

The FOCUS



Head in Tree (detail), 2006-08, stainless steel 105 x 42 x 37 in, (266.7 x 106.68 x 93.98 cm) Edition of three Courtesy of Sonnabend Gallery, New York and Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris/Salzburg

Journey of Evolution

進入Rona Pondick的進化歷程,感受當中的視覺 沖擊和思考蜕變。

Veronica

Rona Pondick 的作品有一種攝人魅力,即使你對她沒有太多認識,甚至是藝術界的門外漢,作為觀賞者,你總會有一刻有意識地把視線停留在她的作品之上。無論是《Animal/Human Hybrids》中各種動物和人類殷體的混種蜕變,人類頭顱成為樹枝一部分的《Tree/Human Hybrids》,或者是早期的牙齒作品,都能在某程度上刺激我們的觀感甚至思考。這也是 Rona的理念,同一件作品與不同對象產生的化學作用。有人會覺得她的雕塑很漂亮,有人則覺得不安,Rona 最想演繹 "ugly beauty"的概念,夾雜矛盾和進化。在她的世界中,藝術是一種語言,只要能與人溝通便可。

嚴格來說,我是在《Come Together:Surviving Sandy》的展覽上首次親身接觸 Rona的作品,這次展出的有她在1998至99年創作的《Fox》,人頭與動物身的完美接合,猶如水銀流動的金屬外殼,我不期然進入了 Rona 的蜕變世界。她本人也在場,閒談的最後一句是「若你有時間的話,隨時歡迎來到我的工作室參觀。」當時尚雜誌工作的我們,這些用作打完場的客套說話聽過不少。翌日我想起了 Rona 的邀請,覺得也不妨一試。這時我在畫廊工作的友人來電,她告訴我 Rona 想跟進我是否有興趣到她的工作室,有點受寵若驚,3天後我去到了她位於東村 (East Village) 的工作室。

進入Rona Pondick的進化歷程, 感受當中的視覺沖擊和思考蜕變。

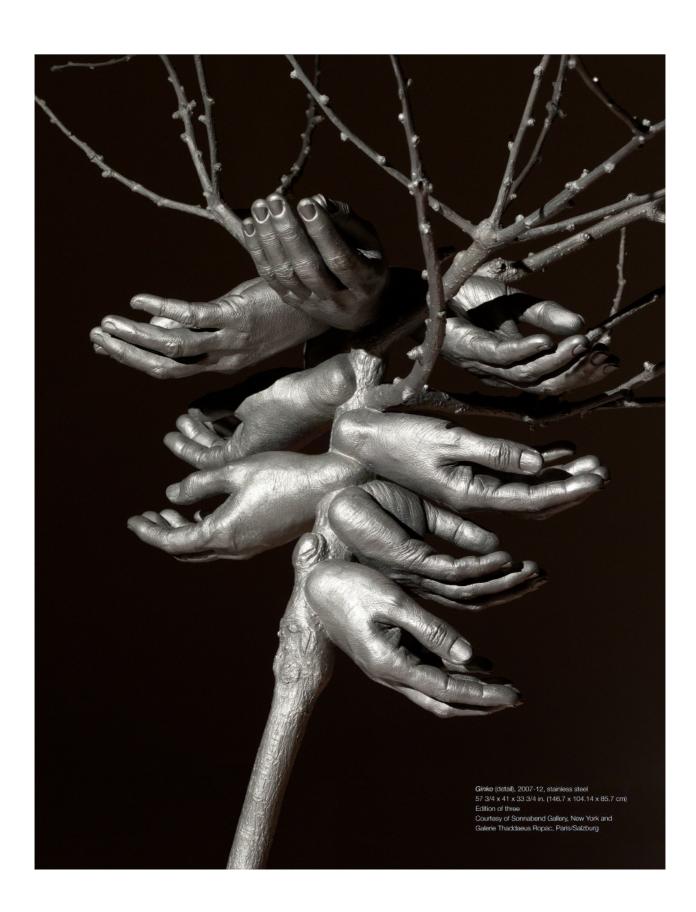
Embark on Rona Pondick's evolutionary journey, and experience the visual impact of her work while contemplating the transformation within.

