

## Noémie Pilo - 'Six Spaces'

13 June - 12 July 2025; Opening 12 June 2025, 5-8pm

In Noémie Pilo's (\*1997, F) sculptural practice, found and familiar materials – stones, books, brooms, newspaper, bronze, and fruit – are reassembled into gestures of quiet attention. Her works reveal subtle resonances between the natural and the constructed, the ephemeral and the enduring, and the spontaneous and the carefully composed. Objects are rarely altered beyond minimal transformation: a book stripped of its cover, a broom inverted, a beehive cast in bronze. Pilo doesn't aim to disguise or transcend these elements, but to heighten their presence – to let them speak in new ways.

In *Suiseki* (2020), a pale aluminum broom leans delicately against a wall, holding a stone within its upward-facing bristles. The composition is simple, almost accidental – a gesture first discovered in the studio. Yet its title refers to the Japanese art of *suiseki*, where naturally shaped stones are appreciated for their resemblance to mountains, waterfalls, or entire landscapes. Traditionally placed on handcrafted pedestals in tea rooms, the stones remain unaltered, elevated only through context. "Here", Pilo explains, "the broom becomes the pedestal". The broom's surface evokes the texture of raked sand in Japanese dry gardens, and its unusual orientation recalls symbolic uses in Japanese culture – an upturned broom may mean "time to leave".

Books appear throughout Pilo's work, often treated sculpturally. In *Bibliographie* (2021), three meaningful books from her personal library – *Pierre* by Roger Caillois, *L'Art Poétique* by Paul Claudel, and *L'Intuition de l'instant* by Gaston Bachelard – are opened, interwoven, and arranged into a triangular prism. The covers are removed, exposing the pale natural paper. Created in response to the question of what one would take when forced to leave home, the piece becomes a condensed, portable archive of intellectual memory – a small monument to influence. "It's like a library reduced to three titles", she notes. The interlocked pages hold together without glue, by friction alone – a delicate equilibrium of thought and form.

This interest in material balance and conceptual layering also appears in *Press-papier* (2024), where a large stone rests on a pile of five

coverless books. The color of the stone echoes the pages' shifting tones – from white to beige – creating a visual and tactile harmony. Unlike *Bibliographie*, the content of the books is unimportant here. "They represent a part of the library", she says. "Any book. It becomes abstract – the idea of text without reading".

*Biface* (2024), a granite sculpture, refers to prehistoric tools shaped on both sides. Pilo plays on the French meaning of "biface" – two-faced – by working one side of the stone to a polish while leaving the other raw. It's both a meditation on ancient techniques and a quiet metaphor for duality, transformation, and time.

Time also plays a role in *Lou* (2024), where a dried lemon is placed on a faded book cover. The lemon has been bleached by the sun; the cover darkened by it. Named after a friend exploring solar effects on fabric, the work reflects shared fascinations with light, decay, and slow alteration.

In *Untitled (Kyoto)* (2024), Pilo places a folded Japanese newspaper on the floor, anchoring it with found objects – a stone, two seeds, and a curled branch – all collected during a visit to Kyoto, where she once studied. The newspaper remains unreadable to her; the information becomes visual. "It's like my news from Kyoto", she says. "A time capsule".

In *Beehive* (2024), a bronze cast of a wax beehive frame hangs vertically on the wall. Originally an artificial aid used by beekeepers, the wax form was given directly to a foundry, cast using the lost-wax method. "The bronze melts the wax and take its place, creating imperfections and giving back to the beehive its "natural" aspect" she explains. Its transformation – from a functional tool into a quiet, painterly sculpture – mirrors the way her practice often elevates the overlooked.

Pilo's works suggest small rituals of looking. They are visual haikus – spare, composed, and attentive – that invite the viewer to dwell with the material world a little longer, and to listen to what quiet things might say.

Dóra Eötvös