a faithful dog, and they're as close as thunder is to lightning, so the dog's name is Zeus after the king of the gods in Greek mythology. Zeus' attribute is a lightning bolt.

In 1915 Vladimir Mayakovsky, the Russian poet, exclaimed in his famous long poem *A Cloud in Trousers*:

*Of Grandfatherly gentleness I'm devoid,
there's not a single grey hair in my soul!
Thundering the world with the might of my voice,
I go by – handsome,
twenty-two-year-old.*

*Gentle ones!
You lay your love on a violin.
The crude lay their love on a drum.
but you can't, like me, turn inside out entirely,
and nothing but human lips become!*

In her art Klara thunders and turns inside out too, is also nothing but human lips – lips that kiss the world or devour it.

A lone figure, not in trousers but in a dress, a girl with two bare legs and two dresses and two bodies (and four arms), sort of, like a girl slipped over her vanishing mum. The mum's legs, too long, support a

大火把學校燒毀，令本已貧困的家庭再次一無所有。

展覽題為《Hello stranger》，這問候語也可用於克拉拉身上，彷彿人像逐一歡迎她加入其行列——一群漂泊無依的倖存者，有才能，有夢想，對同伴或他人同樣忠誠。只有曾失去自己國家和語言、愛和根的人，才會如此忠誠待人。他們失去一切，又贏回一切。

狗也像人，像克拉拉，踽踽獨行，尋找失散同伴。行到半路，她會豎起耳朵，把頭傾向一邊。

水手向那陌生人呼喊。救生木筏擠滿被遺棄的人，他正與別人互相推撞。1816年，梅杜薩號在大西洋沉沒，無良船長竟拋下船員，任由他們在木筏自生自滅。他的暴行震驚全球，但類似事件至今仍有所聞。1819年，法國畫家西奧多·傑利柯畫出作品《梅杜薩之筏》，描繪被遺棄者見到阿格斯號的一刻。這艘船救起了部分船員，但克拉拉提醒我們，世間仍有不少無良船長。

希臘神話英雄尤利西斯，長年在外流浪，返回自己統治的伊薩卡後，發現只有愛犬阿格斯認得主人。克拉拉就是阿格斯，能夠認出木筏上的人。他們的塑像是她的主人，因為藝術家不擁有作品；相反，作品才是主人，藝術家是一頭愛犬。

克拉拉也曾到處流浪，最後以斯德哥爾摩群島為家。就如尤利西斯，她也有一頭忠心愛犬，關係密切如雷之於電。因此，她為愛犬取名宙斯，即希臘眾神之王，手握閃電正是其標記。

1915年，前蘇聯詩人馬雅可夫斯基在其著名長詩《褲子裏的雲》這樣寫：

我沒有爺爺的溫柔，
靈魂沒有一絲白髮！
對着世界大聲疾呼，
我的日子就這樣過去——倒也瀟灑，
今年才二十二歲。

斯文人啊！
你們把愛放到小提琴上。
粗野一點的便放到鼓上。
你們無法學我完全翻轉自己，
化身為一雙嘴唇！

克拉拉在作品裏也大聲疾呼，翻轉自己，化成嘴唇，但卻是用來親吻或吞噬世界。

一座單獨塑像，是個穿裙子的少女，光着雙腿，卻有兩條裙、兩個身軀（和4隻手臂），隱約可見是少女附在母親身上。母親以長長雙腿支撐起少女，令她感到有點搖搖欲墜。要如何應付，才不會跌下來？腳下險惡的地面，時刻要把肉體和感官、大人和小童通通拉下來，一直拉往地下、墳墓、死亡。

弗朗西斯科·哥雅有一幅銅版畫名為《理性沉睡，心魔生焉》，畫裏哥雅伏在繪畫工具上睡着了，周圍有異獸在飛，貌似克拉拉的塑像。或者說，這也是畫克拉拉在伏案發夢，因為她燒製的人物與哥雅的夢境相近，兩人都有類似的夢和幻想。表象與真實互相吞噬，又互為滲透。在另一作品《戰禍》這組畫裏，哥雅描繪花、鳥和蜜蜂互相殘殺、吞噬，從而帶出理性沉睡的可怖。

1928年，美國作曲家科爾·波特寫了一首歌，其中幾句是：

於是小鳥談戀愛，蜜蜂談戀愛

girl who suddenly finds herself farther above the ground than she should be. How will she now cope, without falling, without an embrace to fall into? Far down there is the treacherous ground, implacably pulling and tugging at bodies and senses, at adults and children indiscriminately. They will all be drawn to earth, to graves, to sleep.