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Rona Pondick's works possess a daunting charm; even if you don't know much about her, or even if you're an art world outsider, as a viewer, there will always be a moment when you find yourself consciously lingering to gaze upon her creations. Whether it's the hybrid metamorphosis of various animals and human limbs in her animal/human hybrids, the integration of human heads as part of branches in "Tree/Human Hybrids," or her earlier works featuring teeth, they all stimulate our sensory perception and provoke contemplation. This aligns with Rona's philosophy—the alchemical reactions a single piece can generate with different observers. Some may find her sculptures beautiful, while others may feel uneasy. Rona is interested in the concept of "ugly beauty," and how it incorporates contradictions and evolution. In her world, art is a language that needs to communicate with people.

嚴格來說,我是在《Come Together: Surviving Sandy》的展覽上首次接觸Rona的作品,這次展出的有她在1998至99年創作的《Fox》,人頭與動物身的完美接合,猶如水銀流動的金屬外殼,我不期然進入了Rona的蛻變世界。她本人也在場,閒談的最後一句是「若你有時間的話,隨時歡迎來到我的工作室參觀。」當時尚雜誌工作的我們,這些用作打完場的客套話聽過不少。翌日我想起了Rona的邀請,覺得也不妨一試。這時我在畫廊工作的友人來電,她告訴我Rona想跟進我是否有興趣到她的工作室,有點受寵若驚,3天後我去了她位於東村(East Village)的工作室。

Strictly speaking, my first encounter with Rona's works was at the exhibition *Come Together: Surviving Sandy*. On display was her piece *Fox*, created between 1998 and 1999, featuring a perfect fusion of a human head and animal body, suggesting a fluid quicksilver form. I found myself entering Rona's transformative world unconsciously. Pondick was present at the exhibition, and our casual conversation concluded with the words, "If you have time, feel free to visit my studio anytime." Working for a fashion magazine at the time, I had heard many polite invitations used as social niceties. The next day, recalling Rona's invitation, I thought it wouldn't hurt to give it a try. At that moment, a friend who worked at the gallery where Pondick shows called, informing me that Rona wanted to follow up to see if I was interested in visiting her studio. Feeling somewhat flattered, I went to her studio in the East Village three days later.



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工作室的前身是畫廊貨倉,經翻新後成為 Rona 每天工作的地方。工場上放著兩個已完成的作品《Ginko》和《Dwarfed White Jack》以及一些仍在製作中的作品。Rona 向我解釋《Ginko》的製作過程:「你眼前所看見的是真實樹枝,但卻不是直接從植物中取出來,而是由我親手利用樹木材料雕琢而成,這樣我可控制和設計樹枝的模樣和形狀,也方便鑄模時候把金屬顏色注入。」《Dwarfed White Jack》是個全白色的作品,在 10 月期間與另一位藝術家 Jennifer Steinkamp 的作品一同出現在《Two Trees》展覽中。在樹枝的末端是細小的花芯,細心一看,它們是經常出現在 Rona 作品中的頭顱。

剛剛於今年 3 月至 4 月份在紐約舉行了個人展覽《Rona Pondick》。Rona 以紐約為基地,作品被世界各地的藝術館 列為收藏,在耶魯大學和普林斯頓大學等學府講學,以及獲得 Rockefeller Foundation 和 Guggenheim Foundation 等所頒發的 獎項,無可置疑,Rona 的作品極度富有強烈個人特色。藝術 創作對於她來說是一輩子的事情,一個不斷在進化的過程,但更是與生俱來的。

Small Fukien Tea, 2003, painted bronze and rocks 20 x 17 1/2 x 15 1/4 in. (50.8 x 44.45 x 38.74 cm) Unique Courtesy of Sonnabend Gallery, New York and Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris/Salzburg







Pillow Head (detail), 2009, painted bronze 10 1/4 x 14 1/2 x 15 1/2 in. (26 x 36.83 x 39.37 cm) Edition of three Courtesy of Sonnabend Gallery, New York and Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris/Salzburg

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The studio was originally a gallery warehouse that, after renovation, became Rona's workplace. On the factory table were two completed works, *Ginko* and *Dwarfed White Jack*, along with some pieces still in progress. Rona explained to me the production process of *Ginko*. "What you see in front of you looks like a real tree, but I take parts of trees and alter them, which allows me to control and determine the appearance and shape of the entire tree. And controlling the shape of the branches makes it easier to facilitate the flow of the metal during the casting process." *Dwarfed White Jack* is an all-white piece that was included in a two-person show with Jennifer Steinkamp, in the exhibition *Two Trees* in October. At the ends of many branches there are small buds, and upon closer inspection, you see they are heads that often appear in Rona's works.

