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## MARTA KLONOWSKA SUFFERS FOR HER GLASS ART – BUT IT'S WORTH IT

Courtesy: Marta Klonowska and lorch+seidel, Berlin

Photography: Eric Tschernow

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[mbandf.com/parallel-world/broken-glass-animal-art](http://mbandf.com/parallel-world/broken-glass-animal-art)



Lemur, 2011

**Top**  
*Venus and Adonis*  
after Peter Paul Rubens, 2008

**Bottom**  
*La Marquesa de Pontejos*  
after Francisco de Goya, 2010



Polish sculptor Marta Klonowska suffers for her art. Not in a "I'm a tortured intellectual" way; she comes across as happy with her lot. Nor in the "I must endure squalor to discover my muse" sense; she lives and works in the affluent German city of Düsseldorf.

Marta's suffering is physical. Not quite to the same degree as American artist Chris Burden – who was shot in the arm with a rifle for one of his performance art pieces – but she has sliced her hand open at least once while carrying out her craft, and more nasty lacerations could be just around the corner.

That's because Marta's artistic medium is glass. She makes fabulous animal sculptures out of thousands of spiky glass shards. Not just any creatures, mind you – she takes animals that feature in the background of classic paintings and puts them centre stage as her sculptural subjects.

Dogs, squirrels, goats, rabbits and other animals that originally played second fiddle to human subjects in masterpieces by the likes of Peter Paul Rubens, Francisco de Goya, Frans Snyders and Charles D'Agar all serve as inspiration for Marta, who generates ideas on visits to museums and galleries.

"I really like to go to exhibitions of the old masters," she says. "There is always something new to discover. I thought it would be an interesting idea to take something from these paintings and reinterpret it as something of my own."

It takes up to three months for Marta to recreate her chosen animal subject as one of her glass sculptures.

She begins by welding a framework made of metal rods based on sketches she has made. She then spends about half of her working time cutting panes of glass into fine strips, before gluing the shards onto the frame. Marta admits that making the glass strips is the most challenging part.

"The problem is knowing when to stop," she says. "When you get tired your concentration drops off and you move in ways you shouldn't when applying the glass. I have already slit open one of my hands!"

Given the immense beauty of her sculptures, it seems that a cut here and a scrape there are creative risks well worth taking.

