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In Leos Carax's fantasy film *Holy Motors* (2012), the protagonist's job is to perform as a variety of freaks. He diligently changes costumes and moves around Paris, metamorphosing into the rejects of society, as if he were on a mission to reproduce the absurd and weird moments in life. As the film progresses, it becomes increasingly difficult to make connections between his various performances: from the beast-like man eating flowers to the father who suddenly appears with a family of monkeys. The film breaks with not only the logic of linear narrative but also the norms moulded by social institutions – from family to education.

Like Carax's film, Kris Lemsalu's exhibition *Evian Desert* creates an irrational fantasy world where metamorphosis is an unending process, without beginning or end, before or after, cause or effect. The artist turns the white cube into a menagerie of morning robes, burnt luggage, stray body parts (hands, feet, tongues), animals, furs, waves and sand. Entering the gallery space, the viewer is prevented from becoming a mere spectator since the sculptures seem as if they were about to perform instead of simply existing to be viewed.



**Father is in Town, 2012, Hand-painted porcelain, lamb fur and pigskin, 45×195×130 cm**

In her accompanying statement, Lemsalu describes Evian Desert using conflicting dualities such as 'drying out and floating through water at the same time'. The artist vigorously plays with two sides of the very same situation, as suggested by Evian Desert 1 (all works 2012) and Evian Desert 2: two colourful, life-size and life-like morning robes which are made of porcelain and displayed on a mound of sand. One robe rests abandoned in a wrinkled pile on the sand while the other stands upright, as if it were still being worn. One cannot see bodies, only the traces of them, which end up indicating an absence; a human body turns into nothingness. Or perhaps the robes have anthropomorphized. Every work seems like a monstrosity from a cabinet of curiosities. The porcelain sculptures ∞ (1) and ∞ (2) – psychedelically-coloured dwarfs with heads reminiscent of both flowers and waves, with distorted torsos and huge human feet – are mythological hybrids. In \_Father is in Town, porcelain dog heads with huge tongues seem to be licking each other; the dog heads as well as human-looking feet and hands are all attached to the edges of a wild pigskin and a lamb pelt, both sewn together. The work – devoid of flesh and left on the floor in front of a fake fireplace stuck to the wall – is an uncanny object, somewhere between furnishing and clothing.

In fact, Lemsalu wore this piece for her performance at the opening, which featured the music of the composer Van Dyke Parks. But before the audience arrived, she rolled herself up in the pelts, exposing just her right foot and left leg, which started to look like extra porcelain body parts. The artist – remaining completely still for the entire 45-minute performance – seemed to fuse with her work. Although she lay motionless, her existence was still palpable in the space. Perhaps, like the protagonist in Holy Motors, Lemsalu was just doing her job.