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A solo exhibition titled *Rona Pondick* took place in New York from March to April this year. Rona, based in New York, has work included in the collections of art museums worldwide. She has lectured at prestigious institutions such as Yale University and Princeton University, and has been honored with awards from foundations like the Rockefeller Foundation and the Guggenheim Foundation. Rona's works are unique and imbued with a distinct personal style. For her, artistic creation is a lifelong pursuit, an ongoing evolutionary process, but above all, an inherent part of her being.



「我在紐約出生,小時候最常到的地方就是藝術館。長大後在 Queen's College 修讀歷史,然後我進入了耶魯大學主修藝術。」Rona 曾經在另一訪問中提到其家庭背景對她的影響。擁有猶太血統,猶太傳統習以把性別區分。Rona 的祖父卻給予她平等機會,鼓勵她去做兄弟們做的事情,即使是受人欺凌也要她為自己出頭。有一個星期天,他們如常到教堂參拜。在猶太教堂中,男女須分坐。Rona 問祖父,她不是可以跟兄弟做同等的事情嗎?祖父沒有回答,但從此他再沒有要求 Rona 到星期日參拜。別人常以星座來解讀性格,但我認為成長過程才是奠定性格的關鍵。

Rona 對任何事物都有一種莫名其妙的堅持。 「那時候我取得了獎學金到耶魯大學讀藝術, Richard Serra 是當時的客席藝術家,每年有數 次來到大學交流。在最後的一次探訪,他說他跟 Paula Cooper (紐約著名畫廊) 提及我的作品, 他們已準備好接見我。我沒有跟進,當時只心想 若果這麼年輕便踏上成功之路,那便沒有失敗的 空間,這是很重要的,對嗎?而我又是否準備好 迎接四方八面的眼光?雖然後來我的發展並不是 特別平坦,但我很慶幸當年的決定,讓我有更多 自我進化的空間。」

經常把進化掛在嘴邊,Rona 指每一次的創作都是隨心出發。「當然我會有一個大方向,但在創作過程中,我都會讓一雙手去主導。你早前問我平均會花上多少時間完成製作,有些作品的創作會橫跨 5、6 年。我認為作品本身會在時間中自行進化,由時間來決定最後的模樣。開始沒有甚麼計劃,很多元素都是即興加入,在過程中

沒有特別思考,但經歷某段時間,作品會自我沉 澱,再回望的時候會得出當中的意思。」

Rona 每個系列的主題都很鮮明·於90年代 創作的《Teeth》是其一。對於牙齒·她有這樣的 演繹。「牙齒可與性掛鈎。除此之外·當有人激 怒你的時候·你會很想咬他們一口。」對於我來 說·牙齒更與進食掛鈎·是人類生存的工具之一。 牙齒更是人死後最後才腐化的其中一件東西·也 可用作辨認身份·在人類世界中是獨一無二的東 西。從牙齒進化出來的·還有《Trees/Teeth》系列。

「我在 1995 年首次以樹為題材。有位收藏家邀請我製作一個戶外雕塑・可融入四周環境的樹成為很理想當然的元素。然後我想到了蘋果樹・但取代蘋果的是牙齒。在打後的數年,我集中創作了數個有關樹的雕塑。有趣地方是,這些樹可出現在室內或戶外,與不同空間構成不同關係。我並不是要與大自然競賽,我只想感受大自然的創作過程,去創造自己的樹。在製作戶外雕塑時,我與大自然合作。另外值得思考是,我的人造樹和天然樹在經歷四季時會有甚麼不同變化呢?」

Rona 近 年 的 作 品 都 以 "hybridism"(變形)為 題。 由《Trees/Human Hybrids》 到《Animal/Human Hybrids》。捷克作家 Kafka於 20 世紀 初撰寫的《The Metamorphosis》對 Rona 影響深遠。「我在高校時期首次接觸《The Metamorphosis》已很愛這部作品,雖然那時候未能解讀當中的深層意思。」《The Metamorphosis》在西方社會是不少學校課程的必讀本。故事講述主角 Gregor Samsa一天醒來變成巨大醜陋的昆蟲。Rona 後來每隔一段時期都會重新閱讀作品,每次都有不同得著。

