

CLAIRE MORGAN

I only dared to touch you once I knew that you were dead

September 1 – October 28, 2023

press dossier

Artist's quotes

"Being alive can be beautiful and horrific. Every living thing is in this state of constant transition. I am intrigued by those simultaneous senses of spiritual communion and unpalatable intrusion that come about through awareness of our connectedness, and of our vulnerability."

.

"My practice has been focused on how we humans understand and interact with the rest of the natural world, and our unwillingness to acknowledge our absolute lack of autonomy or control. I look at humans as animals, and the complexity of our intellectual dislocation from the landscape that sustains us. We behave as individual entities with fixed identities, but the reality is less clear. The "me" that I was a few days ago no longer exists."



Claire Morgan at her studio 2023. © Claire Morgan Studio / Photo: John McKenzie Courtesy Galerie Karsten Greve Cologne, Paris, St. Moritz

Biography

Claire Morgan was born in Belfast, Northern Ireland in 1980. She studied sculpture at Northumbria University in Newcastle, UK. In her work, the artist explores the elemental conditions of man within his habitat and reveals the impossibility of grasping the complexity of life and death: "Exploring the physicality of animals, death, and illusions of permanence in the work is my way of trying to come to terms with these things myself." Grace and beauty, but also senselessness and horror are present in her installations and drawings. Poetic and irritating at the same time, she thus expresses the ambivalence of life in her works. Her work has been shown in numerous solo and group exhibitions, such as the 2021 retrospective "Joy in the Pain" at the Saarlandmuseum Moderne Galerie, Saarbrücken, as well as the Horniman Museum in London (2019), the Frist Art Museum in Nashville (2017), and Het Noordbrabants Museum in Den Bosch (2016). Her works are part of important public and private collections, such as the Centre Pompidou and the Fondation Guerlain, Paris, the Stiftung Saarländischer Kulturbesitz, the Stiftung Kunst und Natur, Nantesbuch / Bad Homburg and MONA Museum of Old and New Art, Hobart, Tasmania. In 2019, she was awarded the 12th Prix de Dessin of the Fondation d'art contemporain Florence & Daniel Guerlain. Claire Morgan has been represented by Galerie Karsten Greve since 2010. She lives and works in Gateshead, UK.



Strung Out, 2023, wax, human hair, feathers, mixed media, in vitrine 45 x 45 x 6 cm, vitrine: 187 x 87 x 68 cm

CLAIRE MORGAN

I only dared to touch you once I knew that you were dead

September 1 - October 28, 2023 Opening on Friday, September 1, 5 - 9 pm

Extended hours during DC Open Galleries 2023:

Friday, September 1, 10 am - 9 pm Saturday, September 2, 10 am - 7 pm Sunday, September 3, 1 - 5 pm

"I'm looking for a different kind of intimacy in my work."- Claire Morgan, 2023

Galerie Karsten Greve is pleased to present the fifth solo exhibition by artist Claire Morgan in Cologne as part of this year's DC Open Galleries. "I only dared to touch you once I knew that you were dead" presents the artist's first figurative body of work in which women are the central protagonists alongside animals, woven in an unfolding, fractured narrative, throughout the exhibition space. In nearly thirty new works ranging from painting, installation, sculpture, drawing and printmaking, the exhibition explores the fear of the unknown and loss of control.

Expanding on Claire Morgan's artistic vocabulary which has, until now, captivated with intricate compositions of plant seeds, insects, taxidermy, and multicoloured waste plastic, this exhibition is populated by human presences: sculptures made of wax, textile, animal skin and hair are key to this new group of works by the Irish-born artist, as are ambitious largescale works in pastel, depicting relationships between humans and animals.

"The bodies depicted are sites of significance, vulnerability, and agency, that deliberately challenge the well-worn trope of the body or being as commodity. My interspecies relationships suggest a potential reimagining of how we relate to ourselves, each other and our environment."

