

## 為樹前往 Head For The Trees



羅娜·龐迪克(Rona Pondick)的不銹鋼雕塑〈樹上的頭〉(Head in Tree, 2006–2008, 105x42x37in. 攝影:Kevin Todora)

在納榭雕塑中心的「納榭混音」典藏展中，羅娜·龐迪克(Rona Pondick)的人樹雕塑將古老的智慧與超自然力量融於一體。

本文由納榭雕塑中心(Nasher Sculpture Center，成立於2003年，是收藏現代與當代雕塑、位於美國德州達拉斯的博物館)策展人凱瑟琳·克夫特(Catherine Craft)博士訪談並撰文，刊載於Patron雜誌的2021年四/五月刊期。

納榭雕塑中心(Nasher Sculpture Center)於2021年2-9月展覽「納榭混音」(Nasher Mixtape)中，展出精采的館藏。比起呈現單一主題中的不同變化，數個微型展覽更像是提供了各種「曲目」的匯集整編。入口處，第一個微型展《走進花園》(Into the Garden)便邀請訪客進入納榭雕塑花園，觀賞眾多受到自然啟發的雕塑作品——羅娜·龐迪克(Rona

Pondick)的不銹鋼雕塑〈樹上的頭〉(Head in Tree, 2006-2008)便是其一。龐迪克最近與納榭雕塑中心策展人凱瑟琳·克夫特(Catherine Craft)討論了她的作品。

**凱瑟琳·克夫特：**1990年代後期以來，妳一直創作不輟，作品往往融合了以自己的身體部位鑄造出的元素；這些鑄件有時翻模自妳的手、或像這件典藏作品一樣翻自妳的頭部。妳也常將這些身體元素與動植物融合在一起，產生的衝擊總是讓我感到震驚。從對抗、不安、到夢幻、抒情——觀眾常常感受到這一切的總和。妳是如何開始將自己的身體鑄件融入作品中的？

**羅娜·龐迪克：**我在 90 年代初創作時，用的是萬聖節的橡膠假牙；後來它們因不受歡迎而停產，我只好務實地用自己的牙齒製作模具，並開始把它們嵌到大小不同的手工球體上。我用棕土、蠟，或各種顏色如紅色、黃色、粉紅色的塑料來翻模這些「頭」，然後把它們堆成堆、或四散在地上。

1998 年，我用自己的頭製作了一個模具，並把那顆頭和我手工建模、一隻狗的非寫實身體結合在一起。我領悟到：這些半人半獸的形體，從新石器時代起就一直存在，並反覆在歷史中的每個時期出現。同時，我開始在這些人獸混合體接上我的手、臂和腿。狗是我的第一個人獸雕塑，〈貓柳樹〉 (*Pussy Willow Tree*, 2001, 不鏽鋼) 是我第一個人樹雕塑，那棵樹上有數百個像芽一樣的頭；〈樹上的頭〉 (*Head in Tree*) 則是第一個作品實物大小和我的頭相同的人樹作品。

儘管過去二十年來我一直使用相同的頭模鑄件，但我一直在改變這顆頭。有時是局部重塑：拿掉耳朵、頭髮、脖子，有時是從根本上扭曲形狀、誇張地改變比例。我藉此改變觀看者的身體和情感，希望他們能以自己的身體，感受到我的作品。

就像卡夫卡每次大聲朗讀《變形記》時都會大笑，我也想結合荒誕的幽默與生命中的闇影。我老是愛看這一幕：觀眾起初笑著看我的雕塑，幾秒之後表情驟變，他們都嚇壞了。

**凱瑟琳·克夫特：**觀賞〈樹上的頭〉時，我想起那些人與獸、人與植物緊密往來的古老神話，也想起獅身人面、為了躲避阿波羅的追求而化身月桂樹的達芙妮。另一方面，〈樹上的頭〉又似乎與各類現代雕塑對話，例如布朗庫西(Brancusi)的〈沉睡的繆斯〉。與歷史上的藝術對話，是否是妳作品重要的一部分？

