

VAN DOREN WAXTER

SARAH PETERS: *FIGUREHEADS*

April 27–June 16, 2018
195 Chrystie Street, New York, NY 10002



Sarah Peters, *Tripod (Animal)* (detail), 2016, bronze, 11 x 10 x 13.5 inches (27.9 x 25.4 x 34.3 cm)
Courtesy Van Doren Waxter, NY

Van Doren Waxter is pleased to announce an exhibition of bronze sculptures by New York-based artist Sarah Peters, entitled *Figureheads*. This is the gallery's second solo show of Peters' work, which expands upon her exploration of formal sculptural languages and themes ranging from power and authority to psychology, gender, and humanity.

Works on view reference antiquity, using the imagery of gods in a contemporary context. The bearded male "Herma" busts pay homage to ancient Greek land-markers of the same name, and also invoke current political and social conflicts over power and ownership. Several sculptures in this exhibition are larger-scale than previous works, lending these forms a commanding presence. Among them, the formidable female "Figurehead" (2018) anchors the exhibition and calls to mind nautical talismans, along with pyramidal Egyptian deities. Peters' merging of the ancient and contemporary is often irreverent, with allusions to sex dolls, ventriloquist dummies, puppets and aliens, undermining the authority of the past, highlighting human fallibility and questioning notions of power.

Peters' sculptural language draws from diverse iconographic influences which include Assyrian antiquities, Greco-Roman tragedy masks, Egyptian funerary figures and Cypriot portraits, as well as the work of Elie Nadelman, early American folk art, Constantin Brâncusi, and early modernist figuration. The smooth, eyeless sockets of Peters' heads prohibit an explicit or reciprocal gaze, asserting autonomous internality; the figures' ambiguous expressions simultaneously suggest a state of contemplation, ecstasy, or catatonic paralysis. Gaping mouths mirror those voids, while evoking a sonorous sensibility perpetuated by rhythmic, undulating hair. The meticulously carved strands render chaos tamed, forming an organizing architecture that embodies the duality of our feral and rational human nature.

Sarah Peters (b. 1973) lives and works in Queens, NY. Peters was educated at Virginia Commonwealth University (MFA), The University of Pennsylvania (BFA), and The Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. She is a recipient of awards and residencies from John Michael Kohler, WI; New York Foundation for the Arts; The Fine Arts Work Center, Provincetown, MA; and The Marie

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Walsh Sharpe Art Foundation Space Program. Solo and two-person exhibitions include Halsey McKay Gallery, New York, NY (2017); Eleven Rivington, New York (2015); 4 AM, New York (2015); *Bodyrite* (with Mira Dancy) at Asya Geisberg, NY (2014); and John Davis Gallery, Hudson, NY (2013). Group exhibitions include *Objects Like Us*, The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, CT, curated by Amy Smith-Stewart and David Adamo (2018); Galerie Eva Presenhuber, Zurich, Switzerland (2018); and *Rodin and the Contemporary Figurative Tradition*, Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park, Grand Rapids, MI (2017), among others. Her work has been reviewed and featured in publications such as *The New York Times*, *Art in America*, *Artforum*, and *The Brooklyn Rail*.

Artist Talk with Sarah Peters, May 5 at 4 PM

Gallery Information

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