

# GALERIE KARSTEN GREVE



**CLAIRE MORGAN**

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

November 4, 2023 – January 6, 2024  
Opening on 4 November, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.  
In the presence of the artist.

**Press Dossier**

# GALERIE KARSTEN GREVE

## 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."*

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*"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."*

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*"I don't try to give animal skins the illusion of life, or disguise their imperfect state. I'm navigating our breaking points, the tension between vulnerability and power, between communion and colonisation. It evokes the era of mass extinction we are entering, implicating us all and inviting us to reflect on our own role in this collective act of destruction".*

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*"These shadows are something like the sense of violation or intrusion that bubbles up from finding communion with another being, or with "nature" in its truest sense. The things we try to hide, or hide from, that horrify us."*

-

*"These works do not have a clean-cut narrative. There is beauty and vulnerability, but there is also horror and repulsion, and at the same time comedy and fear and longing and, perhaps above all, a sadness."*

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

## Biography

Claire Morgan is an Irish artist, born in Belfast in 1980. She studied sculpture at Northumbria University in Newcastle, UK. In her work, the artist explores the elemental conditions of humans within their 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.

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*You could be my mother, 2023*

Galerie Karsten Greve is pleased to present Claire Morgan's new exhibition, held at our Parisian gallery. ***"I only dared to touch you once I knew that you were dead"*** is the artist's first series of figurative works in which women are central figures alongside animals. Featuring more than thirty new works – paintings, installations, sculptures, drawings and prints – the exhibition explores vulnerability and fear of the unknown. It evokes the era of mass extinction we are entering, inviting us to think about our own role in this collective act of destruction.

Claire Morgan, known for excelling in the creation of complex compositions featuring seeds, plants, insects, taxidermy and multicoloured plastic waste, has now added the human form to her artistic vocabulary. In this exhibition, the diversity of techniques is apparent in the use of bodily fluids collected during taxidermy for her drawings, the sculptures made of wax, fabric and animal skin and fur, and the ambitious, large-scale pastels on wood panels, which depict the complex and shifting relationship between a woman and a fox.

*"Each image shows a tender interaction between a living woman and a dead fox. Each shadow, though directly related to its associated image, hints at another hidden presence, darkly comical, frightening, vulgar, violent or shameful."* Claire Morgan

***"I only dared to touch you once I knew that you were dead"***, the central spine of the exhibition from which everything else has grown, is the result of experimentation with writing and printmaking. It consists of seven drawings and two handwritten texts that form a dialogue between

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a living woman and a dead fox. The slow passage of time, which marks the cyclical forces of nature, is palpable in the accordion-fold book. The work evokes osmosis and porosity between skins.

The works on wood panels, with scenes closely linked to that central book, portray an intimate relationship of mutual support between the figures, progressing in a subjective reality of deceptive appearances. Just like the shadows, the presence of the fox, an animal that crops up frequently in Claire Morgan's work and that symbolises cunning, questions identity and the reliability of representations. The fox's ability to survive and thrive in difficult conditions attests to its capacity for resilience and adaptability. In a relationship that challenges the roles of dominant and dominated, in which identities and realities are shifting, each offers something to the other. Within a troubling intimacy, beings, living or dead, seek to cultivate an immutable bond by watching out for each other. The wounded figures are united in their vulnerability, are in communion through the fragility of their bodies. By working with a life model, Claire Morgan sought to explore rather unnatural, uncomfortable positions involving direct contact with the skin of a fox, to cradle it, support it, explore it and listen to it. The process required a great deal of trust, patience and endurance.

In her installations, the primal contact with fur, once living, awakens an instinctive vital force alternately reassuring and threatening. Like boatmen or messengers, the dead animals allow us to interact with the afterlife, to enter a space that was previously inaccessible. Throughout the exhibition, Claire Morgan's works transcend the boundaries between fragility and strength, beauty and repulsion.

As well as mastering several mediums, the Irish artist captures the emotional resonance of the ephemeral in her work. In her mobiles, dead birds seem caught up in a moment of eternal suspension, attached so delicately that they seem to be in perpetual motion. In another work, a woman with outstretched hands holds a horizontal rope to which bird skins are tied. It is unclear whether the goal is to cover her own vulnerable body, to present them to us, or to make them fly again.

Mircea Eliade wrote, *“As far as death is concerned, rites are all the more complex as death is not only a natural occurrence – life, or the soul, leaving the body – but a change of state both ontological and social: the deceased must face certain challenges that concern their own destiny beyond the grave, as well as win recognition from the community of the dead and find acceptance among them”*.

