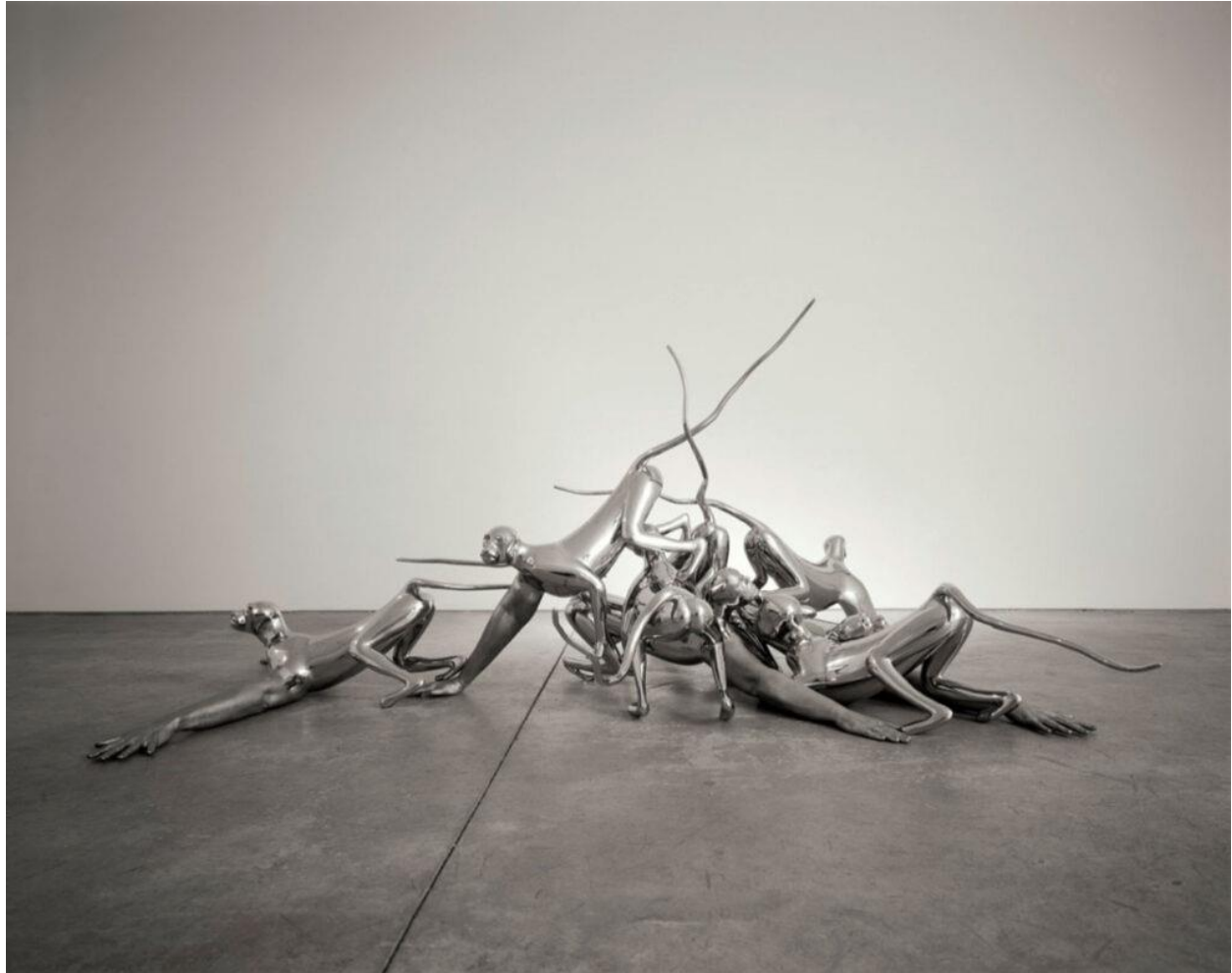


22 September 2022

Rona Pondick's "hybrid monkeys" take over the Belvedere



From 23 September 2022 to 8 January 2023, the Belvedere presents "Monkeys", an exhibition of the hybrid creatures created by Rona Pondick.

Source: Belvedere, Vienna · Image: Rona Pondick, Monkeys, 1998-2001. Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London – Paris – Salzburg – Seoul © Rona Pondick

The "monkeys" by **Rona Pondick** (born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1952) are **hybrid creatures with human parts, part of a series of creatures that the artist has been creating over the past 25 years**, beginning with her "Dog" (1998-2001). According to Belvedere, these "monkeys" are *"simultaneously wild, erotic, aggressive, and whimsical; the human face—the artist herself—either suffering or ecstatic. An overriding impression of ambivalence exists, of attraction and repulsion, and of other often contradictory impulses and drives."*

The Belvedere Museum itself acknowledges the historical sources of these hybrid creatures in Pondick: *"From Egyptian sphinxes and deities, Greek centaurs, Ovid's Metamorphoses, to mermaids in fairy-tales, **chimera have exerted a fascination since time immemorial.** The **Metamorphosis by Franz Kafka** is arguably the most famous example from modern times, and was a source of inspiration for the artist (...) Rona Pondick researched works of the Old Masters in her quest to achieve this flawless execution. With the utmost precision, the artist cast parts of her own body or head using 3D technology to reduce the size of the life casts. She merged these with hand-sculpted animal bodies to create her human-animal hybrids. The meticulous handling of the stainless steel surface is also significant, for duality is manifested in materiality. The parts of the human body are lifelike whereas the animals are smooth and flowing. The monkeys' movements and the complex dynamics of their interactions within the tangle of creatures exert a pull on viewers. **Gian Lorenzo Bernini's Baroque sculptures** were an important influence in this regard. As we see in Bernini's art, everything in Pondick's work seems to dissolve into flowing movement and only by walking around the sculpture can it be grasped in its entirety."*

These hybrid creatures created by Rona Pondick have been the subject of several recent exhibitions, including those at the Marc Straus Gallery, New York (March – April 2022) or Nunu Fine Art, Taipei (November 2021 to January 2022).