The image of the woman holding a fox has evolved over many years. Claire Morgan is interested in the fictional stories we conjure to protect ourselves, and our subjugation of others as a result of acting on these stories: "I make no attempt to give the animal skins the illusion of life, nor do I disguise their imperfect state. I am navigating our breaking points, the tension between

vulnerability and power, between communion and colonization. It conjures the age of mass extinction we are entering, implicates us all, and invites us to consider our own role in this collective act of destruction."

In each piece there are the traces of time spent, evidence of the hand, direct engagement through repetition and layering, through printmaking, handwriting, sculpting with clay, sewing found textiles, piercing wax to embed hair, observational drawing. This slow unfurling of time is manifested in a concertina book, in the imperfect beings suspended from the ceiling, in a precarious rhythm, mirroring the cyclical forces of nature. Richly pigmented buttery pastel carves flesh onto exposed woodgrain, paper is painted and folded by hand to reveal its physicality, fragmented feather and fur are bound together by threads. Moulded and manipulated clay and bees wax possess a luminosity and fragility in dialogue with the animal matter present. Alongside the instinctive physical appeal of wax, its significance is broadened by its history as a sculptural material. Its uses in early anatomical waxworks of female bodies and in early taxidermy techniques are of particular interest, as is Edgar Degas's *Little Fourteen-Year-Old Dancer* (1878-81, National Gallery of Art, London), not only due to the 'poor' materials used, but also because of the vulnerability and, ultimately, the expendability of the subject.

I only dared to touch you once I knew that you were dead is the central spine of the exhibition from which everything else evolves. This book is the outcome of a period of experimentation with writing and printmaking, and is composed of seven drawings and two concurrent handwritten texts that form a dialogue between a living woman and a dead fox. The work is about actions and consequences. It is about hopes and realities. It is about a life lived and a life stolen.

Small works made from wax and hair include *Strung Out*, *I piss a box around myself and wait in there for nothing*, and *Bloom*. Utilizing the uncanny, and the scale and strange power of votive figures, these become frank and tender confrontations with the objects of our fears. They are deeply honest explorations of grief and longing.

The monumental installation *The inevitable heat death of the universe* located in the entrance area of the exhibition shows a figure of a woman surrounded by dead birds. This work centres around power and vulnerability, shame and desperation, and ultimately, with futility. "*The history of the female nude has been one of limitation, provocation, othering, and titillation. And yet there is a profound simplicity and a clarity to the form – this is what we are. There is a desperate need for greater understanding between species"* she says. Morgan succeeds in making the viewer aware of the vulnerabilities of human existence and alienation from the world around them, while at the same time showing in a poetic and conciliatory way that everything is interconnected and mutually dependent.

Claire Morgan was born in Belfast, Northern Ireland in 1980. She studied sculpture at Northumbria University in Newcastle, UK. Her work has been shown in numerous solo and group exhibitions, such as the 2021 retrospective "Joy in the Pain" at the Saarlandmuseum Moderne Galerie, Saarbrücken, as well as the Horniman Museum in London (2019), the Frist Art Museum in Nashville (2017), and Het Noordbrabants Museum in Den Bosch (2016). Her works are part of important public and private collections, such as the Centre Pompidou and the Fondation Guerlain, Paris, the Stiftung Saarländischer Kulturbesitz, the Stiftung Kunst und Natur, Nantesbuch / Bad Homburg and MONA Museum of Old and New Art, Hobart, Tasmania. In 2019, she was awarded the 12th Prix de Dessin of the Fondation d'art contemporain Florence & Daniel Guerlain. Claire Morgan has been represented by Galerie Karsten Greve since 2010. She lives and works in Gateshead, UK.



Claire Morgan

Strung Out
2023
Wax, human hair, feathers, mixed media, in vitrine
45 x 45 x 6 cm
Vitrine: 184 x 78 x 68 cm

CM/S 171

© Claire Morgan Studio / Photo: John McKenzie Courtesy Galerie Karsten Greve Cologne, Paris, St. Moritz



Claire Morgan

You could be my mother
2023
Pastel, charcoal, acrylic, on birch wood panel
168.8 x 150 x 3.2 cm

CM/M 30

© Claire Morgan Studio / Photo: John McKenzie Courtesy Galerie Karsten Greve Cologne, Paris, St. Moritz



