



WRITINGS & VISUAL WORKS

MARIE AIMÉE FATTOUCHE

Text written by Morgan Laurens, art writer

JUNE 2021

« In 1641 architect-artist Gianlorenzo Bernini unveiled the first of two bell towers at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. Two months later, cracks appeared in the foundation. When the damage spread to the main church facade, Bernini faced a choice: Keep going or tear the whole thing down and eat the loss? French artist Marie Aimee Fattouche contemplates a similar question with anthropomorphic metal sculptures that walk a fine line between minor dysfunction and total breakdown.

Conceptually, Fattouche's sculptures hinge on what she calls "structural mechanics"—whether those mechanics arise from the body, the mind, or the environment. Her bizarre works, crafted with sheets of metal, plaster, and joint mechanisms, look like they might come crawling out of a mad scientist's lab after midnight. With their pastiche of body parts and biomechatronic appendages, Fattouche's Frankenstein-like creations are more cyborg than mammal or outright monster.

Using what writer and philosopher Robert M. Pirsig calls "classical understanding," Fattouche looks at underlying form and structure to understand the world. "Its purpose is not to inspire emotionally, but to bring order out of chaos and make the unknown known," writes Pirsig of classical understanding in his classic *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*. However, Fattouche subverts Pirsig's idea with work that tries to make sense of the world through systems, laws, and logic—and fails. The result is a delightfully freakish version of our human systems and structures: shattered bodies beyond repair, physical pain, mental circuitry, learned behaviors and thought patterns stuck in an endless loop.

Several years after cracks appeared in Bernini's bell tower, the project was abandoned and demolished. Whether it could have been saved remains a point of contention. Similarly, Fattouche's work exists "between repair and improvement, a minor dysfunction to breakdown, a precarious impulse to stability." Her sculptures look carefully at points of vulnerability in our lives—the cracks in the facade—and asks whether we should, like Bernini, eat our losses or putty, patch, and paint our way into an uncertain future. »

Waiting, in front of the elevator's doors, my call flashes.

I know all I know, it's coming for me, to take me to destination, self-realisation.

Impatient I pray, blue to reach red,

the moment waits,

stretches my passionate impatience,

impatient passion.

Still hoping for it to come, I dance.

