



state of awe rather than confusion. There is a clear beauty—an organic, minimalist, aesthetic—within these works, but also a fantastic depth, a sense of intrigue, and perhaps even wonder. These paradoxical works prove themselves not only a feast for the eyes but a surprisingly rewarding experience for the soul as well.

—John Routledge

SANTIAGO AND BUENOS AIRES

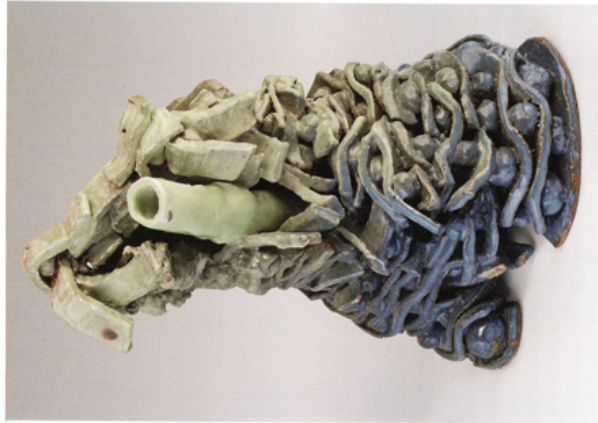
Sofia Donovan
Stuart Contemporary and Federico Tompaya Arte Contemporaneo

Sofia Donovan, a multifaceted young Argentine-born artist living in Chile, works in photography, video, painting, and sculpture. In her recent work, she has developed an interesting play between form and content, using ceramic to create amazing sculptures that carry a powerful physical presence. Donovan's works investigate the human body and its representation. Over the last couple of years, her search has emphasized the mediated body in its daily environment. A good example, according to the artist, is the body's role in medicine. Donovan questions whether the body still functions as a vehicle for experience and relations with other people or if it has been reduced to a mere object.

Left: Shirazeh Houshian, *Tear*, 2011. Anodized aluminum, 123.5 x 37 x 69 cm. Right: Sofia Donovan, *Sticky Trop*, 2011. Ceramic, 28 x 32 x 47 cm. Below: Sofia Donovan, *De Los Pelos*, 2011. Ceramic and copper wire, 48 x 63 x 20 cm.

Over the last two years, Donovan's road has led her to imposing biomorphic glazed ceramic sculptures that highlight the constant tension between the anthropomorphic and metaphorical worlds generated by the body's formal and material aspects. These works set up an interesting dialogue. Bodily shapes and textures interact with materials totally strange to the body itself, creating moments of doubt and ambiguity—a fundamental concept in Donovan's work—that suggest or insinuate intimate queries. Nothing is obvious; the viewer's fantasy and intellect construct the sense, and even form, of these works.

Most people see organs or phallic forms, but the sexuality is more nuanced, with suggestive curves, "ins and outs," concave and convex, feminine and masculine, and full and empty pairings. Most of this effect is caused by the addition of unexpected materials into the ceramic universe; we must dig into the details to understand the whole story. Industrial materials come in and out, play alter ego to the natural clay. Donovan's artifice generates a symbolic structure that surrounds everything and gives the work another dimension. The interaction of opposite forces is a constant in her work, creating an atmosphere that seduces the mind. With a nod to Carl Jung, Donovan says, "I'm deeply concerned about these pieces as objects of seduction. I want them to question an unknown area in the relationship of biology and technique, to [probe] through the human body to regions less common, awakening sensitive experiences full of humor and symbolic content in the spectator."



Contemporary art cries out for an audience with an educated eye, demanding intellectual activity. Defying all limits of good taste or decorum and incorporating new themes, materials, forms, and techniques, it creates infinite ways for the viewer to learn. And when the proposal not only introduces new and revolutionary ideas, but also arouses passions and emotions, art trespasses the boundaries of beauty and contemplation to become challenge. Donovan's sculptures generate an immediate attraction or repulsion, many times because of



Sculpture 31.3

the erotic feelings they may trigger. Yet the sculptures suggest more than they reveal. Our subjective fantasies are responsible for making Donovan's insinuations stand out in a concrete way. Color, form, size, and texture all cooperate to create an immediate reference to the human body, but even that idea is produced in the mind of the spectator. The most important key lies in the irrational response—profoundly visceral and intimate—of the viewer's body, which allows the mind to enjoy what the senses capture.

—María Carolina Bauilo

HONG KONG
Art Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre

If there was one word to describe the fourth edition of Art Hong Kong (also known as Art HK 11), it would be "buzzing." The hum of the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre in Wan Chai could practically be felt next door at the Grand Hyatt and down into the subway tunnels. Nearly 64,000 visitors came from across the globe to discover the newest offerings hailing from 38 countries. Sculpture played a unique role in shaping the landscape of Art Hong Kong by acting as congregation posts (Takashi Murakami's *Superflat Flowers*, recently shown in the halls of Versailles) and geographic markers (Jeff Koons's brightly striped collaboration with BMW at the center of the main hall). Some of the most respected and recognizable names in the realm of contemporary art supplied the sculptural highlights of Art HK 11.

The entrance to the fair was difficult to miss with Paul McCarthy's three-story *Daddies: Tomato Ketchup Inflatable*, presented by London/Zürich-based Hauser & Wirth. With tongue-in-cheek details including gold labels at the neck and body, the cartoon boldness of this mammoth bottle



keenly reminded viewers of its absurdity as a valuable object. The condition itself recalls McCarthy's earlier practice as a performance artist.

Olafur Eliasson's *Your plural view* (2011), a sculpture resembling a solar-paneled telescope, refracted shards of light throughout the Tanya Bonakdar Gallery booth. The Icelandic artist's most recent manifestation of optical phenomena consisted of three conjoined geometric elements, mirrored on the inside, then mounted on an iron stand. The booth also featured studies and wall-mounted spectrums, along with two hanging, hexagonal, colored-glass mobiles that radiated vivid shades of pinks, blues, and yellows.

Chheim & Read presented three sculptures by Lynda Benglis that were among the most visually imposing and compelling sights of the fair: *Chicago Coyotada: Tempest (Juliet)*, and *Silver Wraith* warped the legacies of ancient, patriarchal mythologies into hardened surfaces of stainless steel and gold leaf, tempered by soft, flowing movements. The gallery juxtaposed Benglis's heroic sculpture on the exterior of its space with the piercing, intimate dreams of Louise Bourgeois tucked inside the booth.

Outside the convention center, Zhang Huan's *Three Heads Six Arms* stood roughly 26 feet high and almost 60 feet wide. Weighing 15 tons, his re-imagined Chinese mythological figure incorporates elements of Tibetan Buddhist statues.

The three-headed (one traditional, one a portrait, and one a self-portrait) copper leviathan stretched out its elongated limbs across the 1881 Heritage Grand Plaza (the original site of the Hong Kong Marine Police in Kowloon. Commissioned by local dealer Edouard Malinque, Huan cited a recent trip to China as inspiration for the work, which is about resurrecting the spirit and metaphorically reversing destruction of Buddhist sculptures on the mainland.

Art Hong Kong was recently acquired by the MCH Group (the company that produces both Art Basel and Art Basel Miami Beach),

Above: Olafur Eliasson, *Your plural view*, 2011. Mirror, stainless steel, and aluminum, 182 x 188 x 208 cm. Right: Paul McCarthy, *Daddies Tomato Ketchup Inflatable*, 2007.

Art Hong Kong 11.

so perhaps the best is still to come for this young contemporary fair that has earned its place on the global contemporary arts calendar.

—Shana Bethel