Claire Morgan does not, therefore, seek to beautify the skins of dead animals, nor to give them the illusion of life, but rather to accentuate their critical state through the use of vacant skins. Through a lesson in humility, respect and communion between the creatures of this world, her work interrogates our finitude, in a way that is reminiscent of *vanitas*, by touching upon deep and universal themes such as the ephemeral nature of life, the complex relations between beings and the unrelenting passage of time.

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**Claire Morgan**

*The inevitable heat death of the universe (detail)*

2023

Wax, hair, bird skins, mixed media

350 x 380 x 380 cm / 137 3/4 x 149 2/3 x 149 2/3 in

CM/S 170

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

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**Claire Morgan**

*I only dared to touch you once I knew that you were dead* (detail)

2023

concertina fold book, drypoint and collagraph with hand colouring; 32 pages

Ed. 2/3

32 x 450 x 14 cm / 12 2/3 x 177 1/4 x 5 1/2 in

CM/E 80

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Courtesy Galerie Karsten Greve Köln, Paris, St. Moritz

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**Claire Morgan**

*Song* (detail)

2023

Bird skins, mixed media, vitrine

Vitrine: 180 x 100 x 90 cm / 70 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 39 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>3</sub> x 35 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> in

CM/S 177

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**Claire Morgan**

*You could be my mother*

2023

Pastel and charcoal on stained birch board  
173 x 153 x 4,5 cm / 68 1/8 x 60 1/4 x 1 3/4 in  
CM/M 30

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

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**Claire Morgan**

*Cup*

2023

Watercolour, pastel and pencil on paper

28,4 x 36,9 cm / 11 1/4 x 14 1/2 in

CM/P 303

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Courtesy Galerie Karsten Greve Cologne, Paris, St. Moritz

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**Claire Morgan**

*Bloom* (detail)

2023

Wax, bluebottles, nylon, showcase

176.5 x 73 x 73 cm / 69 1/2 x 28 3/4 x 28 3/4 in

CM/S 173

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Courtesy Galerie Karsten Greve Cologne, Paris, St. Moritz

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**Claire Morgan**

*Dead Weight* (view of Cologne exhibition)

2023

Wax, human hair, fox skin, mixed media

165 x 50 x 55 cm / 65 x 19 2/3 x 21 2/3 in

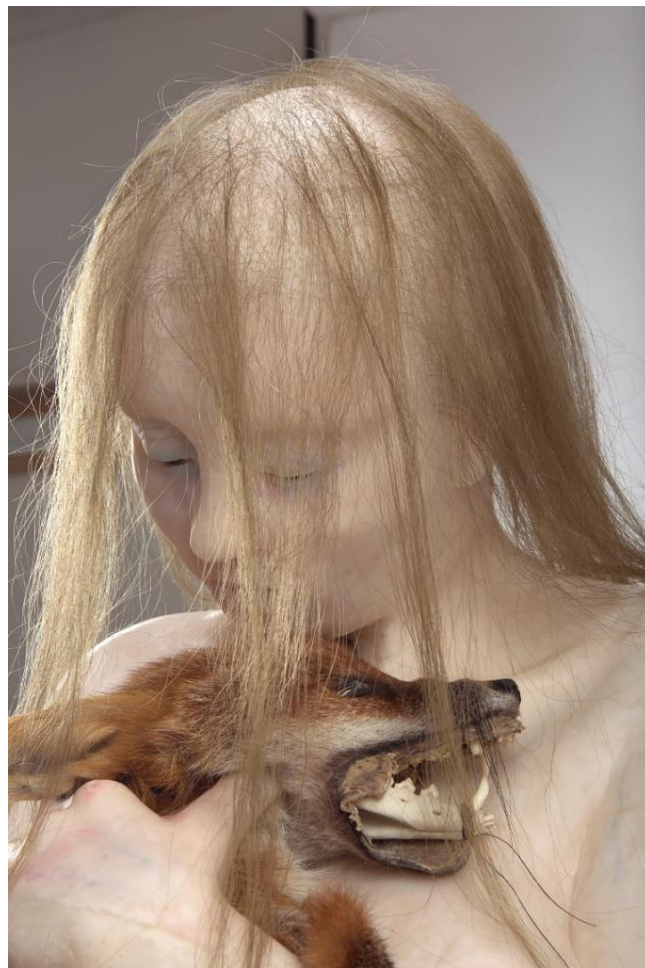
CM/S 168

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*Dead Weight*, 2023 (detail)



