

## Inspired by Kafka's *Metamorphosis*: New York Sculptor Rona Pondick's Exhibition Debuts at Nunu Fine Art on 5/11

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Nunu Fine Art Taipei will present "Rona Pondick: Selected Works 2008-2023" from May 11th to August 4th. This exhibition will showcase a curated selection of sculptures spanning 15 years by New York-based sculptor Rona Pondick. From early anatomical works molded from the casts of her head to combining surrealist techniques with metaphorical symbolism, the exhibition displays the artist's evolving styles and contexts over different periods. Additionally, visitors will have the opportunity to view two debuting artworks in this exhibition.



New York sculptor Rona Pondick's solo exhibition "Rona Pondick: Selected Works 2008-2023," spanning 15 years of her creations, is set to debut at Nunu Fine Art Art Taipei on 5/11. left: Courtesy of Nunu Fine Art, right: Photo by Tarik Atallah courtesy of ODDA Magazine, 2022

### **Unleashing the possibilities of sculptural creation, "my works are extensions of myself."**

Born in 1952 in Brooklyn, New York, Pondick holds a Master of Fine Arts degree from Yale University School of Art, where she studied under contemporary sculptor Richard Serra. Pondick's work is deeply influenced by artists such as Gian Lorenzo Bernini, Alberto Giacometti, and Constantin Brancusi.

In her early works, Pondick used inanimate objects such as beds, shoes, baby bottles, and teeth cast from her mouth, to create unsettling sculptures. In the 90's, she began to merge her head and other body parts, with animals and trees, to suggest strong metaphoric and psychological meanings. Pondick has also

reimagined mythical hybrid creatures from storied traditions, such as the Egyptian sphinx and the giant insects from Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, into modern interpretations of her own.

Pondick's infatuation with *Metamorphosis* began after reading it in high school. The classic novella became the core of her work, and she periodically rereads it to gain new interpretations. Pondick considers Kafka a mother figure in her creative process, citing that the "contradictions", specifically the concept of "ugly beauty" presented in Kafka's literary works are captivating. She explores ways to embody metaphor in her sculpture; the artwork gradually unfolds and envelops the viewer. This encourages the audience to actively experience the artwork rather than passively being instructed on how to perceive it.

Just as Pondick claims by saying, "my works are extensions of myself", while the essence of sculptural work is inherently solid, its symbolism is fluid and tangible. This sentiment mirrors that of metamorphosis, which is the core belief in her creative process.



White Beaver combines Pondick's life-sized head with a hand-made beaver, orchestrating an intensely sensate and emotionally and psychologically inducing experience. left: Courtesy of Nunu Fine Art, right: Photo by Tarik Atallah courtesy of ODDA, 2022

### **From hybrid concepts to facial castings, the exhibition embodies a 15-year creative continuum**

Since 1998, hybridity has been the consistent style in Pondick's works, as she believes it to be the most potent source of imagery in fictional narratives. In "Hybrid Series: Animals/Humans 1998-2013," these hybrid sculptures merge body parts with animals, generating contrasting forms, surfaces, scales, and images, creating psychological and visceral tensions between the artwork and the viewer.

Pondick admits, "I don't know why I choose any particular imagery, but I know I like the posture of a sitting dog. I think it all began with my desire to merge my body parts with animal forms."

Furthermore, *Heads 1999-2001* was molded directly from the artist's face. Pondick also stated, "I found it fascinating that very few people could tell that the cast of my head was of me. I was reading a biography of Bernini at the time, and he talked about the fact that once the color is removed you no longer look like yourself. I realized that most people didn't know the cast of my head was me. In other words, my head became a generic head."

### **Exclusive Preview: 6 Magnificent Works Revealed**

The exhibition features artworks from different periods of Pondick's career, including bronze sculptures coated with a special white enamel paint. The technique presents a porcelain-like softness and fragility, metaphorically representing material transformation by the artist.

In *Dwarfed White Jack*, Pondick integrates her head with a handmade tree. Mimicking growing buds, the miniature heads are attached to the branches using computer technology. Cast in bronze and painted white, the color and surfaces of *Dwarfed White Jack* appear simultaneously bone-like, fragile, tender, and soft-looking, resembling a masterpiece from nature. *White Beaver* combines Pondick's life-sized head with the hand-modeled body of a beaver. The artist seamlessly merges the two: the head of the beaver strains against its hefty weight and gravitational force. The way the sculptor brings these disparate components together orchestrates an intensely sensate and emotionally and psychologically inducing experience.



Courtesy of Nunu Fine Art



Rona Pondick, *White Beaver*, 2009-11. Courtesy of Nunu Fine Art

*Pillow Head* and *Navel* imply birth and attachment. The miniature head in the former seems to distort its balloon-like form, yet it appears to emerge from within the sphere, creating a tension that feels like it could burst at any moment. In *Navel*, Pondick's smaller-than-life-sized head arises from the center of a billowing form, evoking sexual associations such as breasts or the abdomen. The fragile yet powerful bodily tension quivers the viewer's senses. Additionally, the two debuting sculptures *White White Swirl* and *Warped White* are crafted from transparent acrylic and tinted resin. Utilizing the contrast between translucent and opaque materials, Pondick presents clear and recognizable forms alongside dissolving shapes.



Rona Pondick, *Pillow Head* (detail), 2009. Courtesy of Nunu Fine Art

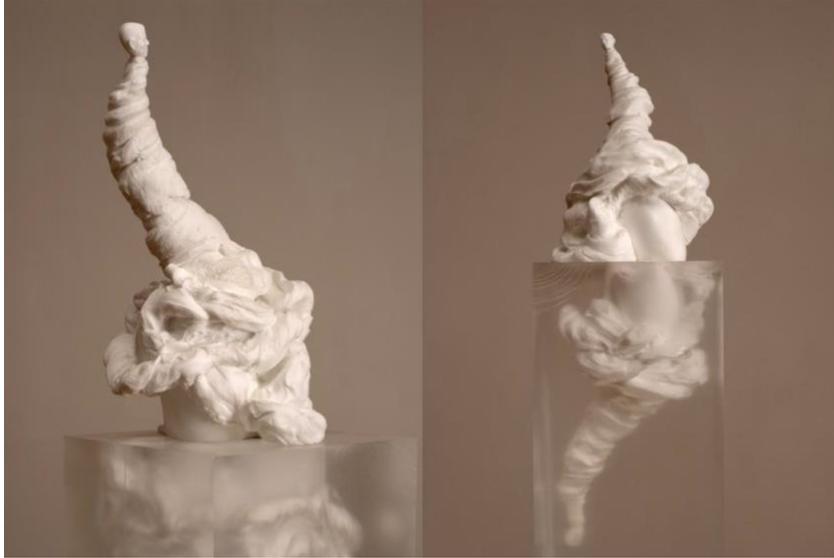


Rona Pondick, *Navel*, 2008-10. Courtesy of Nunu Fine Art



Rona Pondick, *Warped White* (detail), 2019-23. Courtesy of Nunu Fine Art

While the exhibition only showcases 15 years of Pondick's creative journey, it offers a glimpse into her continual exploration of various mediums, techniques, and imagery. Simultaneously, her work reflects her knowledge of literature and mythology, and her interest in how psychology and the body relate. Perhaps, through the various metaphors embedded in her sculptures, viewers are prompted to confront their inner psychological dilemma.



Rona Pondick, White White Swirl, 2015-23. Courtesy of Nunu Fine Art