



Toledo Museum of Art
MASTERWORKS

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Rona Pondick

American, born 1952

Cat
2005

Stainless steel
H. 4 1/2 in. (11.4 cm), L. 33 in. (83.8 cm)
Purchased with funds given by Ruth and Jacob Bloom
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Throughout her career, Rona Pondick's art has straddled the line between seductive and repulsive. For *Cat*, Pondick fuses human features with an animal body to create a sculpture that achieves a nightmarish amalgam of human, beast, and machine-like steel. Making these hybrid forms allows Pondick to combine traditional sculptural modeling and casting with rapid-prototyping technology (converting three-dimensional computer models into physical models). These bizarre beings address self-portraiture (she casts parts of her own body for the human components) and anxieties about genetic engineering, and are even evocative of children's fairytales in which human and animal are sometimes magically mixed.

The human elements of Pondick's sculpture are hyper-realistic, but altered in scale. The animal parts are stylized and polished to a perfect, almost liquid shine. Here, Pondick's

tiny, intricately detailed head rests on the cat's oversized, human-form paw—a pose of immediately recognizable and perfect relaxation. But the most startling part of the sculpture is the large, completely out of scale but perfectly detailed human hand, stretching out from the cat's reclining body. Nothing is as it should be—and that is precisely what Pondick intends. Drawing equally from high technology, art history, and ancient mythology, the resulting sculptures are Kafkaesque in their strangeness—at once eerily familiar and disturbingly alien.