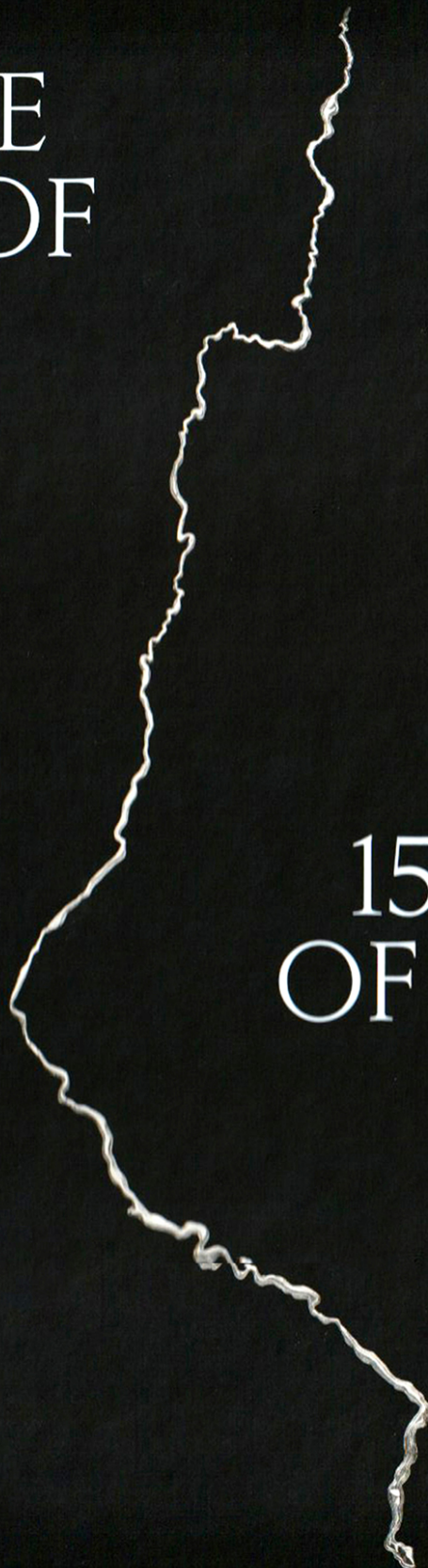


ON THE
BASIS OF
ART

150 YEARS
OF WOMEN
AT YALE



ON THE BASIS OF ART

Introduction by

Elisabeth Hodermarsky

Essays by

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150 YEARS OF WOMEN AT YALE

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1869 to 1949

Part 2
1950 to 1968

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Marta Kuzma

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RONA PONDICK HAS PUSHED THE BOUNDARIES OF sculpture for decades by combining traditional techniques and modern technology. In her work, she uses carving, casting, and modeling, as well as 3-D computer scanning. After receiving a B.A. from Queens College, City University of New York, she was awarded a scholarship to the Yale School of Art. While at Yale, Pondick studied under noted sculptor David von Schlegell and began to experiment with using her own body in a figurative approach.¹ She intensely studied works by the Old Masters and spent long hours in museums, drawing influence from a range of time periods, styles, and artists, from ancient Egyptian art to modern masters, and notably from the Swiss sculptor Alberto Giacometti, whose work has inspired her experimentation with scale.

The human body has been a continual source of inspiration for Pondick's work since the 1980s. In the early 1990s, she created works that fused cast ears and teeth with everyday objects, questioning human desire and the meaning attached to physical things. Around the same time, she also conceived large installation pieces, such as *Granite Bed* (fig. 1), a work that emphasizes the intimate relationship between the human body and a bed, which is commonly used for biological activities such as sleep and sex.

In the late 1990s, Pondick began to make sculptures of hybrid creatures that combined human and animal or vegetal parts. The human features derive from casts she made at the time from her own body—most often her head but also her arms and

hands—and that she has continuously used in her sculpture since then.² In *Fox* (fig. 2), the animal seems stopped in motion, with its head resting on the ground. The double nature of the figure is further emphasized by the opposition between the different textures: the smoothness of the body's surface versus the irregular finish of the face creates a disturbing tension. Pondick's hybrid sculptures are inspired by history and ancient mythology, topics in which she is very interested. The fusion of human parts with animal or vegetal parts recalls the story of Apollo and Daphne, in which the nymph transforms into a laurel tree. But Pondick is also referencing recent scientific experiments, specifically cloning, as she alters the human features over and over again.³ She uses 3-D scanning to change the scale of the body parts, blowing up some elements out of proportion and thus enhancing the imaginary aspect of the hybrid figures she creates. FVJ

1. Rona Pondick, in "Rona Pondick with Phong Bui," *Brooklyn Rail*, March 4, 2013, <https://brooklynrail.org/2013/03/art/rona-pondick-with-phong-bui>.