Claire Morgen *Bloom*

2023

Wax, blue bottles, nylon, in vitrine 13 x 57 x 27 cm Vitrine: 176.5 x 73 x 73 cm

CM/S 173

© Claire Morgan Studio / Photo: John McKenzie Courtesy Galerie Karsten Greve Cologne, Paris, St. Moritz



Claire Morgen I only dared to touch you once I knew you were dead 2023

 $Etching \ (hand \ painted) \ on \ paper \\ 32 \ x \ 50 \ cm$ Ed. 3/3 (unique character due to hand painting)

CM/E 84

© Claire Morgan Studio / Foto: John McKenzie Courtesy Galerie Karsten Greve Köln, Paris, St. Moritz

Public and private collections (selection)

MONA Museum of Old and New Art, Hobart, Tasmania, AU

Ghisla Art Foundation, Locarno, CH

ALTANA Kulturstiftung, Bad Homburg vor der Höhe, DE

Saarlandmuseum Moderne Galerie, Saarbrücken, DE

Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, FR

Fondation d'art contemporain Florence et Daniel Guerlain, Paris, FR

Fondation Francès, Senlis, FR

Emerige, Paris, FR Spaarne Ziekenhuis, Haarlem, NL

Cardiff Bay Partnership, York, UK

Silvie Fleming, London, UK

Awards and scholarships (selection)

2019 Fondation d'art contemporain Daniel et Florence Guerlain, Prix de Dessin, Paris, FR

2007 Wooda Arts Award, Cornouaille, UK

2006 Premio Fondazione Arnaldo Pomodoro, Prize for Young Sculptors, Fondazione Pomodoro,

Milan IT

2004 Roy Noakes Award, selected by Royal British Society of Sculptors, London, UK

Solo Exhibitions (Selection) / Einzelausstellungen (Auswahl)

A tentative strategy for a renewal, or, wanting to tell you everything and then changing my mind, Galerie

Karsten Greve, Paris, France

Joy in the Pain, Saarlandmuseum, Moderne Galerie, Saarbrücken, Germany

Claire Morgan, Galerie Karsten Greve, Cologne, Germany

2019 As I Live and Breathe, Horniman Museum, London, UK

2018 Claire Morgan. Losses, La Maison Deyrolle, Paris, France

Claire Morgan. Here is The End of All Things, Emsdettener Kunstverein, Emsdetten, Germany Claire Morgan. Recent Lapses in Judgement, Galerie Karsten Greve, Cologne, Germany Claire Morgan. Recurring Truths, Galerie Karsten Greve AG, St. Moritz, Switzerland

2017 Claire Morgan. Perpetually at the Centre, Galerie Karsten Greve, Paris, France

Claire Morgan. RESURGENCE. My God-Shaped Hole, Foundation Francès, Senlis, France Claire Morgan. Stop Me Feeling, FRIST Center for the Visual Arts, Nashville, Tennessee, USA

2016 / 17 Claire Morgan. The Sound of Silence, Het Noordbrabants Museum, 's-Hertogenbosch, Netherlands

2016 Claire Morgan & Fine Oceanic and Eskimo Art, Galerie Angela Berney Fine Arts, Basel, Switzerland, in

collaboration with Galerie Karsten Greve AG, St. Moritz, Switzerland, and Galerie Meyer, Paris, France

Claire Morgan. Plenty More Fish in The Sea, Musée Jean-Lurçat, Angers, France

2015 Claire Morgan. The Gathering Dusk, Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature, Paris, France

Claire Morgan. Act of God / Höhere Gewalt, Kunst-Station St. Peter, Cologne, Germany (in-situ-installation)