*Dead Weight*, 2023 (detail)

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## 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)

2023 *I only dared to touch you once I knew that you were dead*, Galerie Karsten Greve, Cologne, Germany  
2021 *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*, Fondation 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

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- Claire Morgan. Act of God / Höbere 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)

- 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

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- Araignées, Lucioles et Papillons*, Musée en Herbe, Paris, France
- 2020 *Natura Artis Magistra - Naturmaterialien in der zeitgenössischen Kunst*,  
Museum Schloss Moyland, Bedburg-Hau, Germany
- Recyclage / Surcyclage*, Fondation Villa Datriis, L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue, France
- 2019 *OVNi Festival*, Nice, France
- Accrochage*, Galerie Karsten Greve, Paris, France
- Bêtes de scène*, Fondation Villa Datriis, 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
- Bzzzzzz ... 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
- 2013 *Accrochage*, Galerie Karsten Greve AG, St. Moritz, Switzerland
- 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



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- 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[physics]*, 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 Crag, Yorkshire, UK  
*Bolwick Arts 3*, Bolwick Hall, Norfolk, UK

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- A New Moon*, Whitstable Harbour, Canterbury Council, Whitstable, UK  
*Shift*, Tynemouth Station, Tyne and Wear, UK  
2004 *RBS Bursary 2004*, RBS Gallery, 108 Centre, London, UK  
*Exposure*, Hatton Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK  
*Threshold*, Shrewsbury Advisory Service for Climate Change, UK  
*Leave*, Westonbirt Festival of the Garden 2004, UK  
2003 *Parallel*, Grainger Market, Art in the Market, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK  
*12 x 12*, University Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK  
*Shrewsbury Sotheby's Exhibition*, Shrewsbury Art Gallery, Shropshire, UK  
2000 *Konturen*, Kloster Bentlage, Rheine, Germany



*Song*, 2023 (detail)

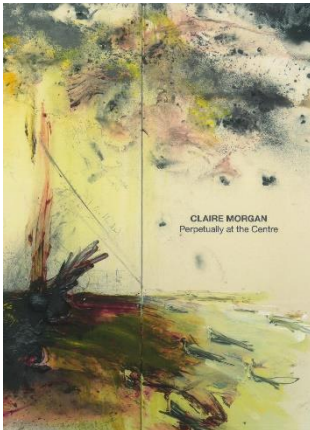
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## Publications from Galerie Karsten Greve



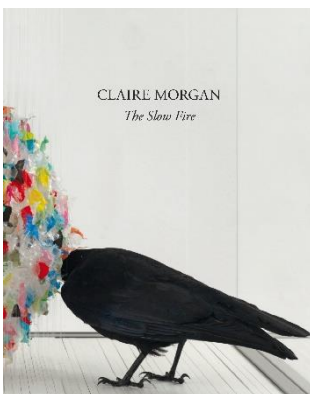
2021

*A tentative strategy for a renewal, or, wanting to tell you everything and then changing my mind*, texts by Claire Morgan, Andrea Jahn, exhibition catalogue [Galerie Karsten Greve, Paris, France], Paris, Galerie Karsten Greve, 2021



2017

*Perpetually at the Center*, text by Lucia Pesapane, exhibition catalogue [Galerie Karsten Greve, Paris, France], Paris, Galerie Karsten Greve, 2017



2014

*Claire Morgan, The Slow Fire*, texts by Darren C. Ambrose, Stefanie Kreuzer, Tom Hembra, exhibition catalogue [Galerie Karsten Greve, Cologne, Germany], Cologne, Galerie Karsten Greve, 2014

