

GALERIE FAVARDIN & DE VERNEUIL

KIM SIMONSSON

Exhibition from October 17
to November 14, 2009



Press kit

Kim Simonsson

October 17th - November 14th, 2009

GALERIE FAVARDIN & DE VERNEUIL

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Metro : Argentine

THE EXHIBITION

In October 2008, Patrick Favardin and Laurent de Verneuil were opening the new space for their art gallery dedicated to Contemporary Art, in a former sculptor studio 5mn away from the famous "Place de l'Etoile". Next October, with the contribution of the curator Yves Peltier, they open the first solo exhibition in Paris of the Finnish star artist Kim Simonsson.

The artist will present a series of works conceived as cultural relics that can be seen as the coming vestiges of our contemporary society.



This exhibition is organized with the support of the Finnish Embassy in Paris.



info-finlande.fr
Le site francophone sur la Finlande

The curator, **Yves Peltier**

A specialist in modern and contemporary ceramics, he has written articles in a variety of specialist magazines. He has taken part in a number of exhibition catalogues, including “Picasso and ceramics” at the National Fine Arts Museum, Quebec, in 2004. Having worked with the National Museum in Sèvres, he worked at the Magnelli Musée, Museum and Vallauris Ceramics Museum, and was a technical advisor for the “Designers in Vallauris” project in 2001 and 2002. He also worked with the Madoura gallery from 1995 to 2008. He was the organiser of the Vallauris Biennial in 2006, 2008 and 2010.

THE GALLERY

The Favardin & de Verneuil Gallery is in a magnificent 180 m² atrium close to the Place de l’Etoile and in one of the capital’s most international districts. It makes the statement of a modernity open to the new influences of contemporary creation.

The aim of **Patrick Favardin** and **Laurent de Verneuil**, the founders of the gallery, is to present works of quality and exacting standards to collectors and institutions. This high demand is part of a new requirement in the art market, which is increasingly concerned to look at works with a view to putting their creation, actual history and relevance into perspective.

Different exhibition organisers will be regularly invited to work within their own preferred fields. They will be chosen for their expertise and career, and will organise exhibitions in which the works must combine quality of approach and formal design with a relevant subject.





Simonsson has been open-minded in his choice of technique and method of expression. Seen in a photograph without scale, his works look like china figurines depicting children and animals. In reality, the works are nearly lifesize, far from sweet ornaments in a display cabinet, and everything but figurines.

The form of the child motifs comes from the characters of the controversial Japanese manga cartoons. Manga is virtually plain and the characters are a combination of innocence and roughness. Simonsson's animal figures are not romanticised, rather they are almost blatantly realistic. Simonsson says he exploits the symbolism of china figurines as cultural relics. Both child and animal characters are combinations of the safety familiar and the strange and estranged. Even the look in the characters' eyes is defamiliarising : viewers can see their reflections in the shining eyes. Viewers and the surrounding world disappear beyond reach, as if in convex lens.

Kim Simonsson uses ceramics because of its history. His expression centres on the opposition of a finished method and simple, animalistic emotions. But do his works have a message ? Simonsson's culturally critical question is : How estranged are we from the world that surrounds us ? □

Anneli Ilmonen
director of the Tampere Art Museum, Finland





The work of Kim Simonsson has often been compared to the world of mangas and Japanese comic strips regarding the stylistic analogies. It is true that the artist has, and assumes, a certain attraction and fascination for this ultra-contemporary urban universe of Japanese culture, going as far as to qualify his work as “Finnish quasi-manga.” They do have points in common, but attentive study reveals significant differences, such as the absence in Kim Simonsson’s work of any colour, allusions to sexuality or attitudes of violence. And indeed, that is not the only possible referent.

His work is just as much part of a very Western system which has varied and ancient references. The Florentine artist Luca della Robia (1400–1482) immediately comes to mind, with his statuary and its very similar plastic effects of clay covered with stanniferous enamel, as well as the works of the sculptor Joachim J. Kändler (1706–1775), essentially his monumental pieces (animals made for the Japanese palace of Dresden, and for Frederick Augustus I, Elector of Saxony); and then, as Cynthia Nadelman has quite rightly pointed out, one thinks of the aesthetic world of Franz-Xavier Messerschmidt and, even more so, that of Adriano Cecioni – particularly the sculptures. Kim Simonsson’s work is different from the other artists’ work in its total absence of naturalism and expressive realism. Kim Simonsson aims more at the formal perfection of his pieces. In fact, he approaches the “oh, so delicate question” of figuration, but in another way. While this formula is to a certain extent restored, it does not involve a return to the classical ideal definitively side-lined by the 20th century. The idea of a split, so dear to modernity, is still current but in a different form



– one thinks of mannerism – that accords with our aesthetics and our contemporary culture. The tradition has been assimilated – no return is possible – and what has been acquired by modernity is an integral part of this tradition.

