

## Peles Empire

*intimacy with mortals*

**Opening:** 9 December 2022, 5-8 pm

**Exhibition:** 9 December 2022 – 18 February 2023

WENTRUP is pleased to present 'intimacy with mortals,' the third solo exhibition by Peles Empire.

Peles Empire repurpose, reimagine and deconstruct our world of historically known meaning. Throughout 'intimacy with mortals' at WENTRUP, Peles Empire create slippages of comprehension, subverting the stable context of people and places who have been utilised historically and contemporaneously to construct hegemony. Historical icons of fertility, including Cleopatra, Aphrodite, the pomegranate and mammalian monoliths take centre stage in this new exhibition, which features several of Peles Empire's idiosyncratic jesmonite panels and ceramic works. Aphrodite is a key protagonist in the exhibition who, like Cleopatra, has been a passive and instrumentalised subject of the male gaze for Millenia. For centuries the iconic status of Aphrodite has shifted, her meaning repeatedly emptied out and re-filled, as a method of coercion to construct new meaning, and thus societal manipulation; from penile clay objects to bearded figurines to her most famous construction by Sandro Botticelli. Throughout the exhibition this allusion to both the precarity and violence of meaning is alluded to. From the confrontational and almost pornographic ceramic representation of the pomegranate, deliberately suspended in raw clay as a nod to the potential of objectified meaning, violently ripped apart to reveal its overly abundant mammalian structure, it's excessive fertility both seductive and grotesque; to the jesmonite panels, caught in the process of creation, a freezing of time to include studio detritus, veneered historical icons, all flattened onto the same axis in an effort to remove hierarchy and illustrate our ingrained systemic prejudices and the abusive potential of storytelling to objectify meaning.

— *Helen Turner*

Peles Empire is a collaboration between the artists Katharina Stöver, born in 1982 in Gießen, and Barbara Wolff, born in 1980 in Fogaras, Romania. They met at Städelschule in Frankfurt during their studies and have worked together ever since.

Peles Empire has had solo exhibitions at Sargent's Daughter, New York, US | E-Werk, Luckenwalde, DE | Barakat Contemporary, Seoul, KR | Künstlerhaus Graz, AT | Kunstverein Kassel, DE | Wilhelm-Hack-

Museum, Ludwigshafen, DE | S.A.L.T.S., Birsfelden, CH | PRO/NUM, London, GB | ten/pm, Copenhagen, DK | GAK Bremen, DE | Cell Project Space, London, GB | Kunstmuseum Stuttgart, DE | GSS, Glasgow, GB.

In 2017 Peles Empire participated at the Skulptur Projekte Münster and the group exhibition 'Made in Germany' at Kunstverein Hannover.

Currently, their solo show at Kunstverein Pforzheim is on view until January 15th.

They were part of numerous group exhibitions including Haus am Lützowplatz, Berlin, DE | Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh, GB | Timișoara Biennale, RO | Portikus, Frankfurt, DE | Kunstverein Braunschweig, DE | KW Kunstwerke, Berlin DE | The Moving Museum, Istanbul, TR | Shanaynay, Paris, FR | NKV Wiesbaden, DE | Bundeskunsthalle Bonn, DE | Temple Bar, Dublin, IE | V22, London, GB | Bold Tendencies, London, GB.

Works by Peles Empire are part of the public collections of the Kunstmuseum Stuttgart, DE | EZB Europäische Zentralbank, Frankfurt, DE | Sammlung für zeitgenössische Kunst der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Bonn, DE | KAI 10 / Arthena Foundation, Düsseldorf, DE.