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## Other publications

- 2017 *Claire Morgan: Stop Me Feeling*, essay by Trinita Kennedy, exhibition catalogue [The Frist Center for the Visual Arts, Nashville, USA], The Frist Center for the Visual Arts, Nashville, 2017
- 2016 *Claire Morgan. The Sound of Silence*, essay by Darrem Ambrose, introduction written by Charles de Mooj, exhibition catalogue [Het Noordbrabantts Museum, 's-Hertogenbosch, Pays Bas], 's-Hertogenbosch, Het Noordbrabantts Museum, 2016
- 2015 *Claire Morgan. Try Again, Fail Again, Fail Better*, essay by Vincent Schmidt, exhibition catalogue [Osthaus Museum, Hagen, Germany], Hagen, Neuer Folkwang Verlag, 2015  
*Claire Morgan*, essay by Erik Stephan, interview by Pierre-Jean Sugier, exhibition catalogue, [Fondation Fernet Branca, Saint Louis, France], Saint Louis, Editions de Saint-Louis, 2015
- 2014 *Claire Morgan. Act of God*, essay by Guido Schlimback, exhibition catalogue [Kunst-Station Sankt Peter, Cologne, Germany], Cologne, Kunst-Station Sankt Peter, 2014  
*Claire Morgan, Trappings*, essay by Darren C. Ambrose and Jean-Charles Taugourdeau, exhibition catalogue [Musée Joseph-Denis, Beaufort-en-Vallée, France], Beaufort-en-Vallée, Musée Joseph-Denis, 2014
- 2007 *Crowdpleaser*, essay by Deborah Kermode, interview by Ele Forsyth, Sunderland, Art Editions North, 2007

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artdaily.com

September 5, 2023

“Claire Morgan: *I only dared to touch you once I knew that you were dead*” now open at Galerie Karsten Greve.



Claire Morgan at her studio 2023. © Claire Morgan Studio / Photo: John McKenzie. Photo courtesy of Galerie Karsten Greve

**COLOGNE.** – Galerie Karsten Greve is now presenting 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 galleries. 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.

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“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

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dependent.

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

Galerie Karsten Greve

Claire Morgan: *I only dared to touch you once I knew that you were dead*

September 1st, 2023 - October 28th, 2023

The opening will take place as part of DC Open Galleries 2023.



Exhibition views: *I only dared to touch you once I knew that you were dead*, Galerie Karsten Greve, Cologne.  
Courtesy Galerie Karsten Greve Cologne, Paris, St.Moritz

# GALERIE KARSTEN GREVE



## Large-scale installations by Claire Morgan draw from the power of catharsis

Claire Morgan's *A tentative strategy for a renewal, or, wanting to tell you everything and then changing my mind*, at Galerie Karsten Greve in Paris, underscores the power to combat loss.

by [Dilpreet Bhullar](#)

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The inevitability to escape the complexity of life and death has incessantly engrossed the minds of many. To give a meaningful expression to this inexorability has populated the art canon. The UK-based contemporary artist, Claire Morgan, with her latest exhibition *A tentative strategy for a renewal, or, wanting to tell you everything and then changing my mind* at Galerie Karsten Greve, Paris, presents a series of multimedia works to articulate the binaries of existence – oscillating between the states of permanency and fragility. The kernel of the exhibition is the act of catharsis: the power to reflect upon the pain and loss. Morgan extensively draws on the possibilities that the cycle of nature offers, yet which could be realised only if humankind is open to accept their vulnerability.

The past two years – dotted with the events of the pandemic, climate crises, civil unrest - have accentuated the necessity to reconstruct the bridge between humans, other species and the planet. In an interview with STIR, Morgan states, “My current body of work has arrived towards the end (hopefully) of the pandemic, but it comes from things that have been brewing for a very long time. As many people do, I have had some very difficult experiences, and I spent quite a lot of my life in denial, pretending things were fine, when they were anything but, because the pain was just too hard to face, and it was easier to just keep on distracting myself. My new works come from a realisation of how destructive that coping mechanism was, and reflect my attempts to actively embrace the pain and futility that have existed in my life, and to try and transform those things into something powerful out of which positive change can come.”

With the current exhibition, the artist has replaced taxidermic animals with their skins for the first time. The transition to the use of tanning reflects the need to discover the truth and exorcise her most deeply rooted fears. The practice is traced to prehistoric times when animal skins were essential for the survival of humans. During the period of colonisation, the task was elevated to



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the status of class and ownership, as the animal skins turned into the metaphor of the trophies of excess. The supple skins, stripped from their bony carcasses, look like strange, empty envelopes.

She addresses the past and archaic memory through a horn shape, used for the first time and revealed throughout the exhibition in different sizes and through different techniques. In the monumental installation, *A tentative strategy for a renewal, or, wanting to tell you everything and then changing my mind*, the larger-than-life horn, for the obvious reasons, does not belong to any existing animal. The horn appears to be weighed down by a mass of weightless seeds, its point pressing into the mass as if it were flesh.