2014	Claire Morgan. Try Again. Fail Again. Fail Better, Osthaus Museum, Hagen, Germany; weitere stationen: / travelled to: Kunstsammlung Jena, Germany; Fondation Fernet Branca, Saint-Louis, France Claire Morgan. The Slow Fire, Galerie Karsten Greve, Cologne, Germany Claire Morgan. Trappings, Musée Joseph-Denais, Beaufort-en-Vallée, France
2013	Claire Morgan. Interference, Nässjö Konsthall, Sweden Claire Morgan. Arresting, Växjö Konsthall, Sweden
2012	Claire Morgan. Gone to Seed, MAC - The Metropolitan Arts Centre, Belfast, Northern Ireland Claire Morgan. Quietus, Galerie Karsten Greve, Paris, France Claire Morgan. No Match, Helmshore Mills Textile Museum, Lancashire, UK
2011	Claire Morgan. Menagerie, Kunstverein Münsterland, Coesfeld, Germany Claire Morgan. Terminal, Centre for Recent Drawing, London, UK Claire Morgan. Under the Sun, Galerie Karsten Greve, Cologne, Germany Claire Morgan. About Time, National Centre for Craft and Design, Sleaford, UK
2010	Claire Morgan. Life. Blood, Galerie Karsten Greve, Paris, France
2008	Claire Morgan. Periphery, James Hockey and Foyer Galleries, UCA – University for the Creative Arts, Surrey, UK Claire Morgan. Gone With The Wind, Great Run Cultural Programm, The Laing Gallery, Newcastle, UK Claire Morgan. Chasing Rainbows, Selfridges, London, UK Claire Morgan. The Fall, The East Rooms, London, UK Claire Morgan. Fluid, ROLLO Contemporary Art (Gallery), London, UK
2007	Claire Morgan. If You Go Down to the Woods Today, The Hospital Club, London Claire Morgan. Head in the Clouds, Wooda Farm, Cornwall, UK
2006	Claire Morgan. Crowdpleaser, Persistence Work Studios – Yorkshire Artspace, Sheffield, UK
2005	Claire Morgan. Hunter Gatherer, OMAC - Old Museum Arts Centre, Belfast, Northern Ireland
2004	Claire Morgan. All that is solid, Grosvenor Chapel, Mayfair, London, UK Claire Morgan. Emotional response, Lagan Lookout Visitors Centre, Belfast, Northern Ireland

Group Exhibitions (Selection) / Gruppenausstellungen (Auswahl)

2023	Saison d'Art, Centre d'Arts et de Nature, Domaine de Chaumont-sur-Loire, France
	Fantastische Tierwelten, Kunstmuseum Heidenheim, Heidenheim an der Brenz, Germany
	Femmes · Frauen · Women, Galerie Karsten Greve, Paris, France
2022	Winter Special Show: Leading and emerging women artists, Galerie Karsten Greve, St Moritz CH REFLECTING NATURE #1 – Künstlerische Positionen mit naturkundlichem Bezug, Kunsthalle Erfurt, Erfurt DE Flowers! Blumen in der Kunst des 20. und 21. Jahrhunderts, Museum Ostwall im Dortmunder U, Dortmund, Germany Vivant, Fondation GoodPlanet, Paris FR
2021	À poils et à plumes !, Maison des Arts, Antony, France Recyclage/Surcyclage, L'Espace Monte-Cristo, Paris, France

