

CONTEMPORARY FINE ARTS

ANGELIKA LODERER

PHANTOMS

11 NOVEMBER – 16 DECEMBER 2023

Angelika Loderer is a sculptor that bends figuration into the abstract. Her imagination is of wilderness itself. As it is in nature so it is in the human body, albeit unto its own material laws. To breathe life into a sculptural nomenclature one has to transform the embryo of a form, like a golem brought to life endowed with vital matter. Time stands still. In that interstitial space there are polarities of movement and entropy. In Loderer's lost wax process causality plays a role in determining the final outcome of the sculptures while layers of wax randomly drip, then solidify in place. Chance sets the controls. In the gesture and pose of the fragments we sense character and humaneness. One cannot say this is the whole person, merely the fragment of the person.

All physical forces, rightly in place and controlled in the thermodynamics of matter, are builders. Thus, nature speaks through Loderer's vessels as interventions of matter. Nothing is accidental; everything is incidental. Time bends. In their brutalist modeling, a remote echo of the archaic is felt, owing fidelity to antique sculptural techniques and materials mined from the earth, cast in bronze, and, for the CFA exhibition, aluminum. Isolated anatomical indices, i.e., distended clasping hands, embracing arms, legs, feet, and atrophied torsos are like phases of the moon. They have lived their cycles of motion and are now at rest standing upon their own protruded limbs upon the floor.

As pure figuration, Loderer transforms muscle sinew into Rubenesque second skins – from soft and malleable, to hard and dense. A hand morphs into a leg that in turn morphs into the foot itself; the outer half of an arm and hand appear as sculptural gloves, while clasping hands morph into swollen mitts as “ungainly” as the hands in the late Picasso portrait “Paloma” (1951). A wall-mounted shelf with ostrich eggs is a symbolical nod to Loderer's exalted bucolic wanderings in forests and meadows. There, animal life, mineral, and plant forms adapt to everchanging conditions. A felled tree exposes an otherwise hidden orifice for a creature of the wild to burrow in; geological erosion creates new topologies; this microcosm of transforming from one thing into another drives Loderer's radical Ovidian deconstruction of the human body.

In weight and volume, Angelika Loderer's sculptural language is elaborated fleshly reality itself, a mirroring of shapes conceived to separate the lasting from the transitory. Embedded within the metallic finish and rough crevices, the minutest details are visible as micro-tributerics of muscle sinew and grafts of fibrous skin itself. And, if this anatomical feeling of heavy medieval body armour looks familiar, it is very much a sense memory of archeological excavations and of vaulted Romanesque catacombs, and rudimentary stone edifices heavily laden with metal bolts, hinges, and decorative elements.

Angelika Loderer's spartan installations are a staged dramaturgy of disembodied characters – a “Noh” theater without masks in the vein of Friedrich Kiesler's “David”, 1964-1965. Only the gestural positions of wayward phantom bodies hint at narrative in the mise en scène. In the nascent sci-fi era of synthetic biology and gene mapping, Loderer's sculptural etudes are a twenty-first century metamorphoses of opposing forces-the push/pull of gravity and time,

silent as an archeological tomb. They are contemporaneous with the currents of sculpture circa 2023, yet the voluminous metals are antithesis to fast, automated production methods where 3D printing is concerned.

This adherence to classical technique and material properties has been turned inside out in these chimerical reliquaries from the blast of the furnace. Loderer reinvents the rules, making something new and peculiar. The binding thread of an iterative process makes for another similitude, for matter is weighted with geometry and geometry is their eccentric "skeleton" crystallized through phantasmic lines of force.

One is struck by the simultaneous fragility and precariousness of Angelika Loderer's sculptures. They hold a strange power and beauty unto themselves. The ideal image of the body is an invention of classical sculpture; Loderer defies and upends its rules of symmetry and order. In the unity of disparate parts the inner planes of reality are externally conveyed; for corporeal and chemical bodies adhere to the laws of gravity in a continual metamorphoses. In idyllic pastoral settings plant and humans are extensions of each other. Thus, Loderer's molten metals of life conjure the immanent substratums of the body and mind as vessels of the psyche. As it is in nature so it is in the human body, thus the cycle is completed, and there is a lyricism to that.

Max Henry