



## Sargent's Daughters

### **Peles Empire**

*rooted in folds*

May 26 – June 25, 2022

Sargent's Daughters is pleased to present *rooted in folds*, the first solo exhibition of Berlin-based Peles Empire in New York. Peles Empire is a collaboration between artists Katharina Stöver and Barbara Wolff, who work across media to create artworks and installations that combine aesthetics of collage-making, copying, and reinterpretation. Through these iterative methodologies, *rooted in folds* reshuffles and folds supposedly known myths and histories in order to question the construction of knowledge and linear time in the context of (art) history.

Stöver and Wolff's partnership began in 2005, when the pair opened an illegal bar in Frankfurt's red light district. Though they met while studying painting, this first collaboration featured wallpaper made of A3 color copies reproducing a room from the nineteenth century historic Castle Peles in Romania where each room in the castle was built to mimic a different architectural style.

The same act of copying or translation that birthed the Peles Castle carries over to the artists' approach to studio production. One three-dimensional installation becomes the two-dimensional source material for their next period of production and the process becomes, temporarily, the work. For the artists, the act of copying is more important than the copy itself. The Castle, as a talisman of this ethos, recurs in each project they take on.

For *rooted in folds*, Peles Empire created an installation based on their research into the figure of Aphrodite, Cybele and other female deities. The site-specific wallpaper on the gallery's back wall, as well as the smaller works, use layered, photographic imagery and trompe l'oeil to blur the boundaries of photography, sculpture, and painting. The resulting images splice together ancient motifs relating to feminine power and fertility, including carnelians, the female nude, and pomegranates. The meanings of these symbols have shifted over the eons and their combination by Peles Empire highlights the historical continuities and raptures in the concept of femininity. Cropped, abstracted, and layered, these fragmented objects question the status quo of our historical perceptions and contemporary narratives.

**Peles Empire** is an artist duo founded in 2005 in Frankfurt, Germany. **Katharina Stöver** (b. 1982, Germany) and **Barbara Wolff** (b. 1980, Romania) studied at Städelschule, Frankfurt (class of Michael Krebber and Wolfgang Tillmans), Slade School of Art, London and Royal Academy Schools, London. Both live and work in Berlin, Germany. Recent exhibitions include Barakat Contemporary (Seoul), Mórán Mórán, Los Angeles; Galerie Widauer (Innsbruck), E-Werk Luckenwalde, Kasseler Kunstverein (Kassel) and Wilhelm Hack Museum (Ludwigshafen). They have also been included in "Now" at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art (Edinburgh); "Art Encounters", Timisoara Biennale (Timisoara); "Skulptur Projekte Münster 2017" (Münster); and "Production-Made in Germany Drei" at Kunstverein Hannover (Hannover). Germany.