

SOFÍA DURRIEU
UNPREDICTABLE FRUIT

DECEMBER 1, 2023 – JANUARY 25, 2024



LIVIE

The Dialectic of the Enlightenment was written by two friends and great thinkers, Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, during the Second World War and circulated privately, before it appeared in a printed edition in Amsterdam in 1947. I first read the book as a philosophy student and was annoyed. Years later, I read the book again, as if it was a novel, and found it profoundly beautiful. The first chapter focuses on Odysseus' effort to avoid the dangers of the sirens. Odysseus has to convince his sailors to plug their ears with wax and to row forward using their bodily strength without looking or listening to them to survive. Odysseus, however, chooses another option for himself as the master: he ties himself to the ship mast to be able to listen to the Sirens' songs. Songs that possess the greatest seductive powers of all, one that makes you forget yourself, following them into the deep waters of the Ocean and die. In a conference in Florence in 1978, the Italian writer Italo Calvino asked in public what I have been also wondering since I read that book: "What were the Sirens singing?" His answer was the most obvious and beautiful of all: the Sirens perhaps were singing the Odyssey itself. Oh... yes... It makes sense that the seduction the ancient poets were talking about was just the listening to our own life, to the difficult journey we all undertake to balance desire, ambition, the limits imposed on us by our birth, class, place, opportunities... the desire to live in peace but be of relevance to others, the many ways we gamble with hope, with luck, with the possibility of escaping the circumstances through a small or big miracle...

The work of Sofía Durrieu focusses on the many unconscious practices and small rituals we all perform to regain a sense of our own self and avoid the damaging feeling of alienation from the world. We „drink“ our own tears so often, or place our hopes of a change of fate in an object we carried... Through performance and sculpture her work explores —and makes conscious and tangible— all these survival tactics, giving them forms and materials to touch and giving them also a script, a narrative dimension that is to be invented by each and one of us. In this particular exhibition composed by ten different pieces she is asking us: what a world have you got inside you? Are you one that constantly replaces mythical thinking with formal logic? Are you one that sees the world full of meaningful symbols and constantly produces allegories? Are you one that wants to free the humans from their subjection to capitalistic destructive power? Are you one that sees nature as a healing substance and wants to embrace a form of life different than the one you currently have?

Read this exhibition as a unique opportunity to see and also touch the pieces to enter into a process similar to mediation. So often we wonder what happens with ourselves, what are the chances we still have of living a fulfilling life. If the animism of ancient cultures and current vernacular and indigenous peoples endows things with souls; industrialism and generative capitalism makes souls into things. But these things here are other things, things that may channel a communication with our souls, or just to resurface traits of our personalities, if you prefer this language. Are these objects magic? They are if you think that magic is the name of the early way humans related to the world. Magic is very different from religion in that sense. Magic works by identification: what the believer—or you, in this case—does to an object is meant to have an effect. Religion, on the other hand, works by representation. In sacrifice, the lamb slaughtered on the altar is a representation of the person atoning for their sins.

Sofía Durrieu's works are magically circumstantial. That is, they want to seek a relation between you and them, between your thinking, your body, your beliefs, your doubts, and those objects. In that sense the exhibition here, the effort in creating a practice that has a deep interest in all of us, in our relationship to ourselves and others is a political interest. Why so? Because the development of the self costs human beings a lot of pain, and the ultimate question is if the sum of all our developments will end up in a good or a bad society, in a toxic and blindly egoist community or in a generous and constantly enabling one. Sofía Durrieu works and also rows—like the sailors of Odysseus— for the later one.

