

ARTnews

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Neoclassic Revival

This summer, the Brooklyn Museum opened a retrospective of sorts for the little-known Neoclassical sculptor **Harriet Hosmer**. But the show doesn't include any pieces by Hosmer. And the accompanying catalogue contains no photographs, plates, or reproductions of her work. Hosmer's sculptures are instead chronicled in a series of monochromatic watercolors painted by New York conceptual artist **Patricia Cronin**.

"I like to say, 'I'm not an art historian, but I play one in my studio,'" Cronin says with a laugh. Since discovering Hosmer's work in 2000, Cronin has sought to fill an omission in 19th-century art history. After conducting research in the United States, Scotland, and Italy, Cronin wrote an account of the

sculptor's life for her "catalogue raisonné" of Hosmer's work, recently published by Charta Art Books. To accompany the text, Cronin made watercolors of Hosmer's 60 known marble pieces, 28 of which are included in the

show "Patricia Cronin: 'Harriet Hosmer, Lost and Found,'" at the Brooklyn Museum (up through January).

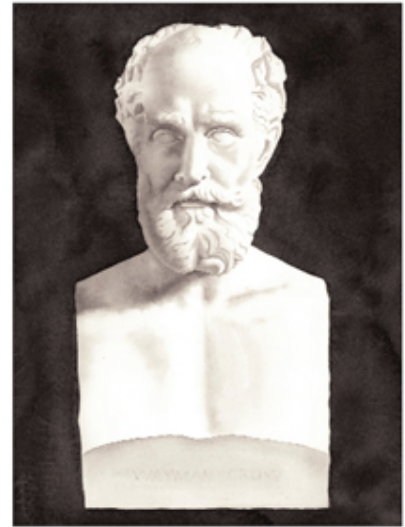
Hosmer, writes art historian **William H. Gerdtz** in a catalogue essay, was critically acclaimed and financially successful in her day. An American expat living in Rome, she mingled with renowned artists

and writers and built a strong presence on the international exhibition circuit. But as Neoclassicism fell out of style, Hosmer all but vanished from the scene.

Cronin's watercolors depict Hosmer's busts of mythological and historical figures. For works that she couldn't find images of, Cronin painted

blurred, abstract "ghost" pieces based on descriptions in the press and in Hosmer's personal correspondence. "They're meant to symbolize lost individual sculptures as well as a lost career," Cronin says. "Plus, they hold out the possibility that these works might one day come back."

—Rachel Wolff



Patricia Cronin's watercolors *Medusa*, 2006 (left), and *Portrait of Wayman Crow*, 2007 (right), depict Harriet Hosmer's marble originals.