Kim Simonsson's sculptures of children in varied positions give the impression of extreme sensitivity. They represent pure moments of grace, where poetry is always present. The attitudes and volumes are made up of simple, solid shapes, the surfaces are smooth with no asperity so that the eye slides over them, and all this taken together persuades us this is a very personal and, finally, highly sophisticated form of art. In fact, Kim Simonsson gives us the impression of establishing a new type of art, a type with disturbing sensitivity, elegance and grace, great gentleness and perfect harmony.

And yet, astonishingly, torment attracts him. The plenitude and the ideal of gentleness of the beings portrayed is very apparent and masks an anxious, if not to say anguished and



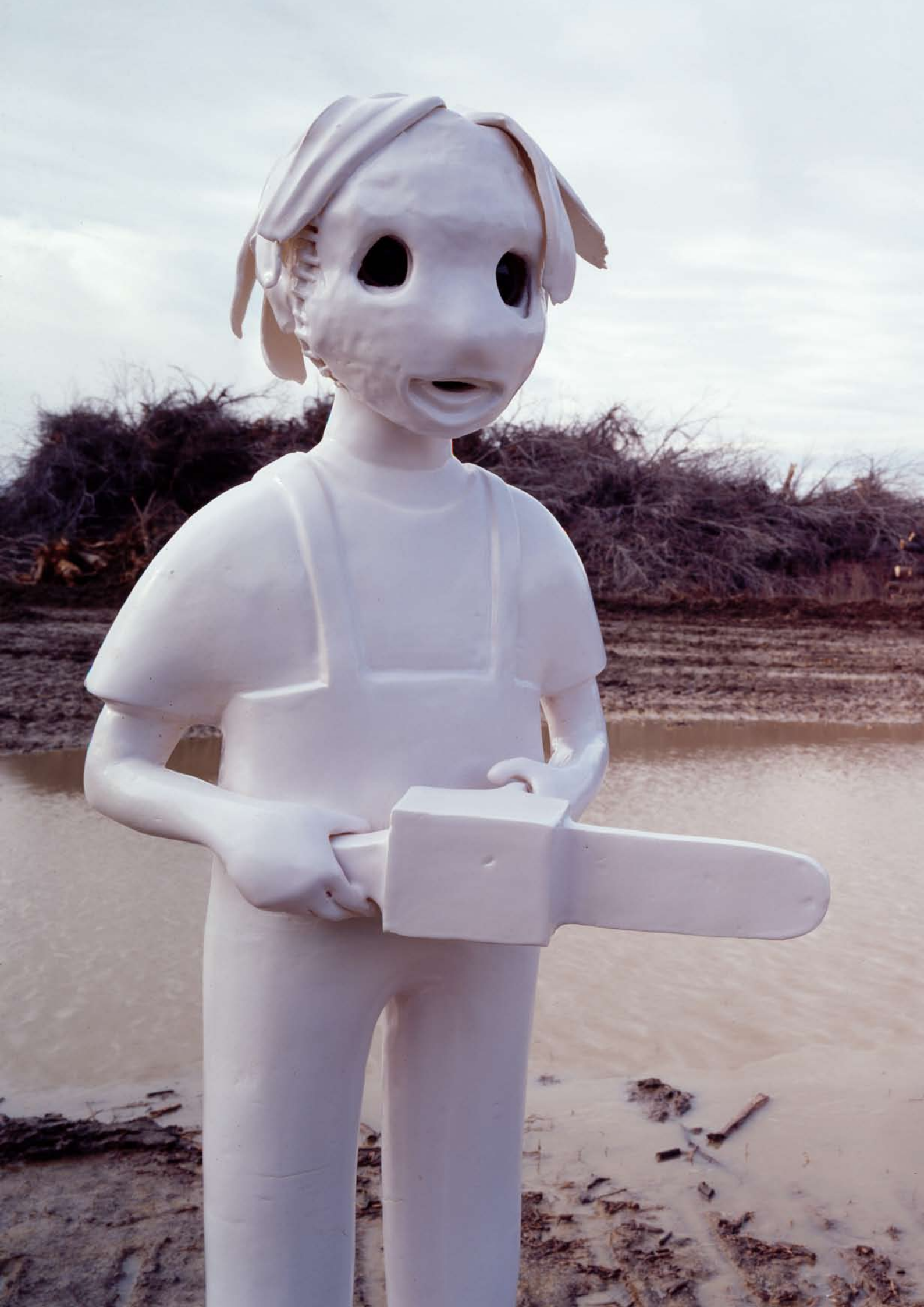
agonising, reality. Quite rapidly certain key elements of their appearance are seen to be intentionally accentuated by Kim Simonsson and are the subject of his particular attention. The children that he sculpts give an impression of distance and hesitation. Their attitudes and actions are separated from any idea of expression. The faces remain impassive and mute. They move in a world of silence approaching a form of autism.

