

Piper Keys Exhibitions

Miriam Visaczki *To Cut Down a Baobab Tree*

16th April to 15th May 2016
Opening view: Friday 15th April, 6 to 9pm

For the first exhibition at Piper Keys's new location on Norman Road, Vienna-based artist Miriam Visaczki shows new work from two series, one comprising plaster reliefs, the other felt wall hangings.

In Visaczki's plaster works the image of a domestic interior has been cast as a solid plaster relief. Over and into this surface the artist has painted the form of a crude figure. Limbs extrude awkwardly, ending in lumpy fists. With their two-tone shaded surfaces, the bodies are reminiscent of computer-generated forms.

Two contrasting images compete in scale, use of colour and aptitude. At the same time a strange resonance occurs between a vacated living room and a figure suspended in space. The historical specificity of each is to some extent conflated. The interiors are based on examples of *Zimmerbilder* (Room Drawings), which were exchanged as gifts among the middle classes during the early 19th century, at a time of conservative reforms in Central Europe. The figures in turn speak of the catastrophe of Pompeii, where in the 1st century AD inhabitants were 'eternalised' – cast in volcanic ashes – while asleep in their homes.

In the second series of works, consisting of felt wall hangings, the interplay between natural and domestic worlds continues. Here Visaczki picks up on materials and motifs she encountered in the classrooms of a Steiner Kindergarten: the felt is used to shape faces, animals, stones, an owl. Though simple, this symbolism connotes the craft-maker's joy or awe in the natural world, with echoes of religious imagery that connect spirituality to animal life. In some of these works a more obscure action takes place: the wool is pulled around to form organic, continuous – if closed – loops.

Visaczki hones in on instances in Western culture of the consumption of a vague spirituality, which draws broadly, and often superficially, on anything from Buddhist beliefs to herbal medicine. So food stuffs which might have deep cultural meaning in their original context, such as the African Baobab fruit, come to be categorised simply as 'superfood'. This kind of reduction and over-simplification is contested in Visaczki's work.

Miriam Visaczki was born in Regensburg, Germany. She lives and works in Vienna. Recent exhibitions include: *Sex and the City*, Croy Nielsen, Berlin (2016); *Stuttgart*, Galerie Francesca Pia, Zurich (2016); *Essai sur le don*, Kunstverein Schwerin (2015); *¡Hola, amiga! ¿Qué tal?*, Ves.Sch, Vienna (2015); *Bunte Steine*, Lars Friedrich, Berlin (2014).

Piper Keys continues its exhibition programme at Ravensbourne Wharf on Norman Road, Greenwich, where Visaczki's exhibition *To Cut Down a Baobab Tree* will run until 15th May 2016. The new space occupies a 1970s light industrial building, surrounded by a number of waterfront developments 'boasting' flats, the obligatory gym, empty shops, all encased in reflective facades. The gallery's use of this preserved site attests to the ongoing metropolitan squeeze.

Piper Keys would like to thank the following individuals who have supported the re-opening of the gallery: Tom Brian, Amy Botfield, Judith Carlton, Tom Cole, Meret Kaufmann, Alan and Christine Leaman, Joseph Leaman, Joseph Murray, Jonathan P Watts, Jeremy Waterfield, and Jim Woodall.

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Gallery opening hours 12noon to 6pm, Friday to Sunday

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