

MARIANNE BOESKY GALLERY

NEW YORK | ASPEN

NATHALIE KHAYAT

UNFOLDED PROXIMITIES

On View: June 26 – August 1, 2025

Opening Reception: June 26, 6–8 PM

507 West 24th Street, New York, NY 10011

*"Living in Beirut means living in a city that breathes contradiction—
explosive joy pressed against sudden silences."*

– Nathalie Khayat

New York, NY – Marianne Boesky Gallery is pleased to present *Unfolded Proximities*, an exhibition of new work by Nathalie Khayat (b. 1966; Beirut, Lebanon). For her debut New York solo show, Khayat presents a suite of new sculptures that expand the very possibility of expression in clay.

Khayat harnesses the material properties of clay to examine the poetic tensions between structure and fluidity, containment and release, and fragility and endurance in objects infused with reminders of human ritual. Through an intuitive dialogue with clay—Khayat constructs sculptural forms that oscillate between architectural precision and organic vulnerability. With *Unfolded Proximities*, Khayat unleashes the sculptural potential of her material, marking a significant shift in her practice. While the artist's work has long occupied a liminal space between function and form, Khayat's newest body of work embraces—and prioritizes—clay's capacity for emotional resonance over use.

Incorporating extruded, hand-built, and wheel-thrown elements into her work, Khayat explores the fragile, transformative spaces where forms meet and boundaries dissolve. Throughout the exhibition, belts cinch clustered, hollow pillars in a tense embrace while wheel-thrown vessels cling to rigid supports as if grafted. In others, undulating petals and reef-like growths cleave to solid, geometric forms that bear faint traces of their functional histories—handles with no spouts, bowls and plates flung to their sides and flipped upside down. The seams of these sculptures—once stark divides where fluid, organic forms encountered exacting supports—become sites of fusion, as bodies and memories dissolve into one another. Negotiations rather than collisions, these quiet convergences attest to the intimacy of coexistence and entanglement as a force for altering identity.

Khayat's process begins with emotional or formal intentions—a spike articulates desire, a tube disrupts symmetry or adds height. But clay, the artist says, insists on its own organic logic, and nature seeps in unbidden: curves remember the weight of water; hollows echo unseen nests, and the material, despite itself, recalls the armor of crustaceans or the reach of deep-sea tendrils. "It is less that I reference nature," Khayat says, "and more than nature persists in finding its way back into the work. Even in abstraction, we cannot escape its morphology."

Unfolded Proximities is deeply informed by place. Beirut is a city at crossroads, a city perpetually on the brink—of East and West, of history and future, of destruction and rebirth—and this

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persistent threat of cataclysm looms large in Khayat's work. "My city," Khayat says, "has been on the verge of collapse for most of my life. We dream, we imagine, we plan, we build—knowing that it can all disappear within a fraction of a second." Clay, for Khayat, embodies the same contradictions as Beirut. Fragile but enduring, clay holds memory and metaphor, finding its form over time and under pressure. As its title suggests, *Unfolded Proximities* is a process of revelation, growth, and transformation in the in-between spaces. From Beirut, Khayat learned to find beauty in things that don't break cleanly, in repairs that show their seams. When the ground shakes, when explosive joy turns to sudden silence, Khayat asks, how do you hold on? Of what do you refuse to let go?

ABOUT NATHALIE KHAYAT

Khayat has exhibited widely in Europe, North America, and the Middle East. Her work is included in the collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK; Female Artists of the Mougins Museum, Mougins, France; and the Saradar Foundation, Beirut, Lebanon. Khayat has also shown her work with Agial Gallery in Beirut and House of Today, an organization that supports Lebanese artists and designers. Khayat studied ceramics at the Centre de Ceramique Bonsecours, Montreal, Canada and at The Visual Arts Centre, Montreal Canada. The artist lives and works in Beirut—where she has taught ceramics since 2000—and Montreal.

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