2. As Pondick has noted, "The body has been a subject of my work since the '80s, but now it's my body." Quoted in Lynn Zelevansky, *Rona Pondick: Works 2013–2018*, exh. cat. (New York: Marc Straus, 2018), n.p.

3. Susan L. Stoops, ed., *Rona Pondick: The Metamorphosis of an Object*, exh. cat. (Worcester, Mass.: Worcester Art Museum, 2009), 13.



FIG. 1. Rona Pondick, *Granite Bed*, 1998. Black Indian granite, 3 ft. ½ in. × 3 ft. × 22 ft. (92.7 × 91.4 × 670.6 cm). Gift of the Ruth and Jacob Bloom Family, 2018.89.1

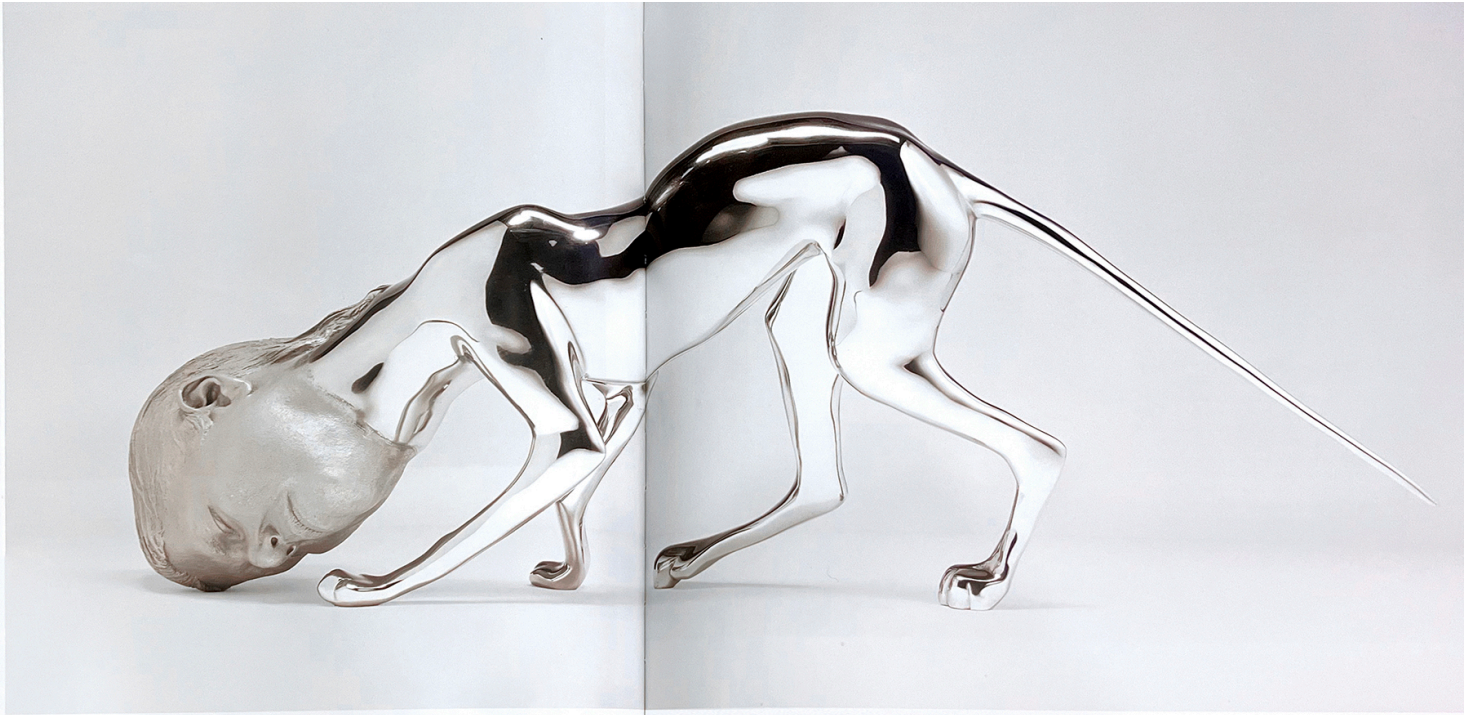


FIG. 2. Rona Pondick, *Fox*, 1998–99. Stainless steel, 14 1/2 × 8 × 38 in. (36.8 × 20.3 × 96.5 cm). Edition 5/6. Promised gift of Antonio Homen