

**HOLLYBUSH GARDENS IS DELIGHTED TO PRESENT:**

**CLAY AS BREAD AND DUST AS WINE**

**CLAIRE HOOPER**

The main gallery hosts a 1:1 scale copy in watercolour of the frescoes in the altar room of the sanctuary of Ereshkigal in Kutha, circa \* -2094 BCE

This temple was replaced by a temple to Nergal by King Shulgi (ca. 2094-2047) which eventually fell into terrible disrepair and was completely rebuilt by Nebuchadnezzar II (ca. 605-562)

The site was excavated in 1881 for four weeks by Hormuzd Rassam, little was discovered, mainly some inscribed bowls and a few tablets.

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*The gatekeeper entered and spoke to Ereshkigal:  
"Ho! here is thy sister, Ishtar ...  
Hostility of the great powers ...  
When Ereshkigal heard this,  
As when one hews down a tamarisk she trembled,  
As when one cuts a reed, she shook:  
"What has moved her heart? what has stirred her liver?  
Ho there, does this one wish to dwell with me?  
To eat clay as bread, to drink dust as wine?  
I weep for the men who have left their wives.  
I weep for the wives torn from the embrace of their husbands;  
For the little ones cut off before their time.*

From *Descent of the Goddess Ishtar into the Lower World* (Nineveh, ca.911-612BC) trans. M Jastrow 1915

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Claire Hooper is best known for her videos: Beginning with those which depict underground, interior and/or imagined spaces; *Auditorium*, *World of Interiors* (2006) and *Nach Spandau* (2008) - and moving into using characters from ancient Greek myth; a loose trilogy comprising *Eris* (2012), *Aoide* (2011) and *Nyx* (2010).

Hooper describes her work as 'essentially literary', using a particular text and its inherent structures as a framework for new production, and exploring the porous boundary between a close reading and personal projection, the interior or underground space is associated with the psyche or dreaming mind. Although the themes are recurring, this new body of work presents a departure from video and into installation, using watercolour techniques to construct large-scale wall panel works on paper. One could say that this is like a theatrical backdrop using a set of ideas as actors, making an imagined space for the action to unfold. The space could be a room that might belong to part of a temple, raised to Ereshkigal, the goddess of the underworld in ancient Kutha, Mesopotamia; a temple which perhaps never existed.

Recent solo exhibitions and events include *Fig 2, no. 7* (with Maria Loboda), ICA, London; *Ziggurat* (w Paul Simon Richards), Chandelier Projects at Edel Assanti, London; *Claire Hooper* Bonner Kunstverien, Bonn (solo), *Eris: The Path of ER*, a live performance with Lioness at the ICA, London as part of the LUX Biennial of Moving Images; *Nyx*, *Aoide*, *Eris* at MUMOK, Vienna; and *Aoide* at Lothringer 13, Munich. She has also exhibited at the; Whitechapel Gallery, London; the Serpentine Gallery, London; Kunst Werke, Berlin; Portikus, Frankfurt; and IT Park Gallery, Taiwan; and has shown her films at the Rotterdam and Oberhausen film festivals. She is the recipient of a 2010 Baloise Art Prize at Art Basel, and was shortlisted for the 2011 Jarman Award.

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for images and further information.

Gallery open: Tuesday - Friday 11 - 6 pm, Saturday 12 - 5 pm  
or by appointment

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