

Tristan Hoare



OF BIRDS AND MONKEYS

KIKI SMITH AND PAOLO COLOMBO

14TH FEBRUARY – 20TH MARCH 2020

PRIVATE VIEW
THURSDAY 13TH FEBRUARY 2020
6-9PM

TRISTAN HOARE
6 FITZROY SQUARE
LONDON W1U 5HJ

OF BIRDS AND MONKEYS

PAOLO COLOMBO AND KIKI SMITH

Tristan Hoare is delighted to present *Of Birds and Monkeys*, an exhibition of watercolours by Paolo Colombo and sculptures by Kiki Smith.

Paolo Colombo's deeply lyrical watercolours and Kiki Smith's mythically charged metal sculptures draw inspiration from the natural world. These works also arise from a fascination with process, fusing a clarity of form with the particularities of texture, gesture, and tone. Both artists display a commitment to the potential of work by hand that coalesces like a flash of insight, lucid and enigmatic. Both artists invite us to think in layers, through the palimpsests of material and the condensations of action. The animals in Colombo's and Smith's art –monkeys, birds, hares, deer– embody and recognize our own instincts with uncanny precision.

Kiki Smith's small scale aluminium or bronze sculpture reveal themselves slowly: shifting as we encounter them. These elemental creatures refuse fixed meaning: a bird with a worm could be a symbol for freedom, discipline, vulnerability, or the culmination of a spiritual journey. Each piece emerges from and contains a multitude of transmuting stories. These animals are in a moment of movement –hunting, mating, flying– and strike us with their urgency and grace. Smith gives keen attention to the peculiarities and habits of bodies. Her sculptures ask us to go over them again and again, reconfiguring our relationship to what they represent. Paolo Colombo's paintings open inward

through levels of different texture. At times, over a wash with dense and translucent variations in pigment, we find a gauze-like layer painted by regularly repeated lines gives way through what appears as organic or geometric openings into an inner layer, containing white space, petals, or black and white checkerboards

In his figurative work, as if embroidered on swaths of fabric we see a recognizable shape: a monkey holding a stone, a hand in an instant of restful touch. These appear like thoughts, personal and enigmatic. Tears in the soft patterns, as if in organdie, draw our attention through the field of lines conjured by slow, extended labour into the feeling of a moment. We see a monkey looking back at us. We see a hand touching one of 36,000 tassels, painted one-by-one. Paintings like these bring us into a world of vigilance, hypnotically focused, evoking touch and instinct, labour and care.

Andrea Applebee – author, poet and editor based in Athens, Greece.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

PAOLO COLOMBO is an Italian artist and curator. Born in 1949 in Turin, Italy, Colombo lives and works in Athens, Greece, and is the Art Advisor for the Istanbul Museum of Modern Art (2008 to present).

In 2017, Colombo curated the Iraqi Pavilion at the Venice Biennale. Between 2001–2007, Colombo was the curator of the Museo Nazionale delle Arti del XXI Secolo in Rome, and the director of the Centre d'Art Contemporain in Geneva between 1989–2000. In 1999, Colombo curated the 6th Istanbul Biennale. In 1977, Colombo was the first European artist to exhibit at PS1, New York.

After a 25 year hiatus, Colombo took up his personal work as an artist again, coinciding with his move to Athens, Greece. "I just picked up a pencil and my old box of watercolours...and started as if one day had not gone by. I have only used watercolour and paper during my whole life because think it is easily transportable and because it is a technique that does not allow for corrections."

Colombo works exclusively with watercolours and pencil, "a strictly intimate practice which demands to be seen one on one, like one would read a book...it is fundamentally lyrical". Colombo's drawings are dream-like meditations, which include poetry, animals, soft washes of colour and his signature chequered squares and fine lines.

KIKI SMITH is an American artist, born in 1954 in Germany, living and working in New York, USA. Smith initially approached subjects such as AIDS and gender in the 1980s and 1990s, before turning her attention to nature.

Smith's focus on the natural world stemmed from a conversation with a scientist, during which she discovered the dramatic projections for the extinction of animals. Horrified by this prospect, Smith was inspired to underline our interdependency with the natural world, by ceasing to depict human figures and devoting herself solely to animals and the environment.

Many of her sculptures are blown up versions of her jewellery, inspired by craft and folk culture and are made from a variety of embossed metals, ranging from aluminium to gold. Smith believes her work does not mean anything, and should be perceived as a celebration of being here, now, in our present form.

ABOUT THE GALLERY

TRISTAN HOARE represents both emerging and established international contemporary artists, working in a variety of mediums. The gallery hosts a series of events and talks to run alongside each exhibition.

Founded in 2009, the gallery was originally based in Notting Hill at Lichfield Studios until 2014. In September 2016, Tristan Hoare opened its new premises at Six Fitzroy Square, a Grade I listed building, designed by the architect Robert Adam.

PRESS INQUIRIES

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TRISTAN HOARE GALLERY

6 Fitzroy Square
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Tuesday–Saturday
11am–6pm