Chus Martínez

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Sofia Durrieu

* 1980, Buenos Aires, Argentina, lives and works in Buenos Aires and Basel

Chest nut, 2023

bronze, steel, 151 x 126 x 25cm





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Amphora, 2023

bronze, steel, glass, ceramic, 76.5 x 16.5 x 10 cm





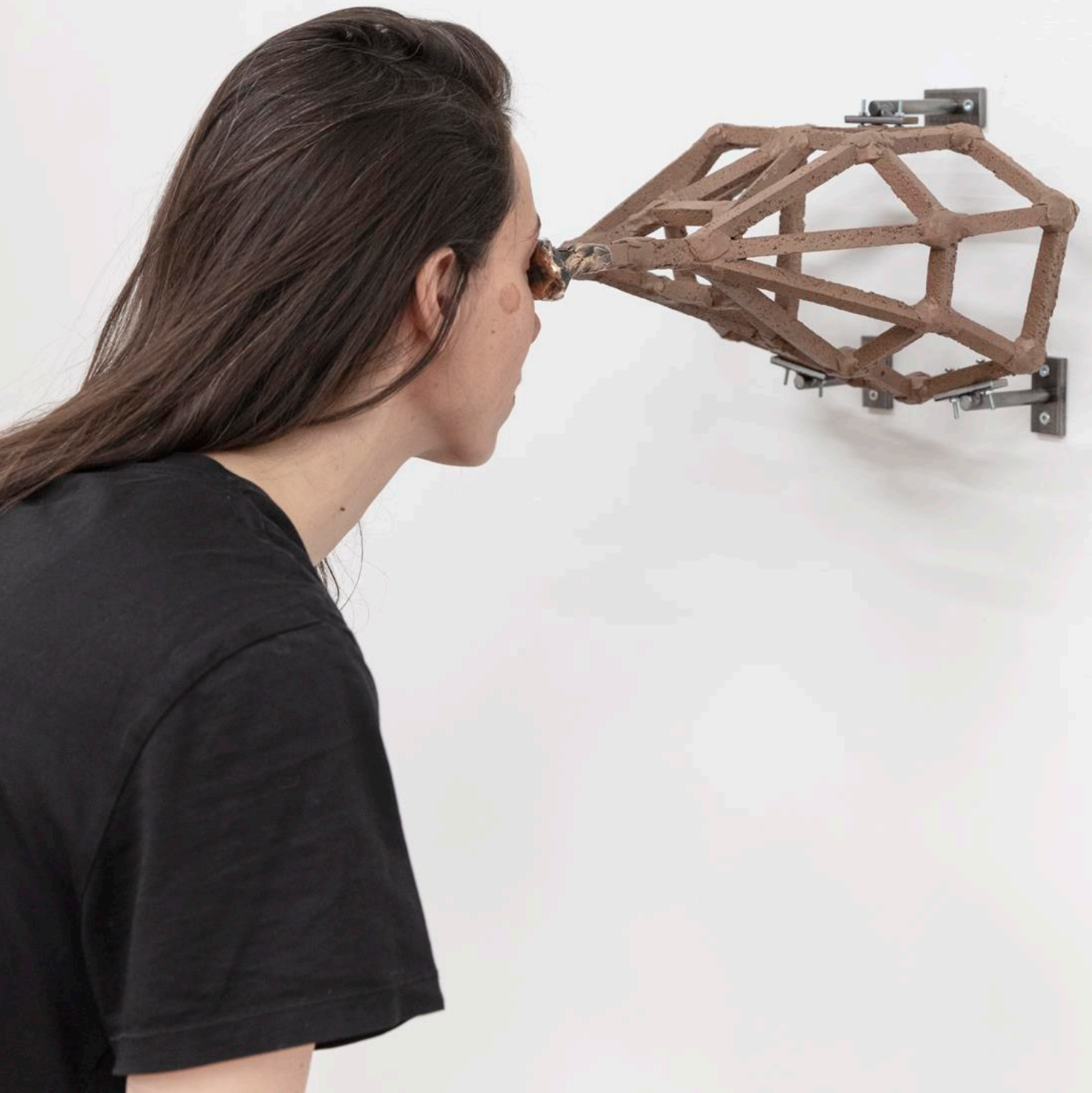
Sofia Durrieu

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Obstructure 1 (see no evil), 2023
bronze, steel, 21.5 x 32.5 x 38 cm

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Obstructure 2 (hear no evil), 2023
bronze, steel, 37.3 x 105 x 30 cm

