

MARIANNE BOESKY GALLERY

NEW YORK | ASPEN

APOLLINARIA BROCHE

In the distance there was a glimpse

On View: January 24 – February 24, 2024
Opening Reception: Wednesday, January 24, 6–8 PM
507 West 24th Street, New York, NY 10011



Apollinaria Broche, *Teardrops Are Falling*, 2023. Glazed ceramic, bronze, decal, Overall dimensions: 21 5/8 x 47 1/4 x 19 3/4 inches, 55 x 120 x 50 cm

NEW YORK, NY – Marianne Boesky Gallery is pleased to present *In the distance there was a glimpse*, an exhibition of new work by Franco-Russian artist Apollinaria Broche (b. 1995; Moscow, Russia; lives in Paris, France). For her first solo exhibition in New York, Broche pulls at threads of fantasy, myth, and memory, crafting surreal dreamworlds and imagined escapes that echo the political concerns of her generation.

Drawing inspiration from art history and fairy tales, Broche crafts strange, fanciful landscapes populated by fantastical flowers and shape-shifting mythical creatures. Working primarily in ceramic and bronze, Broche's practice is informed by a host of visual sources—from Fra Angelico's luminous mysticism, Henry Fuseli's emotive romanticism, Leonora Carrington's sacred surrealism, and David Lynch and Dario Argento's cinematic visions. From this confluence of established symbols and references, Broche constructs immersive dreamscapes and escapist universes that operate according to a logic known only to the artist. Weighty ceramic flowers rest on bronze stems ornately decorated with a host of symbolically rich adornments and suspend from climbing bronze vines. Plausibly mythological figures, captured in moments of arrested narrative, reenact uncertain myths: they cling to lovers or captors, transform into animals, and melt out of snail's shells.

Yet, trouble lurks within this garden fantasy and folly: snakes slither up immense bronze flower stems, cracks appear in clay bodies, fairy wings disintegrate, phantoms emerge from walls. Slipping through the cracks of

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consciousness, these signs of inescapable cruelty and violence, of pain and danger—punctuated by the strength of bronze and the fragility of ceramic—shatter Broche’s carefully crafted illusions, as in a delicate dream that transforms into a lurid nightmare.

Broche brings the violence and cruelty that underpins her practice to the fore in *The Peace Room is closed for renovation*, a monumental, richly allegorical installation inspired by a thwarted visit to the Sala della Pace in Siena, Italy in 2022—shortly after Russia’s escalation of its war in Ukraine. On the walls of the Sala della Pace—the seat of 14th century government in the powerful Republic of Siena—is Ambrogio Lorenzetti’s masterful fresco, *The Allegory of Good and Bad Government*. In Lorenzetti’s depiction of good government, an allegorical figure of Justice presides over order, harmony, and prosperity. In his depiction of bad government, the cityscape is marred by death, destruction, and decay, Justice bound and chained as war rages above. Broche made the trip for the express purpose of seeing the fresco; yet, when she arrived, she encountered an ominous sign on the closed door that read: “The Peace Room is closed for renovation.”

The experience—the feeling that the consequences of poor government were censored from her view—prompted Broche to create a sort of allegory of an allegory: Spanning the gallery walls and floor, *The Peace Room is closed for renovation* comprises a host of small forms—daggers and strange, unidentifiable creatures, and fragments of shattered brick wall, all formed in clay relief and adorned with silver and precious gemstones—all cascading down the wall. At the center—larger and sculpted in higher relief than its surroundings—a hooded, ghost-like figure looms over the destruction. A bronze chain, extending from one small ceramic fragment, reaches down to the floor, where it is shackled to the wrist of a ceramic woman who lies vulnerable, her torso cracked, fractured, and patched with clay band-aids, her cartoon eyes wide and defenseless—Justice scorned yet again.

In the distance there was a glimpse takes its title from Frances Hodgson Burnett’s 1911 children’s novel *The Secret Garden*, an enchanting tale of a young orphan girl who discovers a magical garden on her uncle’s estate. With this newest body of work, Broche has created her own secret garden, a fragile world filled with memories and dreams and fantasies and fears, a personal mythology conjured in bronze and ceramic—the atmosphere enhanced by an ambient sound installation. Produced in collaboration with her brother, the musician MANUSICK, and actress Simona Kust, the sound installation incorporates minimalistic covers of songs about flowers layered with readings from Charles Baudelaire’s *Les Fleurs du mal*.

Broche’s secret garden is nevertheless insistently political, preoccupied less with notions of escape than with how these stories, passed down generation to generation, reflect the oppression of the totalitarian regime in which she grew up, the cruelty of the systems in which we all live. Even in this world entirely of her own making—this world of flowers and fairies, this archive of memory—Broche evokes an inescapable dread, an ominous sense that the world is crumbling, that escape is impossible. It is a frank reminder that, to be alive in this moment is to live amidst death and destruction and decay.

ABOUT APOLLINARIA BROCHE

Throughout her sculpture and installation-based practice, Broche creates places of escape and retreat from the world that blur boundaries between the real and imagined. Incorporating bronze into her newest work—an addition made possible by the artist’s residence for the past year in the centuries-old artist colony in Pietrasanta, Italy—Broche highlights the dualities present throughout her practice: strength and fragility, nightmare and dream, personal and political, fantasy and reality. Her work has been the subject of solo and dual exhibitions at Island, Brussels, Belgium; Parco della Versiliana, Pietrasanta, Italy; Triumph Gallery, Moscow, Russia; Archivio Iginio Balderi, Milan, Italy; Otis College of Art and Design, Los Angeles, CA, and ENSBA Paris, France. In 2022, Broche collaborated with Acne Studios. She has also been included in exhibitions at the Moscow Museum of Modern Art, Russia; New Galerie, Paris, France; and Galerie Michel Journiac, Paris, France, among others. Broche lives and works in Pietrasanta, Italy and Paris, France.

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