

## Peter Wächtler

*Franky's Theme*

25. 1. – 31. 3. 2019

Peter Wächtler works in a variety of media: bronze and ceramics, text, drawings and video. But in many ways 'stories' could be described as his main artistic material. His works often evoke a narration, with animals or human figures in animated states. They are made in ways that use and adapt elements of fiction, folklore and pop culture, relating to specific traditions and common tales, and materialize the ways of telling a story as much as the story itself.

The exhibition at Bergen Kunsthall presents a large body of new works created for the show, together with a large-scale video installation. The exhibition title, "Franky's Theme", implies something like a coherent story across the galleries, or a mood or atmosphere in the way in which a movie soundtrack operates as a narrative unfolds and different protagonists appear. Wächtler has created a series of distinct spaces for the exhibition, each presenting a group of works that (literally) inhabit the rooms in the form of different characters: a group of snowy owls, made in glazed ceramics, depicted with their characteristic white feathering with dark spots that makes them well-adapted to their habitat in the north, a bronze-cast bat, a troll and a model of a shed. The troll appears almost invisible underneath a piece of cloth, while the bat greets the viewer with a graceful gesture. All of the sculptures seem to be casting a shadow on themselves, or veiling themselves, as if to protect them from a gaze, in a dancing move or with the self-absorption of a hermit. Even when assembled in groups, as if co-inhabiting the rooms in social interaction, the sculptures express a sense of loneliness, anxiousness and secrecy. Detailed drawings of interiors and nature scenes, as well as a series of etchings, each depicting a section of a train, such as a locomotive or railway coach, further add to an overall mood, with their fragmented glimpses into a suggested tale. Two fictional texts, written by the artist, are presented within the exhibition. Presented in the style of an institutional text, but written from the perspective of an "unreliable narrator", the short stories bring a speculative voice into the exhibition, loosely connecting to the objects and images on display.

Doubt and struggle are topics that repeatedly (albeit indirectly) appear in Wächtler's work, often with comic effect. These sentiments are usually personified through a narrator or hard-working craftsman, standing in stark contrast to a contemporary logic of effi-

ciency. Without being either ironic or sentimental, Wächtler's works play on the limits of communication and grapple with trying to overcome the gap between intention and affect. In one of the rooms, four large, colourful pens hang on the wall as a constant reminder of the promise of creation and productivity – as an inflated, swollen and frighteningly image of an author's writer's block, or the constant failures and frustrations of human communication.

The video *Untitled (Clouds)* (2018) features a lonely dragon with a straw hat gazing across a dried wasteland in front of colourful cloud formations. The silent images are accompanied by a text in the subtitles, which reports on considerations and reflections, executed in a rambling style. We follow complaints, insecurities and hubris, borrowing in hints and ironic paraphrases from a variety of popular sources: "No need to panic. I am totally Thunderdome. I can prove anything – to anyone – for real". The video creates a tension between pathos and irony, between the formal conventions of genres and emotional expression. What appears as introspection is a calculated tool to observe desires in all their conventions and constraints, of tradition, social context and power relations, while the creature, like many of Wächtler's protagonists, keeps going.

During the exhibition, a new artist book by Peter Wächtler will be published with a collection of works comprising drawings and text contributions by among others John Kelsey and the artist. Designed by Boy Vereecken.

Peter Wächtler lives and works in Brussels and Berlin. His work was shown in solo exhibitions at Schinkel Pavilion, Berlin, M HKA – Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst Antwerp (both 2017), The Renaissance Society, Chicago, Chisenhale, London, KIOSK, Ghent (all 2016) and Westfälischer Kunstverein, Münster (2014). Selected group exhibitions include *The Absent Museum*, WIELS, Brussels (2017), 6th Moscow Biennial, Moscow, Surround Audience, New Museum Triennial, New York (both 2015), *A Needle Walks into a Haystack*, Liverpool Biennial, *Europe, Europe, Astrup Fearnley Museet*, Oslo (both 2014), and *Meanwhile... Suddenly and Then*, Lyon Biennale (2013). A collection of Wächtler's texts titled *Come On* was published by Sternberg Press in 2013.

**Curated by**

Axel Wieder (Director) & Steinar Sekkingstad (Curator)

**Staff**

Maja Zahl (Head of Finance and Administration), Sofia Marie Hamnes, (Assistant Producer Landmark), Mai Lahn-Johannessen (Program Manager), Hilde Marie Pedersen, (Head of Education, Maria Rusinovskaya (Curator Landmark), Jonas Skarmark (Technical Manager Landmark, Einride Torvik (Gallery Manager), Stein-Inge Århus (Communication)

**Reception and Tours**

Dino Dikic, Åsne Eldøy, Thea Haug, Ragna Haugstad, Andrea Grundt Johns, Caroline Larikka, Øystein Larssen, Tuva Mossin, Mia Øquist, Tord Øyen

**Technicians**

Sarah Jost, Dillan Marsh, Yngve Pedersen, Vegard Vindenes, Eric Alvin Wangel

**Distribution, Cleaning and Wardrobe**

Adan Awale, Åsa Bjørndal, Lars Hallaråker, Ask Holmen, Hanna Elise Jozefiak, Vilja Kjersheim, Gudrun Kringlebotn, Annabel Lee, Henrik Skauge, Siv Torvik

