



LIN MAY SAEED  
*Biene*

29 June–26 August 2018

Lin May Saeed's new commission *Biene* (bee) spans a narrative of human–animal relationships from the prehistoric, to the present day. The exhibition includes a pantheon of carved, life–sized animals, alongside a steel gate sculpture, painted reliefs and a large backlit paper cut–out. Saeed's work generates tensions between themes of oppression and liberation. She directly confronts our conflicted relationships with animals – who are at times characterised as companions, votives, an exploited labour force or food source – and by extension, our impact on and interactions with the environment.

Saeed's sculptures have a provisional, naïve quality. Distinctly 'un–monumental', her works often reveal processes of construction and preservation, both within the forms she produces and in the ways in which they are presented. Whilst Saeed's sculptures recall ancient friezes and figurines, stone and alabaster marble are exchanged for carved polystyrene. Equally, the slender crates in which her sculptures are suspended for transport and storage recall cages, which are re–purposed as plinths for display.

Central to Saeed's exhibition, her first-ever solo institutional presentation, are four near life–sized carved animals. Her subjects are neither classical or heroic, comprising an anteater, serval, calf and spotted hyena. From the poised alertness of the serval to the knuckle–walking anteater's pitched gait, Saeed's cohort is posed between activity and the stillness of statuary sentinels.

Such domestic and wild creatures make for unlikely allies, yet each alludes to anthropomorphic qualities ascribed to non-humans. While spotted hyenas vary in their folkloric depictions, characterisations of their species are prevalently adverse. Identified with immorality, they have been alternatively described as brutish, cowardly, sly or necrophagous. Cattle present similarly loaded associations beyond productive livestock, to sacrificial purpose and divinity. Saeed's involvement with animal activism informs her practice, and her works often question how humans have represented and inscribed animal behaviours. Other works, such as *Agri* (2017) more directly address the significance of human impact on the Earth's climate, and the precarity of non-humans within the anthropocene.

Her protagonists are often recast from both mythological and historical narratives, as in the exhibitions earliest work *Zenon in Boat* (2005). The sculpture has been modelled on the pre–Socratic philosopher Zeno of Elea, whose paradoxes, such as 'Achilles and the tortoise' and the 'Arrow paradox', insisted on the illusion and impossibility of motion. Rendered with both male and female attributes, Zeno is shown becalmed on an isolated vessel with a small feline for a companion.

The artist's cross-cultural narratives draw from both Western traditions and her Jewish-Arab heritage, traversing references as divergent as the Animal Liberation Front, the Die

Brücke movement, and ancient Mesopotamia, and fluidly adapt from allegorical, scientific and activist iconographies. Her subjects are displaced in time, deftly transitioning between delimitations of gender, space and species.

Lin May Saeed lives and works in Berlin. Recent solo exhibitions include: Lulu Exhibition Space, Mexico City, MX (2017); Nicolas Krupp Galerie Basel, Switzerland, CH (2016); Jacky Strenz Galerie, Frankfurt/Main, DE (2016); and *The Skyscraper / a horizontal view*, Julius Caesar, Chicago, US (2015).

Group exhibitions include: *Splendor Solis*, The Approach, London, UK (2018); *Predatory behaviour*, T293 Gallery, Rome, IT (2018); *Class Reunion – Works from the Gaby and Wilhelm Schürmann Collection*, Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, AT (2018); *Neuer Norden Zürich*, Zürich, CH (2018); *IWBYD II Animal Liberation in der aktuellen Kunst*, Künstlerhaus Dortmund, Dortmund, DE (2018); *Metamorphosis* (curated by Chus Martínez), Museo Castello di Rivoli, Turino, IT (2018); *La Fin de Babylone*, KölnSkulptur #9, Cologne (2017); *Animal Lovers*, Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst/ NGBK Berlin, DE (2016); *9th Berlin Biennale*, DE (2016), Akademie der Künste Berlin, DE (2016); *X. Bienal de Nicaragua*, Fundación Ortiz Gurdian, NI (2016); *Blocking*, Martos Gallery, Los Angeles, US (2015).

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