The absence of formal tumult is echoed in an absence of social and affective tumult.

Unlike the work of Luca della Robbia – one thinks of the children's choir, the Cantoria made for the Florence Cathedral between 1431 and 1438 and now kept in the Museo dell'opera del Duomo (Duomo Works Museum) – or the work of Adriano Cecioni – the “incontro per le scale” now in the Galleria d'Arte Moderna in the Palazzo Pitti in Florence which is, from this point of view, particularly eloquent – there is no connection between the beings represented by Kim Simonsson. They are sociologically disconnected. And yet they exist, near us and amongst us.

Nothing captures their attention. Their position is frontal. Their eyes are wide-open and the pupil is always completely absent. They stare fixedly, as though absorbed in thought. We, on the other hand, can not help looking into their eyes. There









is a projection of our anxiety, which is accentuated by their ectoplasmic appearance resulting from the coldness and neutrality of the black or white coating used in some of the more recent series. Our eye does not find a place to settle. Now, replacing the eyes and even the face, convex mirrors often reflect and distort our environment.

These vulnerable-looking little children are strangers to all this – to our adult world that they do not understand – and yet they seem to be victims of it.

While we are looking, do we not see something different? Beyond the exterior signs could there be a hidden, worrying reality? Perhaps, but what would it be?

For the answer we have to look into ourselves. Only introspection can allow us to realise to just what extent we adults are guilty. Our responsibility to these beings with their guilt-inducing silence is immense. Our contemporary society as a whole, by its blindness, its madness, its violence and its incapacity to invent a happy future for them, condemns them to being no more than mutants, beings without any link to nature and, thus, to their own human nature.