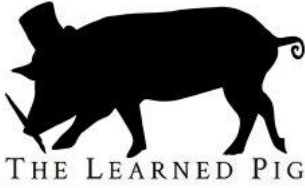
Morgan explains the installation, “Takes the form of a huge tusk (around 7m long) and an organic form composed of thistle seeds (around 3.6 x 4.8m across) suspended on nylon threads. These two very different presences interact, and a sense of equilibrium is created by the organic form bulging, bodily, over the point of the tusk, seemingly keeping it balanced. The tusk is a new form in my work. It suggests something ancient. But the tusk is evidence of it, and it is still something dangerous, it could still do damage. And I think memory is a lot like that. It can bring such pain, but there are ways to still it. While it seems obvious that the violent presence in this work is the tusk, and that the seeds are frail and ephemeral, I am interested in how that could also be flipped on its head. When wildflower seeds germinate, their roots can be so powerful as to break open concrete. Transformation is possible. Growth is possible.”

For the installation *Mourning for Real*, Morgan sublimates the polyethylene through a colourful harmony. Yet it does not lose its parasitic function since it erupts from the skin of the bird. The union between animals and plastic refers to mass extinction and the climate crisis. “With works like *Mourning for Real*, and *Rupture*,” Morgan says, “I was playing with duality again. The fragments come from post-consumer plastic waste, and so they say something about consumption, but within the works, they seem almost organic, and have a superficial visual appeal.” Some of the organic elements, such as seeds, form elegant shapes around animals and hint at the passing of time. The artist thus composes an ode to nature through her interconnected works and various forms of materiality.

Furthermore, with the series of charcoal drawings *Archaeology*, Morgan introduces a human figure who interacts with a horn, straddling it, gripping onto it and exploring it in repeated attempts to master the unknown form, like a child learning to gather its bearings in a new world. If both entities coexisted, could they mutually support each other? To create this series, the artist introspects on her personal experience of loss, trauma and pain to give a glimpse of it to the viewers.

Morgan acutely mentions, “The work is not didactic. Things are rarely clear-cut.” The artist with the exhibition poses pertinent questions such as, “Where is the real violence in a situation? Where is it coming from? Does it need to be like that, or can that pain – which is, after all, energy – be channelled into something powerful and transformative?” to which, even if easy answers are unavailable, yet it leaves the viewers to ponder upon it with an affirmative and sensitive mind.

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## DEAD OWLS AND BLUE BOTTLE FLIES

By Heather Swan in *The Learned Pig*, ROT, published online on October 18 in 2020.

When you enter a gallery transformed by the artist Claire Morgan, you are immediately transported to a magical place that unsettles your basic human understandings—a floating world that defies gravity and rational thought. The body of a dead fox hovers midair surrounded by a precisely measured cube made of suspended bits of ripped plastic. A sphere of thistle seeds wraps a diaphanous force field around a falling crow that seems to be frozen in time, endlessly falling and also not falling. A plane of gold flies floats above a dead chaffinch as if carrying his spirit upward. The world she creates is beautiful—in its composition, its airiness, its patterns—and is wildly discomfiting at once. Death and life intertwined; gravity and time stop; and creatures designated as pests are presented as lovely, as an integral part of the constellation of beings. Here, you enter the deeper mystery of interconnection between the human and nonhuman worlds in this moment of global environmental devastation.

Many of Claire Morgan's installations feature a central taxidermized animal surrounded by an atmosphere created by dead insects or flower petals or bits of plastic hung on invisible threads. In *Here is the End of All Things*, Morgan has created three cubes out of suspended thistle seeds and one out of bluebottle flies. A barn owl appears to have tunneled through the first three cubes and is arrested at edge of the fourth, with wings open, as if caught mid-flight, perhaps in the moment of exiting this realm. The dead owl looks strangely alive, immortal.

I am not accustomed to picking up newly-dead animals, like Claire Morgan. I do have piles of individual bird feathers and nests, shells, and even the skull of a racoon on my mantle at home, but I have not ever done the work of picking up an animal who had recently died.