**羅娜·龐迪克：**我的原生家庭太過痛苦破碎，所以我選擇依身在一個歷史悠久的藝術家族裡。我的藝術根源可以追溯到許多不同的方向，從古埃及藝術、伊特魯里亞文明(Etruscan，鐵器時代的地中海文明)、基克拉迪文明 (Cycladic，愛琴海文明)，哥德式藝術、前哥倫布時期，再到非洲藝術。我仔細觀察了多那太羅(Donatello，15 世紀義大利佛羅倫斯雕刻家)、貝里尼(Bellini)、波希(Bosch，15-16 世紀的荷蘭畫家)，以及梅塞爾施密特(Franz Xaver Messerschmidt，德奧雕塑家) 這位獨樹一幟的藝術家。布朗庫西(Brancusi)和賈科梅蒂(Giacometti)也都是我的摯愛。有意思的是妳提到達芙妮。貝尼尼〈阿波羅和達芙妮〉的隱喻和物性對〈樹上的頭〉產生了很大的影響。聖德蕾莎(Saint Teresa)、阿波羅和達芙妮都是用石頭雕成的，但卻好像在我們面前顫抖、移動和變形—這是惰性材料的驚人轉化！我記得第一次見到阿波羅和達芙妮時，有人轉頭對我說：「我的老天，那是什麼？」我認為這是對藝術品絕佳的回應—我想要得到這種回應！貝尼尼帶給我的靈感，孕育出我的兩件開創性作品〈樹上的頭〉和〈猴子〉，2022 年它們會在倫敦 Thaddaeus Ropac 畫廊首次比肩展出。

**凱瑟琳·克夫特：**妳擅長使用這種材料。這個雕塑是用不銹鋼製成的，它對妳有什麼吸引力？

**羅娜·龐迪克：**我是個材料狂熱分子，幾乎什麼材料都拿來用：布、蕾絲、報紙、漫畫、蠟、粘土、木料、石頭、青銅、鉛片、熔鉛、鞋子、嬰兒奶瓶、假牙…

不銹鋼看起來像不斷運動的流體，也可以造成不同的表面；在我的人獸雕塑中，擁有光滑鏡面的動物身體，接上有我皮膚紋理的身體鑄件；人樹雕塑上，啞光粗糙的樹皮與滑順光亮的頭部，形成鮮明對比，光滑的鏡面戲玩自戀的概念，吸引觀眾進入自己的視線...我喜歡看材質對比所呈現的矛盾和隱喻意義。最近我轉向壓克力和樹脂，藉此在作品中導入色彩，把玩光線、半透明性與不透明。在材料中找到新的視覺和情感對比，令我非常振奮。

**凱瑟琳·克夫特：**在納榭雕塑中心，我們將〈樹上的頭〉(Head in Tree)安置在雕塑花園入口附近。在創作時，接觸大自然對妳來說重要嗎？大自然在妳的藝術實踐中扮演什麼角色？

**羅娜·龐迪克：**接到委託、製作第一個戶外雕塑時，我覺得大自然很嚇人——至少我從沒見過哪個雕塑可以與自然之美匹敵。「如果不能超越自然，為什麼不加入他們呢？」我這樣一想，便決定讓自然直接參與我的作品、成為主題的一部分。我喜歡看到自己的樹木雕塑與日光、季節變化產生實質互動；當大自然改變作品的展出語境，那感覺就像是目睹魔術。

## HEAD FOR THE TREES

Rona Pondick's tree/human sculpture combines ancient wisdom with the supernatural in Nasher Mixtape.

INTERVIEW BY CATHERINE CRAFT

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Rather than presenting variations on a single overarching theme, Nasher Mixtape, on view at the Nasher Sculpture Center through September 26, offers a compilation of “tracks”— micro-exhibitions focused on the Nasher’s permanent collection installed throughout the museum. In the entrance, *Into the Garden* invites visitors into the Nasher’s sculpture garden with works inspired by nature, including Rona Pondick’s stainless steel sculpture *Head in Tree* (2006–2008). Rona Pondick recently discussed her works with Nasher Sculpture Center Curator Catherine Craft.

**Catherine Craft (CC):** Since the late 1990s you’ve been making sculptures that incorporate elements cast from parts of your own body, such as your head, as in the Nasher’s sculpture, or your hands. Often you combine these fragments with animals or plants. I’m struck by the range of effects such fusions can create, ranging from confrontational and disturbing to dreamlike and lyrical, and often some combination of all of these. How did you begin incorporating casts of your body into your work?