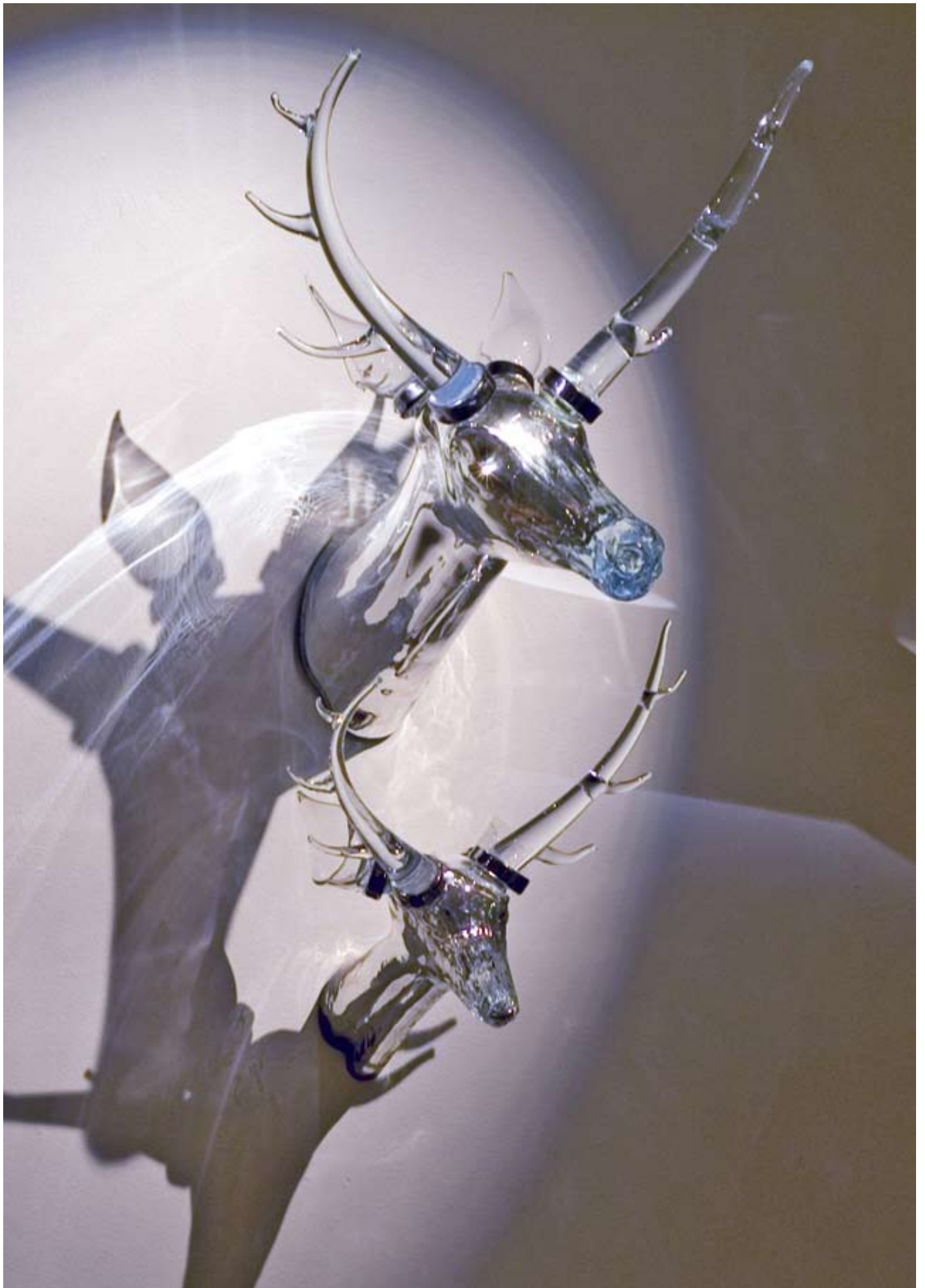
Another collection of sculptures, representing dogs, illustrates this theme. It is as though having been flayed alive their skin was then replaced. Their tensed muscles and expressionless eyeballs, their attitude of suicide victims with fragmented bodies, or perhaps of stressed and fearful racing dogs, display immature and violent human attitudes to all around them. This work confirms Kim Simonsson's interest in humans and their behavioural excesses. □

Yves Peltier











CURRICULUM VITAE

Opinnot

1995 – 2000 University of Arts and Design Helsinki, Master of Arts

Private exhibitions

- 2009 Pro Arte Award Exhibition, Didrichsen Art Museum, Helsinki, Finland (upcoming)
Sculptures, Wonderland Art Space, Copenhagen, Denmark (upcoming)
The Golden Deer, Retretti, Punkaharju, Finland
Animal Gaze, Galleria Heino, Helsinki, Finland
- 2008 Invisible World, Nancy Margolis Gallery, New York, USA
Variations On A Decoration, Wäinö Aaltonen Art Museum, Turku, Finland
Sculptures, Finnish Cultural Institut, Oslo, Norway
The Invisible Deer, Galleria Heino, ARCO08 Solo Projects, Madrid, Spain
- 2007 Den osynliga hjorten, Finnish Cultural Institute, Stockholm, Sweden
Dreams And Disappointments II, Herrmann & Wagner Gallery, Berlin, Germany
Sculptures, Taidesalonki Husa, Tampere, Finland (with Panu Puolakka)
Kotona II, Karin Widnäs, Fiskars, Finland
- 2006 Camouflage, Gallery Heino, Helsinki, Finland
Huoltamo, Tampere, Finland
- 2005 Nancy Margolis Gallery, New York, USA
Sculptures, Arabia Museum's Gallery, Helsinki, Finland
Dislocated Clay and a Transformative Mirror, NCECA, Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore, USA
- 2004 Young Artist of the Year 2004, Tampere Art Museum, Tampere, Finland
- 2003 K9 & NIKE, Kluuvi Gallery, Helsinki, Finland
- 2000 Realm of The Senses, Studio Hyöryllistä, Turku, Finland
- 1999 Ideaali, Gallery of the Fine Arts Academy, Helsinki, Finland (with Miklos Gaal)

