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Sybille Peretti & Mixed Media Works

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Intimate. Beautiful. Disturbing. Such are the adjectives applied to the work of Sibylle Peretti, whose visions of children convey a quietly mysterious otherworld. Like a parallel universe, Peretti-world is part dream and part fairy tale, but it also resonates with a certain reality we sense without knowing exactly what it is, at least not at first.

Peretti resides most of the year in New Orleans but keeps an apartment in Cologne, in her native Germany, and has long been inspired by children who live with circumstances that cause them to establish their own unique relationships with the world, especially the natural world of the feral children who inspired her current body of work. While the idea of children raised by wolves and wild creatures is hardly new, occurring often in mythologies, Peretti's approach is more psychological, invoking perhaps the prehistory of human consciousness — those deeply subconscious dreams or memories of a more mystical union with nature that's latent within all of us.



The works on view are a mixture of freestanding porcelain sculptures, etched translucent wall panels, and glass, raindrop-shaped wall sculptures, all depicting children seemingly in a state of suspended animation if not repose. Otherworldly and dreamlike, their presence is somnambulistic, charismatically quiescent as they relate to each other or to birds, vines and brambles, the flora and fauna of the natural landscape. Like her earlier series of "silent children," inspired by the haunting expressions seen in photographs of youngsters in antique German medical texts, they explore the hidden side of childhood, a complex, contemplative world of dreams, imaginings and gestures. Of the earlier series, Peretti said, "They represent innocence, but also a kind of knowing, yet they cannot really say what they know so they speak their own wordless language." Much the same might be said of these feral children, whose silence hints at the delicate relationship between human civilization and the remaining wildness that lingers around us and within us.