**Rona Pondick (RP):** In the early 90s I was using rubber Halloween teeth. Since they were not popular they were discontinued. Pragmatically, I decided to make molds of my own teeth, and began to embed them into handmade ball-like shapes of varying sizes. I modeled these forms—which I referred to as heads—in plastics that were bubble gum pink, red, yellow, or made with brown earth, wax, and plastics, and piled them into mounds or scattered

them on the floor.

In 1998, I made a mold from my own head and combined it with a stylized dog's body that I hand modeled. I had an epiphany: these hybrid animal/human forms go back to Neolithic times and appear through every period in history. At the same time, I began incorporating my hands, arms, and legs in these hybrid forms. Dog was my first animal/human sculpture, and *Pussy Willow Tree* was my first tree human sculpture (with hundreds of bud-like heads). *Head in Tree* was the first tree/human piece where my head was life-size.

While I have used the same casting of my head for over two decades, I have altered it endlessly by remodeling sections, removing my ears, hair, and neck, warping its shape radically, and dramatically changing its scale, to change how viewers physically and emotionally perceive it. I want viewers to feel my work viscerally, in their own bodies.

Like Kafka, who laughed whenever he read *The Metamorphosis* out loud, I want to combine absurd humor with the darkness in life. I love it when I see viewers respond to a sculpture by laughing, and seconds later others are horrified.

**CC:** When I look at *Head in Tree* it brings to mind many stories and beings from the long tradition of human-animal and human-plant interactions in ancient mythologies, such as the sphinx, or the tale of Daphne, who was transformed into a laurel tree to escape Apollo's pursuit. At the same time, *Head in Tree* seems very much in conversation with modern sculpture, such as Brancusi's *Sleeping Muse*. How important is an engagement with art of the past to your work?

**RP:** My biological family was so damaged and painful that I replaced it with an adopted art historical family. My art roots go way back and move in a lot of different directions, from Egyptian, Etruscan, Cycladic, Medieval, Gothic, and pre-Columbian, to African art. I look closely at Donatello, Bellini, and Bosch, and at Messerschmidt, who is an idiosyncratic artist in a class of his own. Then there are Brancusi and Giacometti... All are tremendous loves of mine. It is interesting that you bring up Daphne; Bernini's sculpture *Apollo and Daphne* was a big influence on *Head in Tree*, in its metaphors and materiality. Both Saint Teresa and Apollo and Daphne are made in stone, but they look as though they are quivering, moving, and metamorphosing right in front of you—an amazing transformation of inert material. I remember the first time I saw *Apollo and Daphne*, someone turned to me saying, "Holy shit, what the f. is that?" and I thought that isn't a bad reaction to a work of art; I would love a response like that! Bernini's sculptures inspired both *Head in Tree* and *Monkeys*, two seminal pieces of mine that will be shown together for the first time, in London in 2022 at Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac.

**CC:** This sculpture is in stainless steel, yet you work in a wide variety of other materials. What is appealing to you about stainless steel as a material?

**RP:** I am a materialaholic. There isn't a material I haven't used at some point to make a sculpture: cloth, lace, newspaper, comics, wax, clay, wood, stone, bronze, sheet lead, poured lead, shoes, baby bottles, chattering teeth...

Stainless steel looks fluid - it feels like it is constantly in motion. In my animal human hybrid pieces, I merge mirror-finished animal bodies with my skin-textured body parts. In my tree human pieces, the matte and rough surfaces of the bark make a contrast with my smooth, shiny head. Playing on the concept of narcissism, the mirrored surfaces draw viewers into looking at themselves. I like the way these contrasting, contradictory surfaces come together and make metaphoric meanings. I have moved recently to working with acrylics and resins, introducing brilliant colors, playing light and translucency against opacity, and I am excited to find new visual and emotional contrasts.

**CC:** At the Nasher we've installed *Head In Tree* near the entry to our sculpture garden. Is it important to you to have contact with nature as you make art? What role, if any, does nature play in your artistic practice?

**RP:** When I was commissioned to make my first outdoor sculpture, I felt intimidated by nature-I never saw a sculpture compete with nature and win. I thought, "If you can't beat them, why not join them?" I decided to engage nature directly and make it part of my subject. I love seeing my tree sculptures engage materially with daily light and seasonal changes, and as nature changes the context around them, that feels like magic.