In the etching by Francisco Goya, *The sleep of reason produces monsters*, Goya is seen sleeping among his tools, tormented by winged imaginary animals that could have come straight from Klara's kiln. It could be Klara slumped and dozing across the table, for her fired characters are fellow-travellers of Goya's dreamt ones. The two artists can dream each other's dreams and marvel at each other's marvels. Appearance and reality devour each other and regurgitate each other. The flowers, the birds and the bees feast on each other when reason sleeps, as Goya depicts in his horrific suite, *The Disasters of War*.

The American composer, Cole Porter, sang in 1928:

*And that's why birds do it, bees do it
Even educated fleas do it
Let's do it, let's fall in love*

But the flowers and the bees remain as abandoned and cannibalistic as the castaways on the raft of the Medusa. Only the viewer still stands in the field of vision – today as in Goya's day. And today the viewer can marvel at the astounding accord between Goya's harrowing, black and white scenes, built with restraint from shadow and shade in the same way that Klara's figures are now, with the occasional reconciliatory colour – but no more reconciliatory than a swirling drop of blood in a glass of water.

Before a solid shadow creating shade sits a black-and-white girl on a shelf, as above an abyss of irrationality and disasters; in another place a motionless snow mum stands at attention, trying to shade her dormant snowballs. Light and shade, sleep and waking, life and death, struggle and flight. Can a snow mum catch cold? Or does she just slowly melt away in tears, turning into her children's pools of tears when they wake? Will they cope? Klara will help them. In Swedish, Klara also means *prepared*.

Klara has been prepared since before she was born, since Goya's day. Goya's day is now, perhaps more than it was then, before photography had been invented and the viewer could still deceive himself into believing that the scenes in *The Disasters of War* were merely morbid, sadistic fantasies. But Klara knows better, she trusts Goya. In a dense cluster of cuddly animals and others that are very much alive – both types profoundly capable of communicating and cooperating with humans – in that cluster is Klara. And there, on her own head, she herself perches unborn. The inscrutable smile makes me wonder at first, then I understand – it's Goya! Hello stranger!

Dan Wolgers, member of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts, Sweden

(translated by Tomas Tranæus)

就是受過訓練的跳蚤也談戀愛
讓我們也來談戀愛，共墮愛河

但花和蜜蜂最終被遺棄，變成互相殘殺，正如被遺棄在梅杜薩之筏的船員。無論是哥雅年代或今天，只有觀者仍在遠望。今天，望着哥雅苦痛的黑白構圖，偶現幾點色彩，仿如一滴血落在水中，觀者不禁驚歎其和諧協調。構圖用色克制，配合明暗變化，一如克拉拉的塑像。

黑白少女坐在架子上，前面是一片陰影，腳下仿佛是個充滿非理性和災難的深淵。另一邊廂，雪地母親呆立着，嘗試以身體遮擋靜止雪球。明與暗，睡與醒，生與死，掙扎與逃走。雪地母親會着涼嗎？或許，她會慢慢溶化，變成子女生存的淚水？子女又能應付嗎？克拉拉會伸出援手。她「已有準備」，而這亦是她名字的另一解釋。

克拉拉已有準備，早在出生前，打從哥雅那時開始。今天的哥雅比昨天更有意思。以往未有攝影技術，觀者仍可自欺，說《戰禍》只是病態虐待狂的幻想，但克拉拉知道不是，她相信哥雅。

一群可愛活潑的動物，還有其他，全可與人溝通和合作，當中便有克拉拉的影子。但這只是她的想法，仍未有實現。看着那微妙笑容，我先是奇怪，然後便明白一是哥雅！哈囉，陌生人！

作者：Dan Wolgers，瑞典皇家美術學院院士



"Girl and goose" 2014
Glazed stoneware
46 ⁷/₁₆ x 16 ⁹/₁₆ x 18 ¹/₈ inches / 118 x 42 x 46 cm

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Media Preview Invitation:

A media preview will be taking place on
Wednesday May 11th 2016 from 5pm to 6pm.

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