On a canoe trip this summer, around the edge of a marsh, I noticed an awkward splay of long, mottled feathers lying still in a tuft of grasses on a tiny island no more than six feet wide. My friend and I moved our canoe closer to investigate. Face down with wings spread wide and head pressed to the ground, a great horned owl seemed to have fallen from the sky like a crashing plane. My chest tightened. The ungraceful end of such majesty seemed wrong somehow. There was no sign of violence. What had happened? The soft small feathers by her ears moved slightly in the night air. We could not tarry too much longer or it would be dark. I could not stop thinking about the owl. In a week's time, I went back, and a sprinkle of tiny blue flowers had bloomed on the minuscule island. Forget-me-nots. I vowed to return for the skeleton later, once the insects and time had done their work. Unlike Claire, I had no idea how to preserve the owl, but I wanted to honor her somehow.

I knew little about the practices of dead animal preservation, but I teach on a campus that has a remarkable zoological collection. Inside one of our large stone edifices are boxes filled with mammal and reptile skeletons, shelves covered with glass jars full of dead fish and amphibians, and drawers filled with extinct birds and the hides of common rodents. "Bones and skins", our curator once explained to me during a visit, "are useful for different kinds of research." It's like a library of dead bodies, nonhuman ones. A few of the skeletons are articulated: a six-foot-long sea turtle from the Galapagos, a chimpanzee, a bat. And several

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others have been preserved to look like they are perched or poised on pedestals: a wolf, a beaver, a great horned owl.

Many of these animals are endangered, some on the extinction list, some already gone. All of these zoological specimens died naturally. Dead animals can tell us a lot about what is killing them. Some have been shot, others sickened by diseases, others poisoned. They can also tell us about environmental change over time. At the Field Museum in Chicago, the amount of soot found in bird feathers told a story about air pollution over the Rust Belt in the early 1900s. There are so many stories.

In the “skins” preservation room, I watched a woman turn a warbler inside out, slicing the belly first, emptying the body, peeling the skin back carefully so as not to damage the feathers, and then preparing it to be stuffed with cotton. The “bones” preparation involved a flesh-eating beetle colony. The curator and I walked down a musty cement tunnel into a chamber with several large tubs. The beetles would not eat live flesh, she assured me, so we were not in any danger.

The label ‘pest’ gives us permission to kill creatures without any sense of guilt.

When I found the owl, I knew I could not do any of that, so I thought I would let nature do its work, the insects and the fungi so efficient at helping things decompose and return to soil. I assumed the bones would remain, and I could take the skeleton then.

The great horned owl was not a common sighting to us. Lately, I have been watching the juvenile barred owls in the woods near my home. Their already huge wings are nearly silent as they drop to the ground to hunt. Several times, locked in the gaze of their large piercing eyes—eyes that could spot prey scores of feet from the ground—I felt relieved I wasn’t a rabbit, a shrew, or a mouse. Barred owls and great horned owls eat many of the same things, but the great horned owl is the larger apex predator. A young barred owl could be attacked by a great horned owl, but the great horned owl has few enemies here. We described the death scene to a falconer we knew and she said the death was most likely due to pesticide poisoning.

The National Institute of Health defines pesticides as “chemical substances used to prevent, destroy, repel or mitigate any pest ranging from insects (i.e., insecticides), rodents (i.e., rodenticides) and weeds (herbicides) to microorganisms (i.e., algicides, fungicides or bactericides)”. It goes on to say that over one billion pounds of pesticides are used in the United State each year and approximately 5.6 billion pounds worldwide.

Merriam-Webster’s online dictionary defines a pest this way: “a plant or animal detrimental to humans or human concerns (such as agriculture or livestock production).”

To Claire Morgan, this very definition is problematic. She told me, “Whenever I am making my work, I am using bodies of animals, and quite often these are animals that humans regard as pests... We are animals, we are part of the natural world. We tend to behave as if we live ON the natural world, like we are separate entities that can use it, take advantage of it, that it is our resource, when really the earth is one huge organism that we are part of.”

The label “pest” gives us permission to kill creatures within the same system we are a part of without any sense of guilt. Our stories and myths have demonized so many creatures: spiders, bats, mice, crows, wasps, snakes, even dandelions. In our attempts to eliminate these beings for our convenience and comfort, we not only break strands of a fragile web, we destroy countless other beings in the process. Bees, frogs, songbirds, owls...even humans can be damaged by this killing practice. The Audubon Society reports on the horrific

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deaths of owls who have died from internal hemorrhaging after eating rodenticides. Many others are sickening slowly.

Claire Morgan's work tells us a new story. Her pieces honor all of the animals in them. Pests are just creatures that are mortal like we are. They are part of our interconnected world. They are kin and we have created this imbalance.

The baby barred owls will be hunting further from their home soon, over yards covered in pesticides.

