

# Reach out and touch

christa yeo

At the age of 30, French sculptor Valerie Goutard Andrianoff exchanged her cushy job in marketing in Paris for a more bohemian life in Asia.

After a chance opportunity to play with clay, she decided to pursue an interest in the arts – specifically, sculpture.

“I had never created any art before and a close friend thought I might enjoy playing with clay. Sometimes, I think life gives you a little push in the right direction,” the 43-year-old said.

Time has proven her right and she has found commercial success, and even love, in Bangkok. She met and married her husband and manager, Mr Frederic Morel, there. She has also picked up conversational Thai.

As to why she chose to go to Bangkok, she said: “My big family was worried about my career change and I didn’t feel completely free to do my art so I wanted to get away from France and have the freedom to create. Now, we are happy to visit one another in France or Bangkok.”

She is exhibiting 32 of her bronze sculptures in Singapore for the first time, at the Red Sea Gallery. The prices range from \$1,800 to \$48,000. Whether they are big or small, her sculptures share the common characteristic of her signature style, such as fragile, faceless figures and the use of bronze worn down to a patina.

“To me, bronze is a very classic and traditional medium for sculptures. It’s a rich metal and also versatile to use. As for my figures, they are characters, like acrobats in the circus of life, and I prefer



to portray their attitudes through body language,” she explained.

The inspiration for her work is wide and varied, from Thai architecture and a traditional fishing boat from Myanmar to her husband interacting with his children.

She added: “My works sometimes come from hidden memories or something I had felt before. Also, my figures represent how I feel humans are fragile. We are capable of building large structures yet we can just go the next day.”

Perspective is something she enjoys playing with, too, which explains why many of her works have window-like

openings in them. They allow a viewer to spy on a pair of lover-figurines and steal a snapshot of them or frame them in a different light.

Red Sea Gallery director Chris Churcher said: “People can always find something they don’t like about a painting but Val’s work has never had a negative comment because there’s nothing to dislike. If you dislike one of these, it’s like disliking people.”

With her works, Andrianoff encourages viewers to reach out and feel the deliberately imperfect finishes, saying: “Sculpture is also the pleasure of feeling.”

view it

**Where:** Block 9,  
Dempsey Road,  
#01-10  
Dempsey Hill  
**When:** Till  
Oct 16  
**Admission:**  
Free  
**Info:** Call  
6732-6711

**French sculptor Valerie Goutard Andrianoff encourages viewers to feel the deliberately imperfect finishes in her sculptures.**  
ST PHOTO:  
AIDAH RAUF