

SOCIETY OF FELLOWS

AMERICAN ACADEMY IN ROME

**At Brooklyn Museum, 'Harriet Hosmer, Lost and Found',
an exhibition of watercolors by Patricia Cronin FAAR'07**

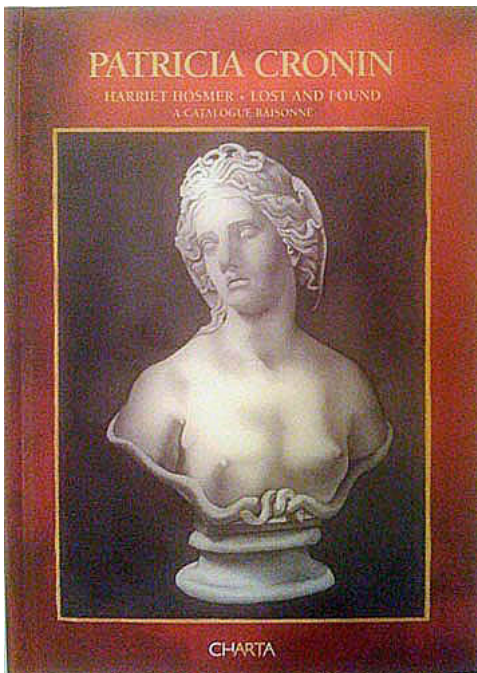
A group of twenty-eight watercolors by Brooklyn-based conceptual artist **Patricia Cronin** FAAR'07, inspired by the work of nineteenth-century sculptor **Harriet Hosmer** (1830-1908), will be on view in the Sackler Wing of the Brooklyn Museum from today (5 June 2009) through 24 January 2010. Read the New York Times review [here](#).



Patricia Cronin, *The Sleeping Faun* by Harriet Hosmer, 1865 (2006)

In an article for Artnet, Charlie Fitch sketches out the basics of this ambitious and unusually memorable show, entitled *Harriet Hosmer: Lost and Found*.

“After five years of hard work, one of which was spent in Rome under a fellowship from the American Academy, Patricia Cronin has completed her monumental recreation of the life of the renowned 19th-century American expatriate sculptor Harriet Hosmer. Cronin’s artwork consists of a catalogue raisonné of Hosmer’s work titled *Harriet Hosmer: Lost and Found*, just out from Charta Press, and a solo exhibition opening at the Sackler Wing of the Brooklyn Museum...”



The Hosmer catalogue raisonné; on the cover, Cronin's Medusa, 1854 (2006)

“Much of Hosmer’s work has been destroyed or disappeared, or was never realized”, continues Fitch. “Patricia Cronin has painstakingly recreated Hosmer’s body of work in a striking series of black-and-white watercolors, which appear as ambiguous ghosts of Hosmer’s main themes, strong women who often suffer through serious tribulations and fancy free men of nature surrounded by charmingly diabolical cherubs.”

But for the deep background to the Lost and Found exhibition, here is Patricia Cronin herself.

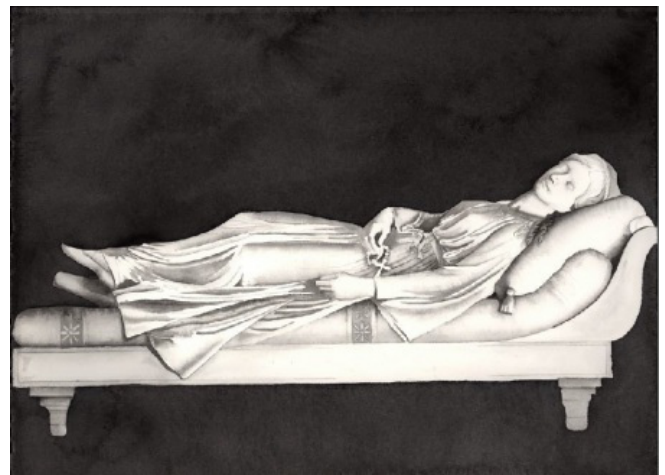
“In 2000 I received a large grant from the Kansas City, Missouri based foundation, Grand Arts, to make my dream piece—a 3 ton marble over life-size mortuary statue titled ‘Memorial To A Marriage’ of my partner, the artist Deborah Kass and myself, destined for our burial plot in Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx, designed in 1863 as America’s Père-Lachaise.”

