An Artist Who Hunts,

Emilie Clark Gets Her

Gun, Then Her Dutch...



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An Artist Who Hunts, Emilie Clark Gets Her Gun, Then Her Dutch Oven Close at Hand

By LIGAYA MISHAN MARCH 14, 2016



Email Novembers ago on an island in the Baltic Sea in Sweden.

York, she put it in her Le Creuset pot with fennel and shallots.

The artist Emilie Clark's first kill was a common goldeneye, shot down two

She hung it for three days, skinned, gutted and froze it, then smuggled it

past customs wrapped in polka-dot paper and tied with a bow. Back in New

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that she eventually titled "Meditations on Hunting," now on display at the Morgan Lehman Gallery in Chelsea. It is a sequel of sorts to a 2013 installation for which she collected leftovers and food waste (milk at the bottom of a cereal bowl, grease smudged in a pan) from a year of meals she

made for her husband and two sons.

A painting in Ms. Clark's "Meditations on Hunting," now on display at the Morgan Lehman Gallery in Chelsea.

Emilie Clark.Untitled TH-22 from Meditations on Hunting, 2016.

Watercolor and graphite on paper.

95"x62".

simmering bones for stock.

Ms. Clark, 46, had traveled to Sweden as research for a series of paintings

She has always eaten meat and

been conscientious about its

origins. Still, she said, "It felt

Hunting was not part of her

contend with."

like there was a gap that I had to

upbringing. "I grew up going to anti-gun rallies with my mom," she said, recalling her childhood in 1970s San Francisco. The idea of holding a weapon "terrified" her, she said. "It's become an important part of my work to put myself in uncomfortable situations." She started with skeet shooting in Maine, then tagged along on a

York ("a 'Downton Abbey' situation"). She remembers picking up a fallen bird, still warm. It felt strangely familiar from years of handling meat in the kitchen and When she first moved to New York, in 1998,

pheasant hunt in upstate New

she and her husband, a poet, lived in an illegal loft on Varick Street, with the bathroom down the hall and no stove. Somehow, she wound up doing catering gigs



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to pay the bills, cooking for huge parties on a hot plate. In 2003, they moved to New York University housing on Bleecker Street. The galley kitchen dated from the 1960s. She celebrated anyway, marching over to Broadway Panhandler to buy a Dutch oven.

The flame-red enamel has gone nearly black,

and essential tool in Ms. Clark's kitchen, even

as if licked by a volcano. It is the most used

more so since she began bringing home

game, which is leaner and, she has found, requires longer braising.

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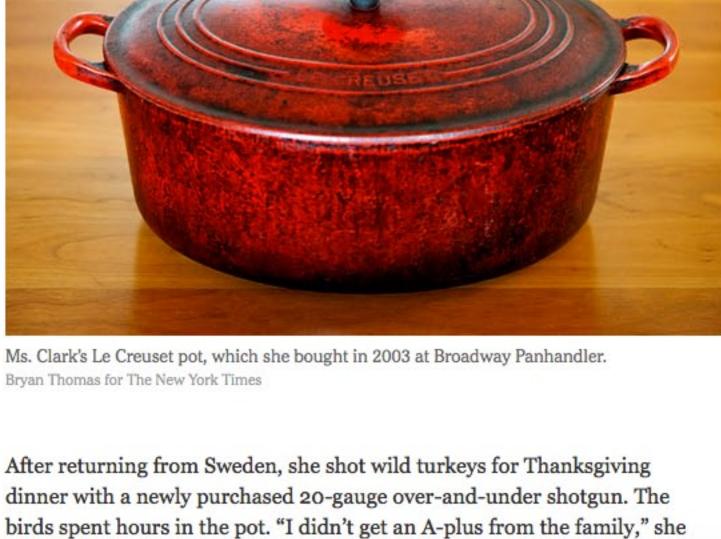
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cooks. She is not squeamish, save for one detail. "I have to be strong for the eyeballs," she said. She turned out to be a good shot, which surprised her. But she soon realized that hunting wasn't about chalking up kills. "Going out in pitch dark, watching the sun come up, feeling the temperature change," she said.

Taxidermy is part of her project: She preserves the skins of the birds she

said. "They were supportive but slightly freaked out."

this incredible activity around me."

indispensable.

Her watercolor meditations are almost delicate, garlands of beaks, wings and feathers circling that empty center. "It was about being, waiting, listening, all your senses activated," she said. She added, "If I can die a happy artist, it would be if people experience my art in the same way."

"I had the strange sensation that my physical presence was void, with all

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