

WE PEOPLE



邵雨薇 × 雷嘉汭

Inspired by Kafka's *Metamorphosis*: The New York Sculptor Rona Pondick's solo exhibition will be open on May 11th at Nunu Fine Art, Taipei

2024-05-06 by Lena-Lin



Nunu Fine Art Taipei is pleased to present *Rona Pondick: Selected Works 2008-2023* from May 11 until August 4, 2024, featuring sculptures by New York based sculptor Rona Pondick. Born in 1952 in Brooklyn, New York, Pondick is internationally renowned. Her work is in the collections of institutions worldwide, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Centre Pompidou.

About Rona Pondick

Since she came to prominence in the late 1980's, the New York-based artist has worked with fragments that evoke the body—such as shoes, baby bottles, and teeth—reconfigured into new psychologically provocative wholes. In the late 1990s she produced the first of her hybrid sculptures that combine casts of her own body parts with those of animals and trees.

Pondick has been working with a repeatedly altered cast of her own head since 1998. In the works in this exhibition, she has used hand-modeling and 3D technology to make scale changes that underscore the sculptures' psychological and metaphoric content.



Pondick lives and works in New York City. She received a master's degree in art from Yale University in 1977 and since then had more than 50 solo shows in galleries and museums worldwide. She has also participated in some 250 international exhibitions, including the Lyon, Venice, and Johannesburg Biennales; the Whitney Biennial; and the Sonsbeek. Her work is represented in over 50 international museums and foundations, among them the Centre Pompidou, Whitney Museum, Metropolitan Museum, National Gallery in Washington, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Art Institute of Chicago, Nasher Sculpture Center, and the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art.

For Pondick, hybridity, metamorphosis, and transformation are central. She draws on a rich body of literary, art-historical, and scientific references, from ancient Egyptian sphinxes to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, to contemporary cloning technologies.

"From the beginning my work has been about metamorphosis," Pondick says. "It brings me back to Kafka and the idea of transformation, something in flux. . . things mutating. . . Each piece is about an evolution. Within each sculpture, the form would start shifting, and as the form shifts, the meaning changes."

Rona Pondick: Selected Works 2008-2023

In the exhibition, four painted bronze works, *Dwarfed White Jack*, *White Beaver*, *Pillow Head* and *Navel*, are painted in special white paint to make strong bronze sculptures look as soft and fragile as porcelain.

In *Dwarfed White Jack*, Pondick integrates her head with an invented handmade tree. Using computer technology, she miniaturizes the heads and attaches them, so they appear to grow out of the branches, mimicking buds on tree branches. Cast in bronze and painted white, the color and surfaces of *Dwarfed White Jack* appear simultaneously bone-like, fragile, tender, and soft- looking as if nature made it.

White Beaver combines Pondick's life-sized head with the hand modeled body of a beaver. Seamlessly merging the two, the artist makes the head appear so heavy that the sculpture seems to be grappling with gravity. The way the sculptor brings these disparate components together orchestrates an intensely sensate, and emotionally and psychologically charged experience.



Rona Pondick, *Dwarfed White Jack*, Bronze, Paint, Edition: 3/3 + 1 AP, 47 x 89 x 59.7 cm, 2010-2012



Rona Pondick, *White Beaver*, Painted Bronze, Edition: 3/3 + 1 AP, 33.02 x 80.01 x 23.49 cm, 2009-2011

Pillow Head and *Navel* suggest birth, attachment, fragility and intense physical tension. While both pieces are similar in their balloon-like appearances, in *Navel* Pondick's smaller than life-size head grows out of the center of a billowing form, alluding to sensuality, like a breast or a belly. In both pieces the heads appear to be twisting the forms they are emerging from, making them look like as if they are about to burst.



Rona Pondick, *Pillow Head* (details), Painted Bronze, Edition:2/3 + 1 AP, 26.03 x 36.83 x 29.37 cm, 2009



Rona Pondick, *Navel*, Painted Bronze, Edition:2/3 + 1 AP, 26.03 x 36.83 x 29.37 cm, 2008-2010

The two most recent pieces—*White White Swirl* and *Warped White*—are in cast acrylic and pigmented resin. The artist uses these materials to contrast transparency with opacity, making some of the forms clearly discernible while others appear to be about to vanish. In *White White Swirl*, Pondick's tiny heads grow out of twisting shapes that look like a body turning itself inside out. Exposed at the top and submerged in an acrylic block, the head and body are mirrored like Narcissus', the character from Greek mythology who saw his own reflection in a pool of water. The encased turbulent form evokes actions such as swimming, dreaming, birthing, and drowning. Are these twisting forms intestines that morph into a head, or a tornado of intense emotions?



Rona Pondick, *White White Swirl*, pigmented resin and acrylic, unique, 86.36 x 20.79 x 24.92 cm, 2015-2023

In *Warped White*, Pondick's oversized head appears to be resting, sleeping, or emerging from a pool of white. The sculpture sits low on the ground, simultaneously feeling weighty and appearing to hover. Pondick enlarged and

warped the shape of the head by hand, so that it suggests a monumental egg, implying a metamorphosis, and a range of meanings around birth and death, rest and growth, stasis and change.



Rona Pondick, *Warped White* (detail), pigmented resin and acrylic, unique, 39.37 x 49.53 x 49.53 cm, 2019-2023

Pondick has said that she wants viewers to experience her work viscerally, in their own bodies. For more than 50 years, she has consistently experimented with materials, techniques, processes, and imagery, focusing on relationships between biography and mythology, the psychological and the bodily, and the uncanny and the familiar, in ways that convey the deep emotional complexity of the human existence.

Rona Pondick: Selected Work 2008-2023

Exhibition Duration: May 11-Aug 4, 2024

Venue: Nunu Fine Art, Taipei

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