Group exhibitions

- 2009 Miami Warm Up, Nancy Margolis Gallery, New York USA
Prospection & Perspective. P1, Galerie Favardin & de Verneuil, Paris, France
Visuell förvirring, Museum of Art in Åland, Mariehamn, Finland
- 2008 Confrontational Ceramics, The Arts Exchange, White Plains, USA
Tulessa Syntynyt, Makasiini, Fiskars, Finland
KunstKörperlich-KörperKunstlich Part 2, Kunsthalle Dominikanerkirche, Osnabruck, Germany
Persistence des Rêves, Bibliothèque Mériadeck / Fondation Pro Artibus, Bordeaux, France
International Biennale of Contemporary Ceramic Art Vallauris, Vallauris, France
Incertitude de la vision, Tour & Taxis, Brussels, Belgium
Every Body Counts, Vestfossen Kunstlaboratorium, Vestfossen, Norway
La Position de la terre, Crac Alsace, France
- 2007 Red Dot Art Fair, Nancy Margolis Gallery, Miami Beach, USA
Evil Eye, Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki, Finland
Silent Violence, Oulu Art Museum, Oulu, Finland
Present 2007, Bomuldsfabriken Kunsthall, Aredal, Norway
I Would Like To Be A Dog, Rauma Art Museum, Rauma, Finland
XII Mäntän kuvataideviikot, Mänttä, Finland
Herrmann & Wagner Gallery and Gallery Heino, Brussels Art Fair, Brussels, Belgium
- 2006 Purnu Summer Exhibition, Purnu, Finland
6 Rooms, Porvoo Art Factory, Porvoo, Finland
Helsinki International, Korjaamo, Helsinki, Finland
SOFA NY, Nancy Margolis Gallery, New York, USA
Another Worlds part II, Arario gallery, Cheonan, Republic of Korea
Set, Forum Box, Helsinki, Finland
Ungsfärskt, gallery Sinne and Elverket, Helsinki and Tammisaari, Finland
- 2005 Japan Pop, Tennis Palace Art Museum, Helsinki, Finland
Trans Ceramic-Art, 3rd Ceramic Biennale Korea, Icheon, Republic of Korea
Stockholm International Art Fair, Gallery Heino, Stockholm, Sweden
- 2003 Wegway Show, S.P.I.N. Gallery, Toronto, Canada
Toronto Outdoor Art Show, Toronto, Canada
One Hundred Years of Finnish Ceramic, Designmuseum, Helsinki, Finland
- 2002 Inverno, Este Gallery, Toronto, Canada

- Group Show, The Palace, Toronto, Canada
- 2001 Made in LAC, Living Arts Center, Mississauga, Canada
Emerging Sculptors, Canadian Sculpture Center, Toronto, Canada
Biennale of Contemporary Ceramic Art, Chateauroux, France
- 2000 K2000, Lappeenranta Art Museum, Lappeenranta, Finland
THINK, Ateneum, Helsinki, Finland
- 1999 Nenonen, Partanen, Lerviks, Persson, Simonsson, Into galleria, Helsinki, Finland
- 1998 Contemporary Glass Art, Studio Mezzo, Helsinki, Finland
Keramik 98, Konstfacket, Stockholm, Sweden
Stockholm International Art Fair, Gallery Taik, Stockholm, Sweden
- 1997 Glass and Light, Tampere Modern Art Museum, Tampere, Finland
Glass and Ceramic in Spotlight, Gallery Taik, Helsinki, Finland

Awards and scholarships

- 2009 Pro Arte Award, Didrichsen Art Museum
- 2008 Walter Runeberg Foundation Award
Svenska kulturfonden 2-year artist grant
- 2006 Walter Runeberg Foundation Award
Stina Krook Foundation Award
- 2005 Frame-fund, exhibition scholarship
Svenska kulturfonden, a 2-year artist grant
Arts Council of Finland, travel grant
- 2004 Young artist of the year 2004, Tampere Art Museum, Finland
Artist of the month, Frame-fund, July 2004
- 2003 Best in Show, Toronto Outdoor Art Show
Svenska Kulturfonden, a 1-year grant
- 2001 Svenska Kulturfonden, project grant
Paolo Foundation, project grant
- 1998 University of Arts and Design Helsinki