2020 / 21 MORGAN - RUSSELL - SHAPIRO / Premiere, Galerie Karsten Greve, Cologne, Germany Araignées, Lucioles et Papillons, Musée en Herbe, Paris, France Natura Artis Magistra - Naturmaterialien in der zeitgenössischen Kunst, 2020 Museum Schloss Moyland, Bedburg-Hau, Germany Recyclage / Surcyclage, Fondation Villa Datris, L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue, France 2019 OVNi Festival, Nice, France Accrochage, Galerie Karsten Greve, Paris, France Bêtes de scène, Fondation Villa Datris, L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue, France ARTENREICH - Insekten in der Kunst, Museum Sinclair-Haus, Bad Homburg, Germany Elements, Galerie Karsten Greve, Paris, France Biennale Ephémères, Château de Monbazillac, Monbazillac, France Nature, Life, Human, MoCA Busan, Busan, South Korea 2018 Beyond Borders, Boghossian Foundation, Villa Empain, Brussels, Belgium Audubon, Then and Now, Biggs Museum of American Art, Dover, DE, USA Summer Show, Galerie Karsten Greve AG, St Moritz, Switzerland Futurs Antérieurs, Maison Guerlain, Paris, France De fils ou de fibres, Centre d'art contemporain de Meymac, France Accrochage, Galerie Karsten Greve, Paris, France Variations, Artloft Gallery, Brussels, Belgium L'art Par Nature, Galerie Robespierre, Grande-Synthe, France Impact, Galerie Karsten Greve, Paris, France Tension, Villa Bernasconi, Lancy, Switzerland 2017 Winter Accrochage, Galerie Karsten Greve AG, St. Moritz, Switzerland Künstlerräume II, Galerie Karsten Greve, Cologne, Germany 2016 Brave New World, National Biennale of Contemporary Sculpture, Trois-Rivières, Québec, Canada Cause & Effect, The National Centre for Craft & Design, Lincolnshire, UK Summer Show, Galerie Karsten Greve, Cologne, Germany Summer Show, Galerie Karsten Greve AG, St. Moritz, Switzerland Bzzzzz ... Viel Fliegen, Museum Schloss Homburg, Nümbrecht, Germany 2015 Accrochage, Galerie Karsten Greve AG, St. Moritz, Switzerland A Piece of Time - Avesta Art 2015, Verket Museum, Avesta, Sweden The Mystery of Birds, Venus Energie AG, OÖ Kulturquartier, Linz, Switzerland Accrochage, Galerie Karsten Greve AG, St. Moritz, Switzerland 2014 Plastic Age: Fascination with and Horror of Plastics in Art and Science, ERES Stiftung, Munich, Germany Inaugural Exhibition, Fondazione Ghisla, Locarno, Switzerland The Tourists, Fellbrigg Hall, Norwich, Norfolk, UK Accrochage, Galerie Karsten Greve AG, St. Moritz, Switzerland Künstlerräume, Galerie Karsten Greve, Cologne, Germany Accrochage, Galerie Karsten Greve AG, St. Moritz, Switzerland 2013 Wunderland, Château de Rue, Switzerland Beastly Hall, Hall Place, Bourne Road, Bexley, Kent, UK 2012 Fantastic, Tripostal, Lille, France Monanism, MONA - Museum of Old and New Art, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia Making Waves: International Contemporary Art from the Saatchi Collection, Hyatt Regency London - The Churchill, London, UK Ästhetik der Natur, Museum Sinclair-Haus, Bad Homburg, Germany 100 sculptures animalières - Bugatti, Pompon, Giacometti..., Musée des Années 30, Boulogne-Billancourt, France

The Bones of My Hand, The Last Tuesday Society, London, UK Agora – Miniartextil 2012, Villa Olmo, Como, Italy

2011 Nature – Contemporary Art from the collection of Altana Cultural Foundation, Osthaus Museum, Hagen,

Germany

On Paper III, Galerie Karsten Greve, Paris, France

Anthro[physis], Rivera and Rivera Gallery, West Hollywood, Los Angeles, CA USA

Bêtes off, La Conciergerie, Paris, France

Bestes, Bestiaux & Bestioles, Château d'Oiron, Oiron, France

Monanism, MONA - Museum of Old and New Art, Tasmania, Australia Compulsive, Obsessive, Repetitive, Towner Gallery, Eastbourne, UK Suspense, EX3 Centro per l'Arte Contemporanea, Florence, Italy

Disconnected: Everyday Tensions, Golden Thread Gallery, Belfast, Northern Ireland

Counterpoint, Ormeau Baths Gallery, Belfast, Northern Ireland

2010 Dead or Alive, Museum of Arts and Design, New York, USA

On & On, La Casa Encendida, Madrid, Spain

Outside In, SW1 Gallery, London, UK

Heart of Glass, 20 Hoxton Square, London, UK Enragés, Fondation Francès, Senlis, France

Resilience, Espace d'Art Contemporain La Tôlerie, Clermont Ferrand, France

To Woo You, Town Hall Hotel, London, UK

Mandala (Dead Space), Portobello Wall, London, UK

2009 *Consumer*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France

Editions, Ormeau Bath Gallery, Belfast, Northern Ireland Caught In A Moment, ROLLO Contemporary Art, London, UK Building with Colour, Gallery North, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK Canopy, The Big Chill Festival 2009, Herefordshire, UK Pressure Makes Diamonds, Assembly Square, Cardiff Bay, UK