Monkeys, 1998-2001, stainless steel 41 1/4 x 66 x 85 1/2 in. (104.78 x 167.64 x 217.17 cm) Edition of six Courtesy of Sonnabend Gallery, New York and Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris/Salzburg 「我在紐約出生,小時候最常到的地方就是藝術館。長大後在Queen's College修讀歷史,然後我進入耶魯大學主修藝術。」Rona曾經在另一訪問中提到其家庭背景對她的影響。擁有猶太血統,猶太傳統習以把性別區分。Rona的祖父卻給予她平等機會,鼓勵她去做兄弟們做的事情,即使是受他人欺凌也要她為自己出頭。有一個星期天,他們如常到教堂參拜。在猶太教堂中,男女須分坐。Rona問祖父,她不是可以跟兄弟做同等的事情嗎?祖父沒有回答,但從此他再沒有要求Rona到星期日參拜。別人常以星座來解讀性格,但我認為成長過程才是奠定性格的關鍵。

"I was born in New York, and the places I frequented the most during my childhood were art museums. As I grew up, I studied history and art at Queen's College, and then I pursued sculpture at Yale University." Rona once mentioned in another interview some of the ways that her family background influenced her. In spite of a Jewish heritage, that often emphasized power relationships based on gender distinctions, Rona's grandfather gave her equal opportunities, encouraging her to do things that her brothers did, even if it meant standing up for herself against others. On a holiday, as they went to the Jewish synagogue where men and women were required to sit separately, Rona asked her grandfather why she had to sit separately. Her grandfather didn't answer, but from then on, they never worshipped again. While others often interpret personality through zodiac signs, I believe the key lies in how we are raised.

Rona對任何事物都有一種莫名其妙的堅持。「那時候我取得了獎學金到耶魯大學讀藝術, Richard Serra是當時的客席藝術家,每年有數次來到大學交流。在最後的一次探訪,他說他 跟Paula Cooper(紐約著名畫廊)提及我的作品,他們已準備好接見我。我沒有跟進,當時 只心想若果這麼年輕便踏上成功之路,那便沒有失敗的空間,這是很重要的,對嗎?而我又是 否準備好迎接四方八面的眼光?雖然後來我的發展並不是特別平坦,但我很慶幸當年的決定, 讓我有更多自我進化的空間。」

Rona sees mysterious connections happening across time. "I received a scholarship to study art at Yale University, and Richard Serra was the visiting artist at the time, coming to the university several times a year for studio visits. During our final visit, he told me he spoke to Paula Cooper (the renowned New York gallery owner) about my work, and she was interested in meeting with me. I didn't follow up at that time, thinking that if I started exhibiting at such a young age, there would be no room for failure, which is crucial, right? And was I ready to face scrutiny from all directions? Although my subsequent development was not particularly smooth, I am grateful for the decision I made back then, because it allowed more space to evolve."

經常把進化掛在嘴邊,Rona指每一次的創作都是隨心出發。「當然我會有一個大方向,但在創作過程中,我都會讓一雙手去主導。你早前問我平均會花上多少時間完成製作,有些作品的創作會橫跨5、6年。我認為作品本身會在時間中自行進化,由時間來決定最後的模樣。開始沒有什麼計畫,很多元素都是即興加入,在過程中沒有特別思考,但經歷某段時間,作品會自我沉澱,再回望的時候會得出當中的意思。」

Often talking about evolution, Rona emphasizes that each creation is a spontaneous journey. "Certainly, I have a general direction, but during the creative process, I let my hands take the lead. When you asked earlier how much time, on average, it takes to complete a piece, some works may span 5 or 6 years. I believe the work itself evolves over time, and its final form is determined across time. There's no initial plan; there are many spontaneous changes often made unconsciously during the process. During the evolution across time and upon reflection, the meaning becomes apparent."

Rona每個系列的主題都很鮮明,於90年代創作的《Teeth》是其一。對於牙齒,她有這樣的

演繹。「牙齒可與性掛鈎。除此之外,當有人激怒你的時候,你會很想咬他們一口。」對於我來說,牙齒更與進食掛鈎,是人類生存的工具之一。牙齒更是人死後最後才腐化的其中一件東西,也可用作辨認身份,在人類世界中是獨一無二的東西。從牙齒進化出來的,還有《Trees/Teeth》系列。

Rona is known for making distinctive bodies of work that are thematic. In the 1990s she was using teeth in many of her sculptures. The artist shared with me that she thinks "teeth can be associated with sexuality. She also said, 'when someone angers her, she often feels the urge to bite them." For me, teeth are more connected to eating, serving as one of the tools for human survival. Teeth are also one of the last things to decay after death, and can be used for identity verification, making them unique in the human world. The focus on teeth also moves into her "Trees/Teeth" series.

