

PRESS RELEASE

MIA AKRAP

Stronger Than Bone

June 10 – September 5, 2026

TROTOAR, Zagreb, Croatia

Curator: Gabriella Rebello Kolandra

Trotoar is pleased to present *Stronger Than Bone*, a new solo exhibition by Mia Akrap.

Working across ceramics, sculpture, and installation, Akrap draws on autobiography, memory, and feminist perspectives to explore questions of inheritance, motherhood, and the transmission of emotional and behavioural patterns across generations. Through recurring motifs such as water, hair, fragmented bodies, and animal forms, she constructs a personal mythology in which subjectivity emerges through the tension between intimate experience and broader social histories. In this new body of work, ceramic vessels and fountains become carriers of memory and transformation, evoking both ancient iconographies and contemporary forms of embodied experience. Moving between tenderness and rupture, *Stronger Than Bone* reflects on how inherited structures are negotiated, resisted, and reshaped through material, gesture, and form.

From the exhibition text:

Mia Akrap (Požega, 1995) draws on her own life as her primary material. The works presented here are new, produced for her first solo show at Trotoar Gallery, and engage with questions of relationality, trauma, and autobiography. Although the exhibition does not include paintings, the artist's primary medium, it nevertheless reflects a sustained commitment to it. Akrap's confessional approach translates her inner emotional and psychological landscape – memories, affects, and personal experiences – into a body of work that is at once intimate and resonant beyond the individual. The exhibition firmly situates her practice within a broader feminist discourse.

In an artistic landscape where production is frequently outsourced to specialised artisans and services, Akrap places emphasis on engaging with different stages of the process, often over extended periods of practice. A visit to her studio, located on the ground floor of a residential building in Zagreb, provides a clear measure of this approach: the space is organised to accommodate a range of processes, reducing the need for external assistance while remaining flexible in its modes of production. Akrap's practice develops in close proximity to her experience of motherhood, and these dimensions inform and permeate one another.

The works presented in *Mia Akrap: Stronger Than Bone* are structured as a personal mythology, articulated through an iconographic system in which recurring motifs – water, hair, cords, animals, and fragmented bodies – operate as carriers of memory. Central to her practice is an investigation into the transgenerational transmission of memory and behavioural patterns, approached as a field of inquiry. Understood as embodied structures

that persist across a family lineage, in her case along a female line, these processes are engaged from within, as sites where inherited experiences are negotiated, reworked, and also resisted. Subjectivity emerges through this tension, taking shape where personal memory and socio-historical conditions converge.

The title of the show draws on two distinct yet related references. One is the artist Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's experimental 1982 book *Dictée*. Difficult to classify, the work operates at the intersection of autobiography, historiography, and literary experiment, incorporating techniques drawn from film editing. Published shortly before Cha's premature and violent death, *Dictée* foregrounds a constellation of historical and mythological women, including the Korean independence activist Yu Guan Soon, Joan of Arc, and Demeter and Persephone. A second point of reference emerges in the poetic essay "Rain Dreamed by Sound: Reading Theresa Hak Kyung Cha" by artist Cecilia Vicuña, published as a contribution to *Minds Rising*, the online platform of the 13th Gwangju Biennale, curated by Defne Ayas and Natasha Ginwala. Vicuña approaches Cha's work through a poetics of sound and transmission, where language persists beyond the written as vibration and resonance across time.

At the opening of *Dictée*, Cha includes an epigraph attributed to Sappho:

*May I write words more naked than flesh,
stronger than bone, more resilient than
sinew, sensitive than nerve.*

Rather than citing a historical fragment, Cha produces a deliberate fabrication invoking the ancient Greek poet from the island of Lesbos: her referent is not a quotation by Sappho but the very idea of the poet, which evokes fragmentation on multiple levels.

Akrap's ceramic works operate through a comparable displacement of origin. While their scale and form recall ancient vessels, they do not function as citations; they open up a space in which genealogy is reconfigured as a relational system structured through forms, figures, and motifs.

The assembly of multiple vessels into a single body further stratifies this structure, producing a field of possible readings, and recognition shifts from one fragment to another, without privileging a single point of view. This non-hierarchical mode of viewing is reinforced by the circular form of the vessels themselves, which resists linear interpretation and instead suggests a continuous movement across the surface.

Water operates as a central element within the exhibition, taking its most explicit form in two fountains, *Spring of Phantoms* and *Spring of Abundance*. They extend an earlier series of works centred on motherhood, approached as a process of reconfiguration.