2008 Landscape, 18 @ 108, Royal British Society of Sculptors, London, UK

EChO wanted, Galerie Karsten Greve, Paris, France

Domestico, Ierimonti Gallery, Milan, Italy

Spooning, Sheffield Millennium Galleries, Sheffield, UK

Re(a)d, HLC, Telford, UK

2007 Jerwood Drawing Prize 2007 (touring exhibition), Jerwood Space, London, UK

Radiance 07, Glasgow's International Festival of Light, Glasgow, Scotland

Die Green, Live Pretty?, Pia Getty, London, UK

Miniartextil 2007, Church of San Francesco, Arte & Arte, Como, Italy

Waste and The Natural World, The Gallery @ Adventure Ecology, London, UK Vital Signs, Cardiff University Optometry Department, Cardiff, Wales, UK

2006 Your Gallery@ The Guardian, The Guardian Gallery in association with

Saatchi Gallery, London, UK

Unnatural Selection, Shrewsbury Museum and Art Gallery, Shropshire, UK

Inside Out at Cragside, National Trust, Northumberland, UK

Premio Fondazione Arnaldo Pomodoro, Prize for Young Sculptors, Fondazione Pomodoro, Milan, Italy

Rising Tide, Temporary Address, Blyth, Northumberland, UK

A New Moon, Bristol Broadmeads, UK

2005 Out There, (CAN 05), Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, Norwich, UK

Sculpture at Hebden Bridge, Hardcastle Crags, Yorkshire, UK

Bolwick Arts 3, Bolwick Hall, Norfolk, UK

A New Moon, Whitstable Harbour, Canterbury Council, Whitstable, UK

DRUSUSGASSE 1-5 D-50667 KÖLN TEL + 49-(0)221-257 10 12 FAX +49-(0)221-257 10 13 info@galerie-karsten-greve.de www.galerie-karsten-greve.com

RBS Bursary 2004, RBS Gallery, 108 Centre, London, UK Exposure, Hatton Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK

Shift, Tynemouth Station, Tyne and Wear, UK

Threshold, Shrewsbury Advisory Service for Climate Change, UK

Leave, Westonbirt Festival of the Garden 2004, UK

Parallel, Grainger Market, Art in the Market, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK

2003 12 x 12, University Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK

Shrewsbury Sotheby's Exhibition, Shrewsbury Art Gallery, Shropshire, UK

2000 Konturen, Kloster Bentlage, Rheine, Germany

2004



Claire Morgan in ihren Studio 2023.© Claire Morgan Studio / Photo: John McKenzie Courtesy Galerie Karsten Greve Cologne, Paris, St. Moritz

GALERIE KARSTEN GREVE PARIS

5, rue Debelleyme F-75003 Paris Tel. +33 (0)1 42 77 19 37 Fax +33 (0)1 42 77 05 58 info@galerie-karsten-greve.fr

Öffnungszeiten: Di – Sa: 10h – 19h

GALERIE KARSTEN GREVE KÖLN

Drususgasse 1-5 D-50667 Cologne Tel. +49 (0)221 257 10 12 Fax +49 (0)221 257 10 13 info@galerie-karsten-greve.de

Öffnungszeiten: Di - Fr: 10h - 18.30h Sa: 10h – 18h

GALERIE KARSTEN GREVE AG ST. MORITZ

Via Maistra 4 CH-7500 St. Moritz Tel. +41 (0)81 834 90 34 Fax +41 (0)81 834 90 35 info@galerie-karsten-greve.ch

Öffnungszeiten Di- Fr: 10h -13h / 14h - 18.30h Sa: 10h - 13h / 14h - 18h

PRESS CONTACT

Katharina Neudeck k.neudeck@galerie-karsten-greve.de

Galerie Karsten Greve online: www.galerie-karsten-greve.com www.facebook.com/galeriekarstengreve www.instagram.com/galeriekarstengreve