In one installation, called *Elephant in the Room*, a nebula of tiny pieces of torn paper (that she sees as a symbol of our obsession with reckless consumption) creates the shape of a fourteen-meter long North Atlantic right whale. The enormity of the sculpture is balanced by the immaterial ethereal aspect of the giant mammal as it swims above you through the air. Ideas of impermanence and the danger of a looming extinction come into my head, but the piece also offers another more haunting sensation as if this might be a sacred moment caught by an artist, the whale spirit living on. A ghost whale perhaps with a warning.

The poet and artist Ian Boyden once told me a story about traveling to Mitla, an archeological site in the state of Oaxaca in Mexico. As he walked along the edge of one of the elaborately carved stone buildings, he was suddenly surrounded by thousands of white moths fluttering madly around him. For a moment he was blinded and also completely dazzled by the frenzy of wings. Moments later they disappeared, and Ian noticed that a guard who stood nearby had seen what happened was laughing heartily. "You looked like a cloud," the guard said. "The clouds are the intermediaries of the gods. Looks like they were trying to take you!" Reflecting back, Ian said at that time he was "too heavy". He had "no spiritual helium". They had to put him back down.

The whale in Claire Morgan's work seems to be light enough. I think of all the animals facing extinction and how none of them have caused this crisis. I carry the weight of that.

The baby barred owls will be hunting further from their home soon, over yards covered in pesticides. The other night I sat on the ground in the dark under a tree where one had perched. I watched her swoop from branch to branch, her elegant brown and white wings riding the breeze. Then she would pause to peer at the ground intently, often looking directly at me, perplexed perhaps by my rapt attention. And then suddenly, she dropped down to the ground just a few feet from me, staring straight into my eyes. I held my breath, heart beating wildly at this gift. And then just as suddenly she took to the air again, the wind from her wings whooshing over my face. How, then, could I do anything but tell her story, the story of her radical trust, her faith that this human would do her no harm?

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# DAMN°

## **ARRESTED ANIMATION: Claire Morgan's vanity of supposing significance.**

By Anna Samsom in *Damn Magazine*, published in October 22 in 2017.

A male peacock, its pristine feathers fanned out, is lying on top of its female partner in Claire Morgan's solo show at Galerie Karsten Greve in Paris. Five large interlocking circles, fashioned from bluish and brightly-coloured confetti-like petals of plastic, burst into atomised euphoria above the mating birds. Titled *The Vanity of Supposing Significance*, the taxidermy installation at first glance seems celebratory. But, as with many of the Morgan's works, it is heavily ironic – in this case, of western people's self-indulgent lifestyles.

'What I've been preoccupied with for a while is all the horrific violence in the world, like the refugee crisis and the Grenfell Tower fire in London, and how easy it is to forget and just continue your personal indulgence,' says Morgan, 37, about the starting point for the piece. 'The peacocks having sex and the fireworks over their heads is about the significance that we attach to fleeting things and how that can be captivating. It's a beautiful bad joke.'

Our conversation is taking place at the opening of Morgan's exhibition, *Perpetually at the Centre*. Several visitors are walking round, intrigued by her painstakingly labour-intensive work. 'Until this exhibition, I've predominantly used animals that share our environment – like crows and foxes – or that live on the periphery of cities,' the Northern Irish artist explains. 'But the peacocks were perfect for this piece because I wanted it to be showy. They're beautiful animals but it was incredibly difficult to get the tail layered out in the right spirals.'

In another sculpture, *A Lesson in Failure*, two foxes are playfully fighting each other, their footprints scratched into the mud. 'I was holding real foxes and pushing their feet into the mud,' Morgan says, laughing. The foxes are in a geometric grid delineated by suspended nylon lines of meticulously threaded dandelion seeds. A flurry of seeds behind them gives the impression that they have kicked up the undergrowth and run into a clearing, where shafts of light are beaming down. 'I was thinking of how sunlight filters through the trees,' says Morgan. 'The idea of landscape has become more important to me and I've been looking at scenarios for the animals.'

Morgan's fascination with nature harks back to her childhood near Belfast. 'Belfast is so small that in 15 minutes from the city centre you're surrounded by farmers' fields and countryside,' explains Morgan, who studied Fine Art (Sculpture) at the University of Northumbria in Newcastle. Her early installations, from 2002 - 2003, were composed of fresh fruits, such as a room filled with two thousand suspended strawberries. Morgan threaded them one by one onto nylon threads to create an ephemeral, perishable environment, the strawberries rotting over the duration of her exhibition.

