

CONTEMPORARY FINE ARTS
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HUMA BHABHA

REVENGERS

27 April – 2 June 2018



Huma Bhabha, *2 of US*, 2018
Cork, acrylic paint, oilstick, 101.6 x 61 x 30.5 cm

Contemporary Fine Arts is pleased to present *Revengers*, **Huma Bhabha's** first exhibition with the gallery.

The exhibition opens a week after the unveiling of Bhabha's commissioned site-specific installation for the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Iris and Gerald B. Cantor Roof Garden. On view in the gallery's bel étage, the exhibition is comprised of three cork busts, a leaning figurative sculpture made of wood, clay, wire, metal, acrylic paint among other materials and a series of ink, pastel and collage portraits on paper and also drawings with ink, acrylic, oil stick and collage on colour photographs taken by

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the artist. Known for her “post-apocalyptic” figures made from unusual materials, the works in this exhibition mark Bhabha’s first dedicated exploration of the head or bust.

Bhabha’s material and historical bricolage is often located in a pre and post-history, simultaneously invoking archaeology and the after-life. As past works invoke Charon and Thoth – figures from Greco-Egyptian mythology who escorted the dead to the underworld – the faces in *Revengers* begin to envision the encounter after a return journey. Drawing equally upon horror movie monsters, Egyptian statues, and the likes of Brancusi and Basquiat, the work becomes a manifestation of encyclopaedic memory. The eroded surfaces of her four-sided cork busts or the sarcophagus-like *Roxana*, made from wood, clay, wire, steel and plastic mesh, express an affinity between a contemporary sci-fi movie prop and an ancient relic.

An intuitive material investigation – the way cork is carved, how wood holds a mark – is a motivating force for her practice. Her immediate surroundings in Poughkeepsie, New York, from where she gathers discarded material, as well as memories of her native Karachi’s desert landscape, also exert an emotive influence over the work. Etched and charred, they also become landscapes themselves. The palpable sense of place in Bhabha’s work often raises questions of colonial displacement and memories of home, sites of construction and deconstruction.

Returning continuously to features of the single upright figure, Bhabha’s sculptures insist upon the potential of this basic archetype of humanity. Inscribed in a lineage that dates from ancient Egyptian and African art, her sculptures also evoke aspects of Rodin, Brancusi and Giacometti. As the faces of the *Revengers* look out with hollow eyes, their gaze grounds the work firmly in the present, demanding the viewer consider what these haunting harbingers see.

Huma Bhabha (b. 1962 Pakistan) has exhibited in numerous exhibitions internationally, including *Unnatural Histories* at MoMA P.S.1, New York; *All the World’s Futures* at the 56th International Art Exhibition La Biennale di Venezia, Italy; *Players* at the Collezione Maramotti, Reggio Emilia, Italy; *Huma Bhabha* at the Aspen Art Museum, Colorado; *Stranger* at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Cleveland, Ohio; *A Different Kind of Order: The ICP Triennial* at the International Center of Photography, New York; *Land Marks* at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; *Intense Proximity* at La Triennale, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France; 2010 Whitney Biennial at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; and the 7th Gwangju Biennale, Korea. Her work will be exhibited in the upcoming 57th Carnegie International and a February 2019 solo show at the ICA Boston. She lives and works in Poughkeepsie, New York.

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