

ANNIE ATTRIDGE HEARTS OF OAK

ASYA
GEISBERG
GALLERY



Love on the Rocks, 2010, Porcelain, tin and enamel glaze, 7" x 6" x 6".

JANUARY 15 - FEBRUARY 12, 2011

Asya Geisberg Gallery is pleased to present "Hearts of Oak", an exhibition of porcelain works, bronze sculpture, and charcoal drawings by British artist Annie Attridge. Attridge creates a universe of caves, mounds, entrances into flesh and exits into limbs, breasts, and flowery decadence. Her bawdy and sometimes brazen imagery explicitly contradicts the decorum of traditional porcelains, revealing what hides beneath a petticoat. The rococo curving lines of 18th century porcelain are evoked in arms and legs entwining, tree limbs twisting, and animal and figure amalgamations. In the intimacy and luminous delicacy within her pieces, Attridge expresses a torrent of emotion. Attridge's lush drawings create a velvety cover of compressed charcoal, adding drama to her cavorting carnality. Her bronze works emasculate while simultaneously endowing a symbol of timelessness and strength to soft bodies and billowing sails.

The process of making porcelain is long and difficult, but Attridge's playful pinched pieces exude a simplicity and ease. Similarly, in her bronze works, Attridge takes a complex and arduous process with a long history, and shrinks the patently megalomaniacal into toy-like scale. With *Flogging a Dead Horse*, instead of a super-sized statue of a general on his horse proclaiming victory in the public plaza, Attridge gives us a truly miniature pony, with a shiny breast for a hump. In *Termite Boobie*, Attridge takes gargantuan cathedral mounds where termites create a self-contained world of digestion, and turns them into another kind of symbol of nourishment. In *Love on the Rocks*, the termite mound, a colony for millions, has become a private cave for half-submerged lovers.

The title of the exhibition, "Hearts of Oak", is a Cockney expression, which in the rhyming slang of working-class British culture means "broke". A sly nod to the traditional penury associated with artists, it is also a witty joke on the upper-class origin of the decorative figurines that sit atop mantelpieces. In Attridge's works, traditional British aristocratic referents -- the hunt, the private garden, and gymkhana equestrian events-- are fused with private dramas of desire and longing. In the churning of art history, Roman mythology and Chinese technology are repackaged by 17th century workshops led by Meissen and Sevres, then later copied by centuries of English hands, and finally a modern lass discovers a neglected art, and finds new stories to tell with this privileged medium. As Attridge says, "I have a love relationship with porcelain, and I hope we never fall out." In *Your borders, your rivers, your tiny villages*, multiple figures prance within a maze of hedges, all on a scratched old ping-pong table. Metaphors multiply, as the landscape of the body is conflated with the arenas of play, sport, and games. Behind the charm and gaiety lies a melancholic air, where true happiness is just out of reach, and the potential for romantic fulfilment might never be realized.

Born in 1975, Annie Attridge lives and works in London. With a MA from the Royal Academy, and BA in Painting from the University of Brighton, Attridge was featured in "Grand National - Art from Great Britain" at the Vestfossen Kunstlaboratorium, Norway, and has had exhibitions at Galerie Maurer, Frankfurt, and Nettie Horn, London. She will be in "Material Worlds" at the Contemporary Art Society, and "Belle Laide" at Danielle Arnaud Gallery, both in London. This will be the artist's first solo exhibition in New York.