

Huma Bhabha
Distant Star

June 13–July 26, 2025
108, rue Vieille du Temple, 75003 Paris



Detail of Huma Bhabha's new sculptures.
Photo by Jason Schmidt. Courtesy the artist and David Zwirner

David Zwirner is pleased to present new work by Huma Bhabha at the gallery's Paris location. *Distant Star* features six sculptures and a series of large-scale drawings, presenting new directions and materials that expand the scope of the artist's practice. The exhibition coincides with a two-person presentation of Bhabha's work in dialogue with sculptures by Alberto Giacometti, on view at the Barbican Centre in London until August 2025.

A solitary beacon in the gallery's front room is the titular cast-iron sculpture *Distant Star* (2025), which stands tall like a mysterious sentinel. The sculpture appears to be eternally watching and waiting, suspended in a state of petrified solemnity. Its living rust-orange surface will continue to oxidize and evolve in appearance, affirming the notion of time as a primordial sculptor's tool—a concept that Bhabha has repeatedly returned to in her oeuvre.

In the main gallery are five sculptures made using Bhabha's characteristic arsenal of multivalent techniques; she begins with cork, which she then carves, gouges, paints over, and otherwise marks up. Notably, these works also introduce new formal elements and sculptural processes: to create these sculptures, the artist rubs wet clay atop areas of these previously carved surfaces, adding an additional layer of coloristic and textural dimensionality. In the works on view, passages of material are juxtaposed

with densely carved areas that delineate limbs or scarred flesh, resulting in forms that are embodied in a state of disorder, erosion, and entropy. They appear to be emerging from—or encased in—rubble and debris. Some works possess skeletal heads fashioned from salvaged animal skulls, clay, chicken wire, Styrofoam, and cork. These sculptures stand on black wooden plinths, further lending them the feeling of a mortal relic or an artifact from another world.

Surrounding the sculptures, Bhabha presents a group of ink-and-collage drawings made atop photographs she has taken. Each of these large-scale works depicts a single hooded portrait—a new motif in the artist’s visual repertory that draws a connection between thirteenth- and fourteenth-century depictions of saints and Franciscan monks by artists such as Cimabue, Giotto, and Margaritone d’Arezzo and the ubiquitous symbol of the modern-day hoodie. Their facial features are omitted, save for black-rimmed, collaged eyes that gaze out at the viewer with a direct stare, relaying a sense of their varied endurance; with eeriness, foreboding, and humor, they bridge the divide between what is monstrous, animal, alien, and deeply human.

Distant Star is the gallery’s third exhibition of Bhabha’s work since the announcement of her representation in 2022, and it follows her two concurrent solo shows held at the gallery’s 537 West 20th Street and 34 East 69th Street locations in New York in February and March 2024. This is the artist’s first solo presentation in Paris since 2009.

Huma Bhabha (b. 1962) was born in Karachi, Pakistan, and moved to the United States in 1981 to attend the Rhode Island School of Design in Providence, from which she received her BFA in 1985. She received her MFA from the School of the Arts at Columbia University, New York, in 1989. The artist presently lives and works in Poughkeepsie, New York.

From May through August 2025, Bhabha’s work is featured in *Encounters: Giacometti* at the Barbican Centre in London. Co-curated by Shanay Jhaveri and Émilie Bouvard, and co-organized by the Barbican and the Fondation Giacometti, this presentation shows works by Bhabha alongside sculptures by Alberto Giacometti. Bhabha’s presentation is the first of three rotating shows at the Barbican, each with a different contemporary artist showing their work in dialogue with Giacometti’s oeuvre. In 2024, *Huma Bhabha: Before The End*, a large-scale installation commissioned by Public Art Fund, was unveiled at Brooklyn Bridge Park, New York. In 2023, M Leuven, Belgium, presented the solo exhibition *Huma Bhabha: LIVIN’ THINGS*. The show traveled to MO.CO., Montpellier, France, in November 2023 as *Huma Bhabha: A fly appeared, and disappeared*. A solo presentation of Bhabha’s work curated by Nicholas Baume was on view at Fundación Casa Wabi, Puerto Escondido, Mexico, from 2022 to 2023. In 2020, the Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead, England, presented *Huma Bhabha: Against Time*. The Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, organized *Huma Bhabha: They Live*, on view in 2019, and published an accompanying catalogue. An installation of the artist’s work, *Huma Bhabha: We Come in Peace*, was commissioned by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, in 2018 for the museum’s Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Roof Garden.

Previous solo exhibitions of the artist’s work have taken place at prominent institutions such as The Contemporary Austin, Texas (2018); MoMA PS1, New York (2012); Collezione Maramotti, Reggio Emilia, Italy (2012); Aspen Art Museum, Colorado (2011); and The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, Connecticut (2008), among others.

Bhabha's work has also been included in numerous group exhibitions internationally, including *MANZAR: Art and Architecture from Pakistan 1940s to Today*, National Museum of Qatar, Doha (2024); *The Shape of Power: Stories of Race and American Sculpture*, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC (2024); *Summer Exhibition 2023*, Royal Academy of Art, London (2023); *Reclaim the Earth*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2022); *Traces*, Portland Art Museum, Oregon (2022); *Hi Woman* (curated by Francesco Bonami), Museo di Palazzo Pretorio, Prato, Italy (2021); *NIRIN*, 22nd Biennale of Sydney (2020); 2019 Yorkshire Sculpture International, Wakefield, England; *All the World's Futures*, 56th Venice Biennale (2015); and the 2010 Whitney Biennial.

Bhabha has been the recipient of notable awards, such as the Guna S. Mundheim Fellowship, Berlin Prize, awarded by The American Academy in Berlin (2013); and the Emerging Artist Award, awarded by The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, Connecticut (2008). In 2022, Bhabha was elected as a National Academician by the The National Academy of Design, New York. In 2023, the artist was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Letters, New York.

Work by the artist is held in significant collections worldwide, including the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; Buffalo AKG Art Museum, New York; The Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York; Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Collezione Maramotti, Reggio Emilia, Italy; Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, New York; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC; Long Museum, Shanghai; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Museum of Art, University of New Hampshire, Durham; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Museum of Old and New Art, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia; National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, Overland Park, Kansas; New York Public Library; RISD Museum, Providence, Rhode Island; Roberts Institute of Art, London; Sharjah Art Foundation, United Arab Emirates; Sheldon Museum of Art, University of Nebraska, Lincoln; Tate, United Kingdom; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut; and Zhuzhong Art Museum, Beijing, among others.

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