'My work has always been about the passing of time and change,' she says. 'With the huge, room-filling installations, I wanted to scare people and make them feel uncomfortable. The process of suspending things captured my attention and, as I became more skilled, the work became more precise. I wanted to control what role the animals took and that led me to taxidermy.'

Morgan began learning the craft of taxidermy in 2008, setting herself the challenge of finding a way to connect it with the suspended elements. The first piece was *Fantastic Mr Fox* – a fox entering a tilted cube dotted with tiny pieces of torn, black polythene bags. An arrangement of plastic fragments on the ground evoked the cube's shadow. The situation of arrested animation is characteristic of Morgan's work. 'Having an animal there makes us see a narrative, and there's a formal relationship between that

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and the contrived, geometric and precise elements,' she says, adding that the employment of plastic is meant to be unsettling. 'It has a superficial prettiness but is cheap, horrible stuff that has a suffocating presence.'

After a few years living in London, Morgan recently relocated to Gateshead, northeast England, to be nearer the countryside. She does the taxidermy herself and says that the animals are mostly roadkill, birds which have flown into windows or, in the case of the peacocks, have died in captivity. 'It's quite strange to work with birds that have never flown in the sky,' she notes. Certain sanctuaries and breeders call her when creatures have died, enquiring if she wants to collect them. Additionally, Morgan's own five cats bring her mice and rats. 'I've got at least a couple of hundred things in my three freezers,' she exclaims, giggling. 'I'm making myself sound mad! There's a badger that an assistant of mine found dead on a roadside a few years ago. I've still not figured out what to do with it.'

Besides the installations, Morgan makes smaller pieces in vitrines, such as *To an End* – a blackbird perched on a branch and encased in a glow of orange blossom. 'With the vitrine pieces, every thread is threaded through the animal, so it's a slow, complicated process that demands patience,' says Morgan, who makes several sketches, combining shapes, colours and materials, before beginning the taxidermy and suspended elements. Another piece spells out a phrase from Rutger Hauer's monologue in *Blade Runner* (1982) – 'All those moments will be lost in time, like tears in rain' – through dandelion seeds. 'The titles of my work are really important and some- times appear before the visual side, so it seemed a natural progression to introduce text,' explains Morgan, who has a concurrent show, *Resurgence – My God-Shaped Hole* at Fondation d'Entreprise Francès in Senlis, northern France, featuring mostly 'black-and-white pieces'.

Certainly, Morgan's works combine a poetic sense of fragility with violence and death. Asked which artists have inspired her, she cites Francis Bacon, Cy Twombly, Joan Mitchell, Joseph Beuys, Wolfgang Laib and Anselm Kiefer, as well as minimalism and Arte Povera. And outside of the art world, she is an enthusiastic fan of the musicians Bjork and Aphex Twin, and the American writer David Foster Wallace. 'Bjork in particular has been an inspiration, since I first heard her over 20 years ago,' says Morgan. 'She is such a unique and incredibly strong creative force.' However, it is nature that inspires Morgan the most. 'Exploring the landscape seems to be where my ideas come from,' she says. 'There's something unpredictable and intriguing about the darkness inside a forest.'

Lately, Morgan has been working more on paintings, too. While some depict landscapes, others reveal an influence of abstract minimalist art, with grey rectangles painted onto a white background and birds embedded in the canvas, if they have accidentally crashed into it. Morgan allows herself more spontaneity and freedom with the paintings than with the sculptures. 'The forms of my sculptures are designed beforehand, so it's nice to make a mess with the paintings,' she remarks.

Regarding the recurring themes in her practice, she says, 'We want to pretend that we're immortal and that death doesn't affect us. The process of surrounding ourselves with more stuff is directly related to our unwillingness to confront the situation that we're animals and are going to die.'

There's a Shakespearean sense of tragedy and comedy in Morgan's work. The taxidermy animals in her sculptures are stand-ins for all of us: mortal beings that, depending on the moment, may behave like preening peacocks, cunning foxes, house sparrows or wise owls.

*Claire Morgan: Perpetually at the Centre*, Galerie Karsten Greve, Paris, until 23 December 2017  
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Claire Morgan in her studio, 2023 © Claire Morgan Studio / Photo: John McKenzie. Courtesy Galerie Karsten Greve Cologne, Paris, St. Moritz

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