Their development was accompanied by an investigation into historical fountains, particularly the lactating fountains of Italy, which inform their framework. In sixteenth-century Mannerist visual culture, lactating nereids, sirens, and goddesses figure as emblematic forms through which Nature is rendered as a generative body associated with protection and fertility. *Spring of Abundance* looks also to the compositional structure of *The Garden of Earthly Delights* by Bosch, where the fountain appears as a site of excess and cyclical

life. In *Spring of Phantoms*, the vertical sequence of female heads articulates a form of inheritance that is both material and affective. The “phantom” designates inherited emotional traces and unresolved experiences that persist across generations. Read in relation to Marianne Hirsch's concept of postmemory, the fountains frame inheritance as a process through which experience is transformed and, at times, distorted.

In works such as *Girl with Lilies*, where transmission precedes articulation, a similar condition emerges. The figure occupies a threshold in which subjectivity is already structured by inherited roles. The lily introduces a codified iconographic field tied to purity and an idealised femininity, functioning as a sign imposed in advance of choice, one that positions the subject within a system of representation before it can be negotiated. In *Stronger Than Bone #3 (Blue Vase with Braid)*, where this structure is no longer only internalised but acted upon, the gesture of cutting the braid marks a position within a system that continues to impose form.

Akrap's practice unfolds in dialogue with a broader constellation of practices. *Stronger Than Bone* draws on forms of embodied strength that traverse historical and contemporary subjectivities across generations and geographies. Origin appears only as construction.

About the Artist:

Mia Akrap (Požega, 1995) graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb in 2020, where she is currently undertaking her postgraduate studies. She works primarily in the fields of painting and ceramics, and through her practice she explores questions of identity, personal and collective experience, transformation, and transgenerational legacies. Her work focuses on the processes of memory, the build-up of layers of experience and archetypal models, in which materiality and form become bearers of symbolic and affective meanings.

She has held solo exhibitions at the Kazamat Gallery (Osijek, 2023), Poola Gallery (Pula, 2023), the B. Dešković Art Gallery (Bol, 2023), the Karas Gallery (Zagreb, 2022) and the Šira Gallery (Zagreb, 2020), among others. She has participated in numerous group exhibitions, including *Od Y do Z – Gradilište nove generacije* (National Museum of Modern Art, 2025), the 37th Youth Salon (Archaeological Museum, 2024), the Biennale of Painting (2023, 2025), the 36th Youth Salon (2022), the 6th Biennale of Painting (2021), *Matrice: botanika* (SC Gallery, Zagreb, 2021), the 16th Erste Fragments exhibition (2020), *Venientes* (the 35th Youth Salon, 2020), and the 8th Watercolour Triennale (Art Gallery of the City of Slavonski Brod, 2019).

She was awarded the Canvas Gallery Prize at the 7th Biennale of Painting (2023), the “Collector to Artist Award” at the 36th Youth Salon (2022), and the People's Choice Award at the 16th Erste Fragments competition (2020). She has been on several art residency programs in France, Germany, and Lithuania, and as part of her Erasmus+ placement she spent time in Germany. Her works are part of the collection of the National Museum of Modern Art in Zagreb, and private collections. She lives and works in Zagreb.

About the curator:

Gabriella Rebello Kolandra is an independent curator currently based in Milan, Italy.

Her practice spans curating, writing, and research, focusing on the construction of supportive contexts for artistic practices not exclusively oriented toward market-driven logics of legitimation, but attentive to processes and the conditions of artistic labor. From 2022 to 2025 she was Assistant Curator at ICA Milano, and since 2026 she has been collaborating with the Centro per l'Arte Contemporanea Luigi Pecci in Italy as part of Supertoscana, a residency program for artists and curators. In September 2025 she was awarded the Meridiana Prize for curators, promoted by the Madre Museum in Naples, Italy. Recent curated exhibitions include Santa do pau oco (Anna Maria Maiolino, Maria Luce Cacciaguerra, Clarissa Baldassarri) at Madre Museum, Naples; Margherita Moscardini: Super Super, at Platea, Lodi; Isabella Costabile. Whose is this? at ICA Milano, Milan; Vashish Soobah: Chez moi and Rebeca Pak: Terriccio Universale, at Platea, Lodi, among others.

TROTOAR

Mesnička 7, Zagreb, Croatia

Opening hours: Wed – Fri 11 – 19, Sat 10 – 14, and by appointment

trotoar-galerija.hr

[@trotoar.gallery](https://www.instagram.com/trotoar.gallery)

contact: info@trotoar-galerija.hr

media inquiries: press@trotoar-galerija.hr