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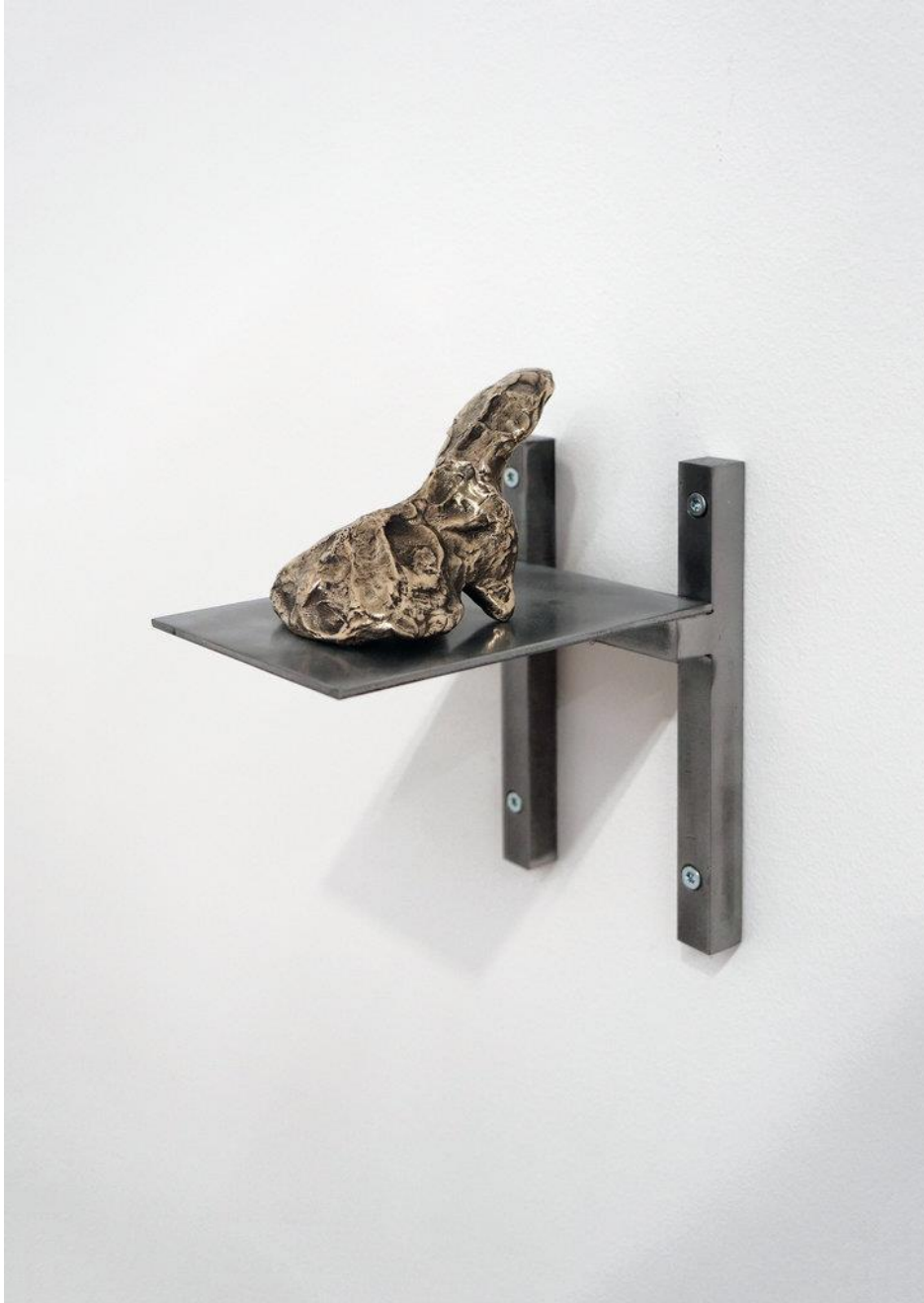
Obstructure 3 (speak no evil), 2023

bronze, 70 x 47 x 18.5 cm

concrete plinth, 99 x 20 x 19cm



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Oyster - Echo, 2023

bronze, steel, 17 x 10.5 x 16 cm





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Pendulum, 2023

steel, lead, copper leaf, 130 x 13 x 10 cm



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Fetich, 2023

steel, lead, copper leaf, nails, screws 61 x 10 x 18 cm



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Tool, 2023

bronze, steel, 181 x 2 x 2 cm





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You ought to smile more, 2023

bronze, steel, acrylic prosthetic teeth, metallic chain, 11.5 x 32 x 35 cm





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Bull's eye (horns), 2023

bronze, steel 39 x 60 x 20 cm







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Infinitears, 2023

bronze, steel 66 x 20 x 17.5 cm



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* 1980, Buenos Aires, Argentina, lives and works in Buenos Aires and Basel

Unicorn, 2023

bronze, steel 86 x 22 x 13 cm



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Sofia Durrieu (*1980 Buenos Aires, Argentina, lives in Basel, Switzerland and Buenos Aires, Argentina) studied Fine Arts at Prilidiano Pueyrredón, Philosophy at the University of Buenos Aires, and Graphic Design at the Faculty of Design of Buenos Aires. In 2018 she moved to Basel, Switzerland to join the Master in Fine Arts program at FHNW HGK Institut Kunst, directed by Chus Martínez, graduating in 2020. Recent solo exhibitions of the artist were Protolito/Limen at Ruth Benzacar, Buenos Aires, Magenmund at Palazzina, Basel, Amenities at Reaktor, Zurich, Control Remoto at Pasto Galería, Buenos Aires. Her work has been included in several group exhibitions, among them at Kunsthalle Basel, MALBA, Buenos Aires, Kunsthaus Baselland, Basel, CEAAC Strasbourg, Federico Klemm Foundation, Buenos Aires, and Livie Gallery, Zurich. Her work was part of the performance series “Friday Beyeler” at Fondation Beyeler, Riehen, and of the Performance Biennial in Parque Memorial in Buenos Aires in 2022. Recently she has been awarded with the 2022 Swiss Art Awards, the Werkbeitrag Kunstcredit Basel Stadt 2021, as well as an Atelier Mondial residency in Tokas, Tokyo. A solo exhibition at Kunstverein Heppenheim and a performance at Kunstmuseum Basel are planned for 2024.