The Thorn Stigmata and
The Faded Branch of The Crown

Marie Ségolène C Brault
Christopher Gambino
Dr. Aneta Stojnić

Pangée
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In the 1633 play The Bird in A Cage, Eugenia is imprisoned in a tower by her father, The Duke, preventing her from marrying her beloved Philenzo. Challenged to find a way into the tower if he wishes to claim her hand, Philenzo conceals himself within an elaborate birdcage filled with exotic birds. His eventual reveal shatters the cage, liberating both himself and Eugenia from her gilded confinement.

In one of the rare direct quotations attributed to the Franco-American stigmatist and mystic Little Marie Rose Ferron, she likewise imagines herself as a caged bird. Confined to her room, she watched from the window as friends passed in their Sunday best on their way to church. "I wept bitterly. Oh, if you only knew how I felt!." In stories of her birth, her mother dedicated her tenth child to the mystery of the crucifixion, foreshadowing a life of sacrifice and pain. By 23, she lay in agony on a bed made of wooden planks, her body secured with strips of linen to prevent it from curling uncontrollably into itself.

Yet her devotion to God knew no bounds. By 1925, Little Rose entered periods of ecstasy during which she was said to converse with Christ, sing, and speak in other languages. As her body closed in on itself, she grew closer and closer to Jesus. Entirely relinquishing her own will.

Marie Rose never escaped her confinement. Through redemptive suffering, the cage itself became the site of spiritual expansion. Her bodily pain acquired symbolic and theological value as she took on the pains and illness of others, submissive to her suffering. Her pain was never entirely her own, but became the place in which she believed union with her beloved could be found.

The Thorn Stigmata and The Faded Branch of The Crown presents new works by Christopher Gambino (New York) and Marie Ségolène C. Brault (Montréal), accompanied by a commissioned text by Dr. Aneta Stojnić (New York). Moving between archival research and material experimentation, the exhibition reflects on mysticism, devotional practice, self-dissolution, and the figure of the victim soul.

Inspired by research into the life of the Franco-American mystic and stigmatist Marie Rose Ferron (1902 – 1936), the exhibition considers how ordinary objects become charged through acts of devotion. Ferron's wounds were never formally recognized by the Church, and her cause for canonization was eventually suspended. The photographs and narratives that remain inhabit an unresolved space between faith, performance, pathology, and possible fabrication.

Throughout the exhibition, matter becomes both the site of encounter and the obstacle to it, invested with meaning precisely because it cannot deliver what it promises. Objects solicit devotion while remaining stubbornly insufficient.

Christopher Gambino's sculptures evoke quasi-bodies and the residue of intense, often transgressive experiences. Working with found furniture and domestic objects, he selects forms that already carry histories of touch, posture, and bodily relation. Through dressing, propping, fragmenting, and breaking apart, these objects begin to assume distinct personalities—at times humorous, at times unsettling. Suspended between trace and performer, passivity and agency, they hover in a state of unresolved animation, where transformation itself begins to resemble ritual.

Marie Ségolène C. Brault's practice moves between writing, installation, and curatorial methodologies. Through sculptural interventions, archival research, and conceptual framing, she examines how devotional images and relics accumulate symbolic charge, occupying an uncertain space between preservation and dissolution, presence and absence.

A commissioned text by psychoanalyst and scholar Dr. Aneta Stojnić extends these questions, offering a speculative reading of the exhibition's material and conceptual concerns.

Bringing together Gambino's sculptural language with Brault's archival and material investigations, *The Thorn Stigmata and The Faded Branch of The Crown* considers the devotional object as something simultaneously intimate and elusive. Drawing upon mysticism, psychoanalytic thought, and negative theology, the exhibition reflects on the ways longing becomes materially inscribed, revealing how objects continue to bear the weight of belief even as they resist the desires projected onto them.

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Christopher Gambino (b. 1996, New York NY) is an artist in New York. Christopher received a BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2018, and will be completing an MFA from the Yale School of Art in 2028. Recent solo and two-person presentations include *The Christmas Show* at Below Grand (New York, NY 2025,) *Puqpa* at Weatherproof (Chicago, IL 2025,) and *Who Shot Candy Warhol?* at Horse Room (Worcester,

MA 2024.) Christopher's work has also been exhibited at Amity (Los Angeles, CA 2026,) Blue Velvet (Zurich, Switzerland 2026,) KMS Enterprises (New York, NY 2025,) Espace Maurice (Montréal, Canada 2025,) and Pop Gun (New York, NY 2025,) among others.

Marie Ségolène-Christiane Brault (b.1988) is a Montreal-based artist, writer, and curator. She holds an MFA in Performance from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and bachelor's degrees in Creative Writing and Intermedia Cyber Arts from Concordia University. Working across performance, installation, and text, Brault's practice draws from archival research, religious history, and personal narrative. Her work has been presented in Canada, Europe, and the United States at venues including Western Front (Vancouver), Fonderie Darling (Montreal), M. LeBlanc (Chicago), No Gallery (New York), Hauser & Wirth Bookstore (New York), and Pangée (Montreal), among others.

Aneta Stojnić Ph.D, FIPA is a member of the Institute for Psychoanalytic Training and Research, IPTAR, New York, a licensed psychoanalyst in private practice in Manhattan and a director of IPTAR's Child and Adolescent Program. Alongside psychoanalysis, Aneta's areas of research include artistic and theoretical practices at the intersections of art, culture and politics. She has published three books and three co-edited volumes, as well as dozens of peer-reviewed articles. She is a senior editor at the magazine "ROOM: A Sketchbook for Analytic Action" and co-host of the "Voices from Room" podcast. Aneta has authored numerous artistic and curatorial projects in collaboration with renowned institutions and organisations all over Europe. She has taught performance, art and media theory at universities and art academies in Vienna, Belgrade, and Ghent. She regularly presents her work and research at conferences and festivals worldwide.