“I began researching the history of sculpture in order to make mine. The history of sculpture is dominated by death, burials and memorials. In fact, the history of sculpture IS the history of death. While combing through every tome on sculpture, I stumbled across two statues I had never seen before. They were extraordinary.”

“One was of Beatrice Cenci and the other was the Tomb of Judith Falconnet. I fell in love. I looked at the artist’s name below each reproduction and read the words ‘Harriet Hosmer.’ I said out loud, ‘hmmm, I’ve never heard of her.’ And then wondered, ‘WHY had I never heard of her?’ I knew then and there she would be my next project. While I was thinking about my own death when creating ‘Memorial To A Marriage,’ I found someone else’s life.”



Patricia Cronin, Beatrice Cenci, 1856 (2007)



Patricia Cronin, Tomb of Judith Falconnet, 1857

“Harriet Hosmer (1830-1908) moved to Rome in 1852 when she was 22 years old, apprenticed with the leading Neo-classical sculptor, British artist John Gibson, and very quickly hung out her own shingle and became known as the first professional woman sculptor. Hosmer lived within a lively Anglo-American expatriate community of writers and artists, as well as a circle of ‘independent women.’ In her time, she had a prominent career, was critically acclaimed, financially successful, and exhibited in all the international exhibitions. She was infamous. Today, her works are in the best museum collections in the world and yet she is largely unknown.”



Hosmer 1857 portrait of Harriet Hosmer by Matthew Brady

“Who gets written into history? Who is forgotten? Why, how and what are the conditions in which eradication can occur? How is value determined? These elements coalesce at the intersection of the ivory tower and the art market that is the catalogue raisonné.”

“My Hosmer Catalogue Raisonné is made by hand. Each of her neo-classical marble statues is represented by a monochromatic watercolor. Because of its transparent properties watercolor is the perfect medium to represent the luminosity of marble—how light penetrates the surface of marble, swirls around about inch below the surface before it bounces back out.”

“The watercolor images of Hosmer’s statues are arranged in chronological order and are interspersed with ghost images of what the London Art Journal (the Artforum of its day), called Hosmer’s crowning achievement: her masterpiece, which is now lost, the life size marble statue of the last Queen of Naples. Although there are contradicting written descriptions, there is no visual documentation of Hosmer’s ‘Queen of Naples.’ How to visually represent something I cannot see has been a question I’ve been grappling with for some time.”

“Living in Rome for a year, tracing Hosmer’s footsteps, surrounded by Catholicism, majestic churches, mysticism, stories of miracles and saints’ lives has helped me shape the answer: an apparition, a phantom for missing statues, and a lost career.”



Working in painting, sculpture, installation, and watercolor, Patricia Cronin has exhibited extensively, including at the American Academy in Rome, Deitch Projects, White Columns, and the Brent Sikkema Gallery in New York. She has been included in group exhibitions at the Neuberger Museum, the Contemporary Art Center in Cincinnati, and the Tang Teaching Museum.

In addition to her 2006/7 John Armstrong Chaloner/Jacob H. Lazarus-Metropolitan Museum of Art Rome Prize, Cronin is the recipient of numerous awards, including grants from the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation and the New York Foundation for the Arts. She is an associate professor of art at Brooklyn College.

“When I first observed Patricia Cronin’s painstaking watercolors of Hosmer’s oeuvre in her Brooklyn studio three years ago,” writes critic Charlie Fitch in Artnet, “I marveled at the completeness of such a project that would subsume any artist without the bright, marathon spirit of the indefatigable Cronin. Her pictures add a shade of vulnerability and pathos to the residue of Hosmer’s fame, but they also, by their very existence, seek to restore Harriet’s glory. Let this be the beginning of a wider search into the buried past of the great women artists, of whom Patricia Cronin is one.”