



Melkorka Katrín Tómasdóttir, aka Korkimon

Intense Freedom

Korkimon finds independence through art

Words: John Rogers Photo: Art Bicnick

Exhibition

Korkimon's solo show opens at Geysir Heima on March 23rd

Melkorka Katrín Tómasdóttir, aka Korkimon, opens the door to her studio with a beaming smile. Hidden in the top floor of an unassuming office building, her workspace is located in a network of rooms she shares with some other young artists. It's littered with interesting stuff—a chaise longue set against a black backdrop; a pile of books topped by the Petra Collins-edited compendium 'Babe'; an eye-catching Alvia Islandia calendar.

Her studio is lined with the small sculptures and pinned-up line drawings that will make up her forthcoming show at Geysir Heima. She inspects them carefully. "My work is not very refined," she begins. "It's sort of unfinished. I like to see the traces of the process, when I look at other artists' work—I like it when you can see how they were hammering the object."

The exhibition will consist of new drawings and sculptures, mixed with her favourite existing work. "I've been making new drawings for the past two months, but some of the sculptures are from my graduation show. It's sort

of, in my opinion, my 'Best of.' It's the work I'm most proud of."

Mutual support

Melkorka graduated from the Sarah Lawrence College in New York City in May 2017. "I just moved back," she says. "Everyone's very surprised. Any time I'd tell someone I lived in New York, they were like, "Wow! That must be amazing!" But I moved there when I was 12, so I was used to it."

She's enjoying the change of pace. "I like being home," she continues. "The quality of life in Iceland is so high, and there's camaraderie in the art scene. Everyone wants to work together and support each other here. In New York, it's more competitive. There are so many artists. It's dog-eat-dog."

Viscerally fleshy

Melkorka's large-scale drawings are created by tracing sketchbook works onto acetate, blowing them

up on an overhead projector, and re-drawing the lines onto bigger sheets of paper. "It's like a whole new medium for me," she says. "It's a different technique, using the same drawing, with elements of reproducing and recycling. I really like these step-by-step, problem-solving processes."

The resulting imagery is often viscerally fleshy, including teeth, gums, muscles, tendons and other distorted body parts. "The female body is an underlying red-thread that's always part of my work," she explains. "It's an instinctive, in-the-moment choice of what I'll draw. When I'm writing a statement or trying to figure out what my work is about, meaning always comes after the fact. I don't decide to make work about X and Y—I make a tonne of everything, and then I curate all the accidents together."

"In my art, I'm the highest voice. I control everything. It's an indulgence and freedom that I don't feel in the real world."

Total indulgence

For Melkorka, art is an escape from the steady climb up the rungs of school and academia. "When I was growing up and going to school, I felt like I was always being prepped for the next stage," she finishes. "Being prepped for college, which is then prepping you for life. But in my art, I'm the highest voice. I control everything. It's a total indulgence, an intense freedom that I don't feel in the real world." ☞