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"In 1995, I started integrating trees into my work. A collector invited me to create an outdoor sculpture and I wanted integrate it seamlessly into its surroundings. So using trees as a naturally fitting element seemed ideal. There was an apple orchard on their property and that led me to work with an apple tree. I placed round balls with teeth, like fallen apples, under the tree. Over the following years, I focused on several large-scale sculptures related to this first tree. These trees can be installed both indoors and outdoors, and they form different relationships with these spaces. I'm not trying to compete with nature; I just want to create my own trees. When creating outdoor sculptures, I collaborate with nature. I like to think about how my fictional trees and natural trees differ in their transformations through the seasons."

Rona近年來的作品都以「hybridism(變形)」為題。由《Trees/Human Hybrids》到《Animal/Human Hybrids》。捷克作家Kafka於20世紀初撰寫的《The Metamorphosis》對Rona影響深遠。「我在高校時期首次接觸《The Metamorphosis》已很愛這部作品,雖然那時候未能解讀當中的深層意義。」《The Metamorphosis》在西方社會是不少學校課程的必讀本。故事講述主角Gregor Samsa一天醒來變成巨大醜陋的昆蟲。Rona後來每隔一段時期都會重新閱讀作品,每次都有不同得著。

In recent years, Rona's works have revolved around the theme of "hybridism," from tree/human hybrids to animal/human hybrids. The influence of the Czech writer Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*, written in the early 20th century, has been profound on Rona. "I first encountered *The Metamorphosis* during my college years and loved the work, although at that time, I couldn't interpret its deeper meanings." *The Metamorphosis* is a must-read in many Western school curricula. The story narrates the protagonist, Gregor Samsa, waking up one day transformed into a giant, grotesque insect. Rona continues to revisit the work periodically, finding different insights each time.

Head in Tree, 2006-08, stainless stee 105 x 42 x 37 in. (266.7 x 106.68 x 93.98 cm) Edition of three Courtesy of Sonnabend Gallery, New York and Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac. Paris/Salzburg





Little Bathers, 1990-91, mixed 500 elements, each approx. 2 1/2 x 4 3/4 x 4 in. (6.35 x 12.1 x 10.16 cm) Courtesy of Sonnabend Gallery New York and Galerie Thaddaeus Ropec, Paris/Salzburg

「我後來更發現當中的幽默感,但大部分 倒模的過程是怎樣嗎?兩個多小時中,我有一刻 Kafka 好友 Max Brod 撰寫有關 Kafka 的傳記· 有趣。我在想・我找到了靈魂伴侶。」

在 Rona 的「變形」世界中·她融入了自己 的元素。在兩個系列中找到各種體積的頭和不同 肢體如手和腳的部分。「其實 "hybrid" 這個概念 型。 也在人類歷史中不斷出現(古埃及文化也是 Rona of Art 吸收有關這段歷史的知識)。我想以製作 Beaver》、《Fox》和《Dog》等作品的時候, 一個頭顱模型開始。採用醫學用的矽膠,是因為 想製造完美的皮膚質感。在完成後,我可以隨意 利用電腦按比例地放大或縮小頭的體積,甚至改 種生物處於某空間,在等待蜕變。時移世易, 部都是一致缺乏表情,這是刻意的嗎?「你知道 候,我或有機會成為 Rona 的靈魂伴侶。 ■

人都認為故事結局很悲哀。某次,我閱讀了由 經歷了咽喉反射的反應,覺得快要窒息。我很害 怕・幸好我準備了紙筆・那一刻・我在紙上寫 提到 Kafka 覺得《The Metamorphosis》其實很 出 "slit the rubber; I'm choking" (撕破膠模, 我要 窒息)、最後一句我寫了 "Get this off of me. I'm losing it. I'm freaking out."(將這東西拿開,我不 行了,我很害怕)。」最後,她還是成功造出模

作為有輕度憂閉恐懼的我・當然能感受到缺 的童感之一,她會經常到 Metropolitan Museum 氧所帶來的恐懼。基於這個原因,我看見《White 先吸引我視線的都是那副沒有表情的面孔,然後 看到如水銀般流動的動物身軀,我都覺得好像有 變它的形狀如把頸項部分切去等,有助配合不同 Rona 的作品或會經時間帶來不同解讀,就正如 作品的需要。我亦發現有很多人認不出我的樣 她形容藝術創作為一世的進化,或許某天我再看 子,這樣就可以有更多演繹的可能性。」所有面 到其作品的真身,會感受到當中的幽默感,那時 「我後來更發現當中的幽默感,但大部分人都認為故事結局很悲哀。某次,我閱讀了由Kafka 好友Max Brod撰寫有關Kafka的傳記,提到Kafka覺得《The Metamorphosis》其實很有趣。我在想,我找到了靈魂伴侶。」

"Later on, I discovered the humor in it, but most people consider the ending of the story to be quite sad. Once, I read a biography of Kafka written by his friend Max Brod, where it mentioned that Kafka actually found *The Metamorphosis* to be quite funny. I thought, 'I've found a kindred spirit.'"