**Design**

Blank Blank

**Opens**

25.1. 20:00  
With Dj Vilde Tuv

**Tours**

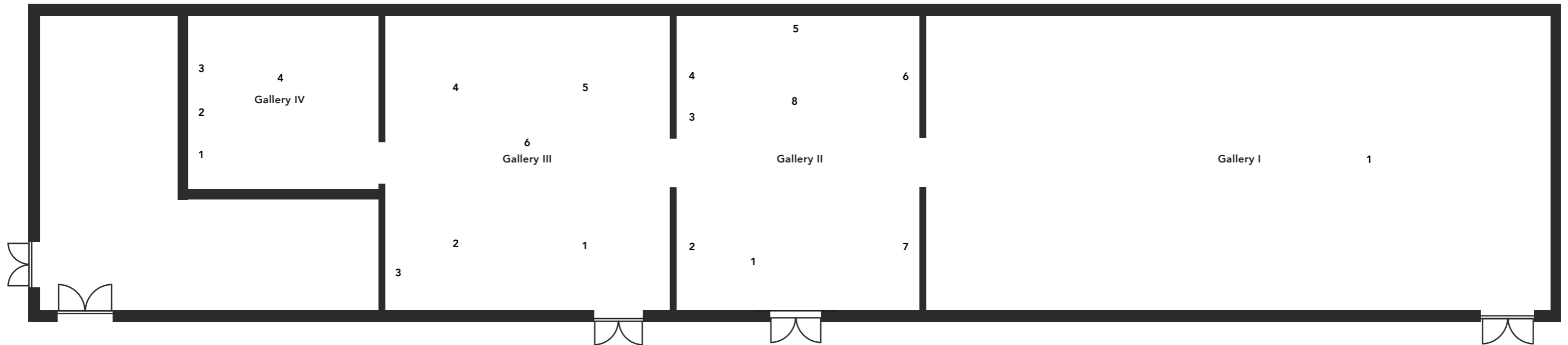
Every Sunday 14:00  
Every Sunday 13:00 for Families

**Plattform**

Sat 26 Jan 14:00 Free  
Peter Wächtler in conversation  
with Ed Atkins

**Reading and Book Launch**

Thu 28 Mar 19:00 Free  
Peter Wächtler

**Gallery IV**

- 1 *The Pond 1*, 2019  
Watercolor on paper  
Unique. Approx. 75 x 95 cm  
Courtesy of the artist and  
Reena Spaulings Fine Art,  
New York
- 2 *The Pond 2*, 2019  
Watercolor on paper  
Unique. Approx. 75 x 95 cm  
Courtesy of the artist and  
Lars Friedrich, Berlin
- 3 *Nobody can help you*, 2019  
Watercolor on paper  
Unique. Approx. 75 x 95 cm  
Courtesy of the artist and  
dépendance, Brussels
- 4 *Warehouse*, 2019  
Bronze. Edition AP  
66,6 x 32,2 x appr. 35 cm  
Courtesy of the artist and  
dépendance, Brussels /  
Lars Friedrich, Berlin / Reena  
Spaulings Fine Art, New York

**Gallery III**

- 1 *Snowy Owl 2*, 2018  
Glazed ceramic  
Unique. 48 x 74 x 55 cm  
Courtesy of the artist and  
Lars Friedrich, Berlin
- 2 *Snowy Owl 4*, 2018  
Glazed ceramic  
Unique. 47 x 79 x 87 cm  
Courtesy of the artist and  
dépendance, Brussels
- 3 *Intro 2*  
Text
- 4 *Snowy Owl 3*, 2018  
Glazed ceramic  
Unique. 52 x 81 x 50 cm  
Courtesy of the artist and  
dépendance, Brussels

- 5 *Snowy Owl 5*, 2018  
Glazed ceramic  
Unique. 41 x 58 x 43 cm  
Courtesy of the artist and  
Reena Spaulings Fine Art,  
New York
- 6 *Snowy Owl 1*, 2018  
Glazed ceramic  
Unique. 39 x 56 x 42 cm  
Courtesy of the artist and  
Lars Friedrich, Berlin

**Gallery II**

- 1 *Bat*, 2018  
Bronze. Artist Proof  
Edition of 4 + 1 AP  
36 x 38 x 41 cm  
Courtesy of the artist and  
dépendance, Brussels
- 2 *Writer's Block 4*, 2018  
Glazed ceramic  
Each unique  
Approx. 20 x 100 x 20 cm  
Courtesy of the artist and  
Lars Friedrich, Berlin
- 3 *Intro 1*  
Text
- 4 *Writer's Block 2*, 2018  
Glazed ceramic  
Each unique  
Apprx 20 x 100 x 20 cm  
Courtesy of the artist and  
Reena Spaulings Fine Art,  
New York

- 5 From the series:  
*Wide Open Country*, 2019  
From the left:  
*Train 1, Train 2, Train 3, Train 3*  
All: Drypoint etching  
65 x 155 cm  
Courtesy of the artist and  
dépendance, Brussels /  
Lars Friedrich, Berlin /  
Reena Spaulings Fine Art,  
New York
- 6 *Writer's Block 3*, 2018  
Glazed ceramic  
Each unique  
Apprx 20 x 100 x 20 cm  
Courtesy of the artist and  
dépendance, Brussels
- 7 *Writer's Block 1*, 2018  
Glazed ceramic  
Each unique  
Approx. 20 x 100 x 20 cm  
Courtesy of the artist and  
Reena Spaulings Fine Art,  
New York
- 8 *Untitled (Fur)*, 2019  
Bronze  
Edition 1 of 3 + 1 AP  
29 x 28 x 30 cm  
Courtesy of the artist and  
Lars Friedrich, Berlin

**Gallery I**

- 1 *Untitled (Clouds)*, 2018  
HD-Video, 10:00 min.  
Camera: Adam Milburn  
Animation: Peter Wächtler,  
Ida Michel  
Courtesy of the artist and  
dépendance, Brussels /  
Lars Friedrich, Berlin /  
Reena Spaulings Fine Art,  
New York