PAN
AMSTERDAM

CROSSOVER GALLERY

Rivals, House of the Vettii, Pompeii

Colour pigment print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag Baryta 315 gsm, 2026. On show at PAN: 60 × 76.2 cm, edition 1/5 (edition of 5 + 2 AP). Other sizes: 80 × 100, 101.6 × 127, 122 × 152 and 147 × 184 cm, each in an edition of 5 + 2 AP.

Two white peacocks face each other on the black railing of a painted dining room in Pompeii, one perched on the top bar, the other with its long train draped over the rails. *Rivals* was photographed in 2026 in the House of the Vettii, the lavishly decorated home of two freedmen who had made their fortune. On the central panel behind the birds the infant Hercules strangles the serpents that a jealous Juno sent to kill him, while Jupiter looks on in the form of an eagle. The peacock is the sacred bird of that very goddess — Knorr sets her birds back into the house itself, letting myth, ruin and the present coincide in a single image.

The work belongs to *Scavi* — Italian for excavations — the series Knorr began in 2023. In it she alludes to Roman and Greek myths, restaging them by inserting animals in the domus and villas of Herculaneum and Pompeii: a swan, a lion, a peacock, a leopard. They return as messengers between nature and culture, between a world that vanished in a single day and the present.

Karen Knorr (b. Germany, based in London since 1976) has explored cultural heritage and its ideologies for four decades, from *Gentlemen* (1981–83), revisited by Tate Britain in 2024, to *India Song*. Her work is held by Tate, the Centre Pompidou and SFMOMA, among others.