在Rona的「變形」世界中,她融入了自己的元素。在兩個系列中找到各種體積的頭和不同肢體如手和腳的部分。「其實『hybrid』這個概念也在人類歷史中不斷出現(古埃及文化也是Rona的靈感之一,她會經常到Metropolitan Museum of Art吸收有關這段歷史的知識)。我想以製作一個頭顱模型開始。採用醫學用的矽膠,是因為想製造完美的皮膚質感。在完成後,我可以隨意利用電腦按比例地放大或縮小頭的體積,甚至改變它的形狀如把頸項部分切去等,有助配合不同作品的需要。我亦發現有很多人認不出我的樣子,這樣就可以有更多演繹的可能性。」所有面部都是一致缺乏表情,這是刻意的嗎?「你知道倒模的過程是怎樣嗎?兩個多小時中,我有一刻經歷了咽喉反射的反應,覺得快要窒息。我很害怕,幸好我準備了紙筆,那一刻,我在紙上寫出『slit the rubber; I'm choking』(撕破膠膜,我要窒息),最後一句我寫了『Get this off of me. I'm losing it. I'm freaking out.』(將這東西拿開,我不行了,我很害怕)。」最後,她還是成功造出模型。

In Rona's "metamorphic" world, she incorporates her physical self, featuring various sizes of her head, and different body parts such as hands and feet in her hybrids. "Actually, the concept of 'hybrid' has continuously appeared throughout human history..." (Ancient Egyptian culture is also one of Rona's inspirations; she often visits the Metropolitan Museum of Art to absorb knowledge from this period). "I began by making a life-cast of my head. I used medical-grade silicone because I wanted to achieve a perfect skin texture. After completion, I could easily use the computer to proportionally enlarge or shrink the volume of the head, then alter its shape by hand, cutting off part of the neck, removing the ears... to suit the needs of different works. I also found that many people didn't recognize my face, which allows for more interpretative possibilities." All of her faces lack expressions consistently—is this intentional? "Do you know how the molding process works? In over two hours, I experienced a moment where I felt like I couldn't breathe, feeling like I was choking. I was terrified, but luckily, I had a pen and paper on my lap. I wrote, 'slit the rubber; I'm choking!,' and the last line I wrote was, 'Get this off of me. I'm losing it. I'm freaking out!' Eventually, we succeeded in creating a life-cast model."

作為有輕度幽閉恐懼的我,當然能感受到缺氧所帶來的恐懼。基於這個原因,我看見《White Beaver》、《Fox》和《Dog》等作品的時候,先吸引我視線的都是那副沒有表情的面孔,然後看到如水銀班流動的動物身軀,我都覺得好像有種生物處於某空間,在等待蛻變。時移世易,Rona的作品或會經時間帶來不同解讀,就正如她形容藝術創作為一世的進化,或許某天我再看到其作品的真身,會感受到當中的幽默感,那時候,我或有機會成為Rona的靈魂伴侶。

As someone with a mild fear of confinement, I can certainly feel the fear brought about by a lack of oxygen. For this reason, when I see works like *White Beaver*, *Fox*, and *Dog*, the first thing that attracts my attention is always the expressionless faces. Then, seeing the animal bodies flowing like mercury, I feel as if some creature is in a certain space, waiting for metamorphosis. With the passage of time, Rona's works may bring about different interpretations, just as she describes artistic creation as a lifelong evolution. Perhaps one day, when I see the true essence of her works again, I might sense the humor within them. At that time, I might have the chance to become Rona's kindred spirit.

The FOCUS





Dog. 1998-2001, yellow stainless steel
28 x 16 1/2 x 32 in. (71.12 x 41.91 x 81.28 cm)
Edition of six
Courtesy of Sonnabend Gallery, New York and Galarie
Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris/Salzburg



Rona的模型和材料。