



**Najad** 2015, stoneware, readymade, porcelain, glaze, 15 x 35 x 35 cm.

My works are usually made in ceramics: everything from the finest porcelain to the coarsest stoneware. Yet I often combine my own creations with readymade figurines which I get from friends and acquaintances or buy in second-hand stores. Today, these kinds of figurines – mass-produced objects – are considered tasteless and have low cultural and market value. Yet for me, they evoke many thoughts about time and life. These are objects that we have had around us for generations and that we have experienced in different contexts. I combine the industrially-produced object with the handmade artwork. The found objects undergo a kind of transformation – both physically and symbolically – when they shift from one arena to the next. The material – its ability to combine simplicity with complexity – attracts me. I am fascinated that ceramics can change character: from a liquid-like substance that cannot be held to a malleable plastic in the hands and finally hard as rock. The material carries a memory and a story that I find interesting to explore. *Anita Hanch-Hansen*

## Anita Hanch-Hansen



**Rabbit Taking Care of His Egg** 2015, stoneware, readymade, porcelain, glaze, 25 x 20 x 10 cm. All images courtesy: the artist; all photographs: Kjetil Tefke.

Anita Hanch-Hansen (1971) lives and works in Rygge, Norway. Her artistic medium is ceramics, mainly stoneware and porcelain. Before completing her MFA studies at the Oslo National Academy of the Arts in 2015, she participated in group exhibitions at Kunsthall Grenland in Porsgrunn, Norway, at A.I.R. in Vallauris, France and at the inaugural Cluj International Ceramics Biennial at the Museum of Art Cluj-Napoca in Romania in 2014. During her studies, the artist was awarded a scholarship from the Norwegian fund for visual artists Bildende Kunstneres Hjelpesfond. Hanch-Hansen will have a solo exhibition at the Moss Kunstgalleri in 2016.

### Ready to Be Made Again

Who owns an artwork? Can it be altered by others? Does its status rise or fall after such alterations? These questions are inherent to the recent works of Anita Hanch-Hansen. The ceramicist started collecting readymade porcelain figures which used to adorn the shelves of many households, only to fall out of favour, descend into kitsch and be sold off at flea markets for a song. Instead of just presenting her finds, Hanch-Hansen uses them to produce new hybrid works: both serial readymade and unique original, both figurative and abstract, both low and high culture. A bathing nymph steps out of a pool of green, all atop a white mound reminiscent of a meringue puff; a moose calls out from another mound of swirling blues and greens; a rabbit places its paw on an enormous egg – both unceremoniously splattered by white blotches. While some figures grow out of their symbiotic partners, others appear to be sinking into them. The artist adds glazed clay to the porcelains before firing the hybrid, although she occasionally uses porcelain herself to fuse the found figures. While some are chipped, Hanch-Hansen is not adverse to altering a pristine collector piece. In some eyes, her hybrids could be viewed as acts of vandalism, either welcomed or tolerated because the originals have lost market, cultural and symbolic value. However one judges her creations, they raise issues that go hand in hand with digital culture: from the end of copyright to the erasure of the old hierarchy between high culture and popular culture on the web. The porcelains were mass-produced, just as one digital image is inherently an infinite series. Who owns an image? Can it be altered by others with PhotoShop or GIFs? Does its status rise or fall – rise to an Internet sensation or fall into disregard among countless other commentaries – after the alterations? In a way, Hanch-Hansen is doing with ceramics precisely what digital natives are doing online: stealing, recombining, reviving. She just uses a kiln instead of a smart phone. *Jennifer Allen*



**Mug** 2015, stoneware, readymade, porcelain, green glaze, 40 x 30 x 25 cm.



**Mother Deer** 2015, stoneware, readymade, porcelain, glaze, 25 x 20 x 20 cm.

Anita Hanch-Hansen



**Reindeer** 2015, stoneware, readymade, porcelain, glaze, 25 x 20 x 10 cm.