Museums and collections

Sara Hilden Art Museum
 Victoria And Albert Museum
 Racine Art Museum
 KONE Foundation
 Amos Andersson Art Museum
 Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art
 Espoo Museum of Modern Art
 National Museum of Norway
 Oulu Art Museum
 Shigaraki Museum of Contemporary Ceramic Art
 Helsinki City Art Museum
 Tampere Art Museum
 Designmuseum, Helsinki
 Arario Gallery
 Pro Artibus
 Ville de Chateauroux
 Heino collection

Public Sculptures

Yrkeshögskolan Sydväst, Tammisaari, Finland

Catalogues and selected publications

Best of New York Art 2008, X Tresaco, Theredoom Publishing
 Simonsson skapar sin egen värld i vitt, Dan Sundell, Hbl 29.03.2009
 The Pop Insurrection, Sandra Bavin, Belio Magazine 028
 Kim Simonsson, M. Carmen Riu de Martin, Revistart no 132
 Outouden estetiikka ja mangan muotokieli, Riitta Monto, 22.8.2008, Turun Sanomat
 Ghost World Sculptures Kim Simonsson, Aril 21 2008, The New York Sun

Scenes from domestic life: Victoria&Albert Museum's Collect fair, 26.1, 2008, The Times
Kim Simonsson: Alien Innocence, Stephanie Bickel, Sculpture, March 2008,
Architektur und Wohnen, October-November 2007, Helsinki Die design-metropolen in hohen Norden, Jan van Rossem
Kunst Magazine Berlin 0709
Camouflage, Catalogue Gallery Heino, Tuomas Toivonen
Artnews, February 2006, Top Ten Trends In Contemporary Art, Beautiful Mutants, Kay Larson
Ceramics Art & Perception, Issue 63, Kim Simonsson – Little Girls, Big Questions,
Anne Virtanen
New York Times, 28th of October, Art in Review, Kim Simonsson at Nancy Margolis
Gallery, Ken Johnson
World Contemporary Ceramics, Trans Ceramic Art, 3rd Ceramic Biennale of Korea, Catalogue
Artforum.com, Critics Picks November, "Kim Simonsson at Nancy Margolis Gallery", Lori Waxman
Ceramics Magazine October/November 2005, "A Waking Nightmare. The World Of Kim Simonsson", Anne Virtanen
Taidemuseo.fi,3/2005, "Kauden Taideteos" by Leena Mattelmäki
The Scandinavian Stylish Design, 2005, "The Arabia Ware in Finland" by Hannele Nyman
Trans Ceramic-Art,2005, 3rd Ceramic Biennale Korea, "Post-global Society", catalogue
Framework, 2/2004, "Kim Simonsson: Dystopia-Porcelain Dogs as Guardians of a Pathological Fantasy" by Leevi
Haapala
Form Function Finland, 3/2004, "Truth is No Trend, a Close-up View of the Art of Kim Simonsson" by Anne Valkonen
American Ceramics, 'Finnish Quasi-Manga' by Cynthia Nadelman
Taide,3/2004, "Kuvausvalmiita kolmiulotteisia ideoita" by Jari Arffman
Suomen Kuvalehti, 20/2004, "Kohtaamiset/henkilöt" by Silja Lanas Cavada
Ceramic Art in Finland, 2004, "A Contemporary Tradition" by Åsa Hellman
Tampere Art Museum, 2004, "Kim Simonsson, Young Artist of the Year" by Berndt Arell
1984-2004 Young Artist of the Year, 2004, "Kim Simonsson" by Tapani Pennanen
Wegway Primary Culture, 2005
11th Biennale of Contemporary Ceramic Art in Chateauroux,2001, by Jean-Pierre Viot
University of Art and Design, 2000, "Think" by Paula Hakkarainen and Elina Melgin
Arttu, 3/2000, "Posliinia uudessa paketissa" by Sami Sykkö
Geo Saison, 2/2000, "Design in Helsinki" by Bernd Polster
University of Art and Design in Helsinki, 1998, "11 x 98"