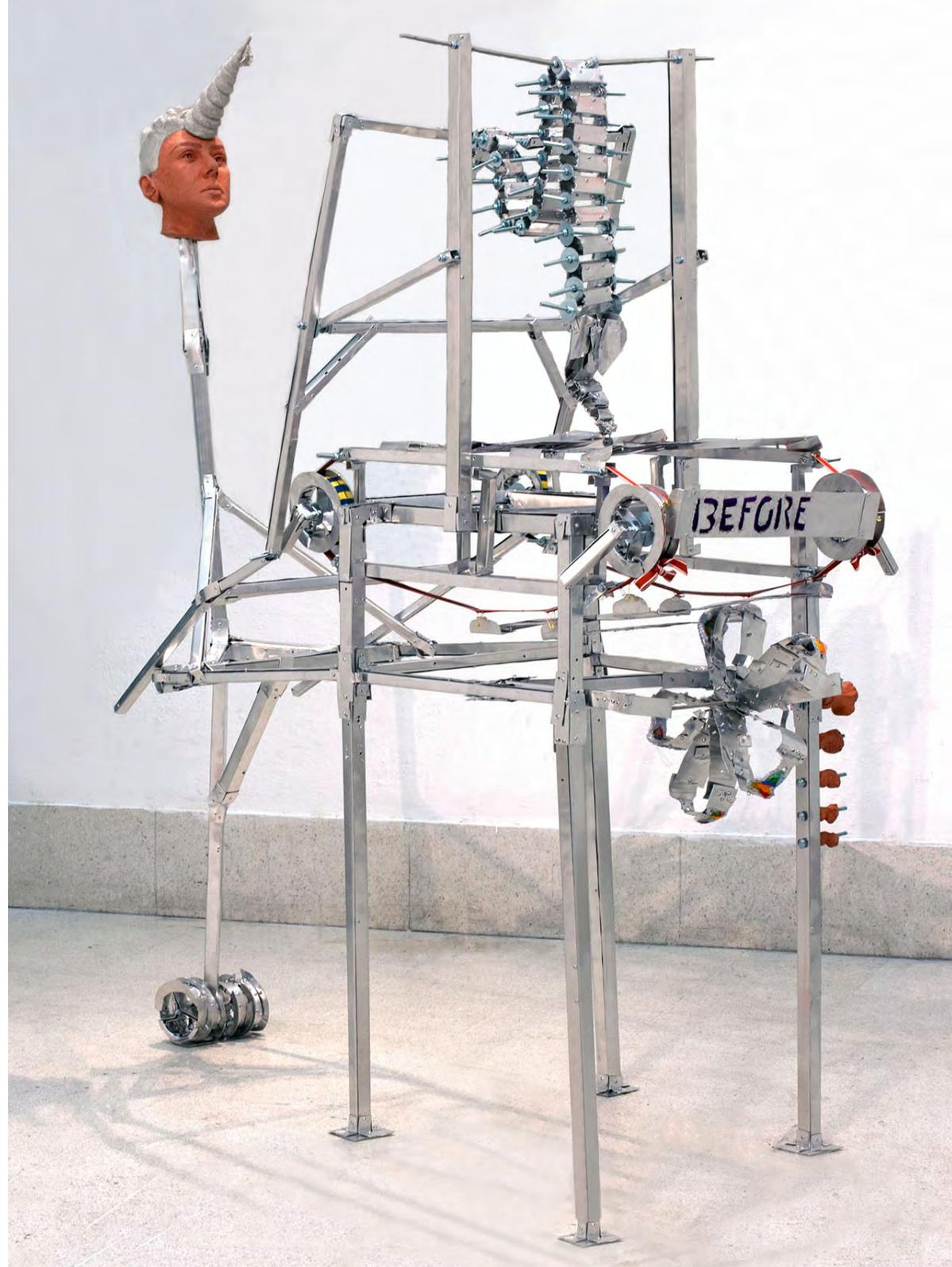
APPEL ENREGISTRÉ

[link to video documentation \(00:02:31\)](#)

2018. 177 x 150 x 70 cm.

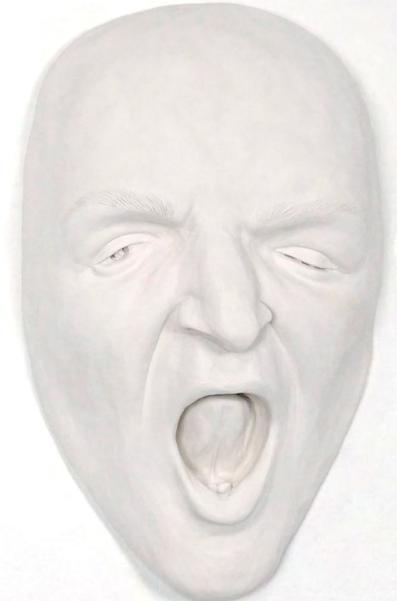
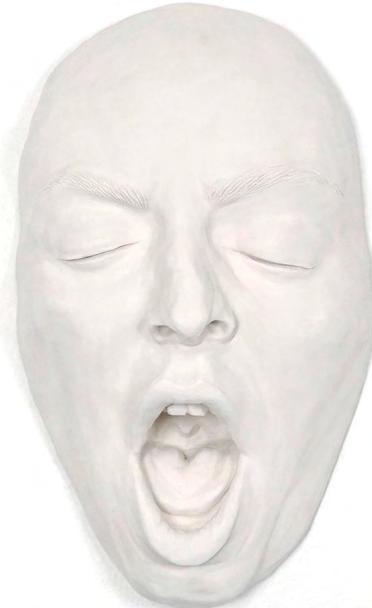
Aluminium sheets, blind rivets, bolts, nuts, washers, automotive wire, sandpaper, anti-slip tape, foam, lighting filter gel, fired terracotta, air dry clay, ribbon, thread, embroidery thread, safety pins, paint, prints, punched pockets, a bobby pin, mirror, performer, video.

Appel enregistré acts as a shattered body cynically enjoying the thrill and pain of the repetition of a static path. Lying in the wait for an ending materialisation to its own utopia, it develops a normative behaviour towards its own flaws.





RELEASE

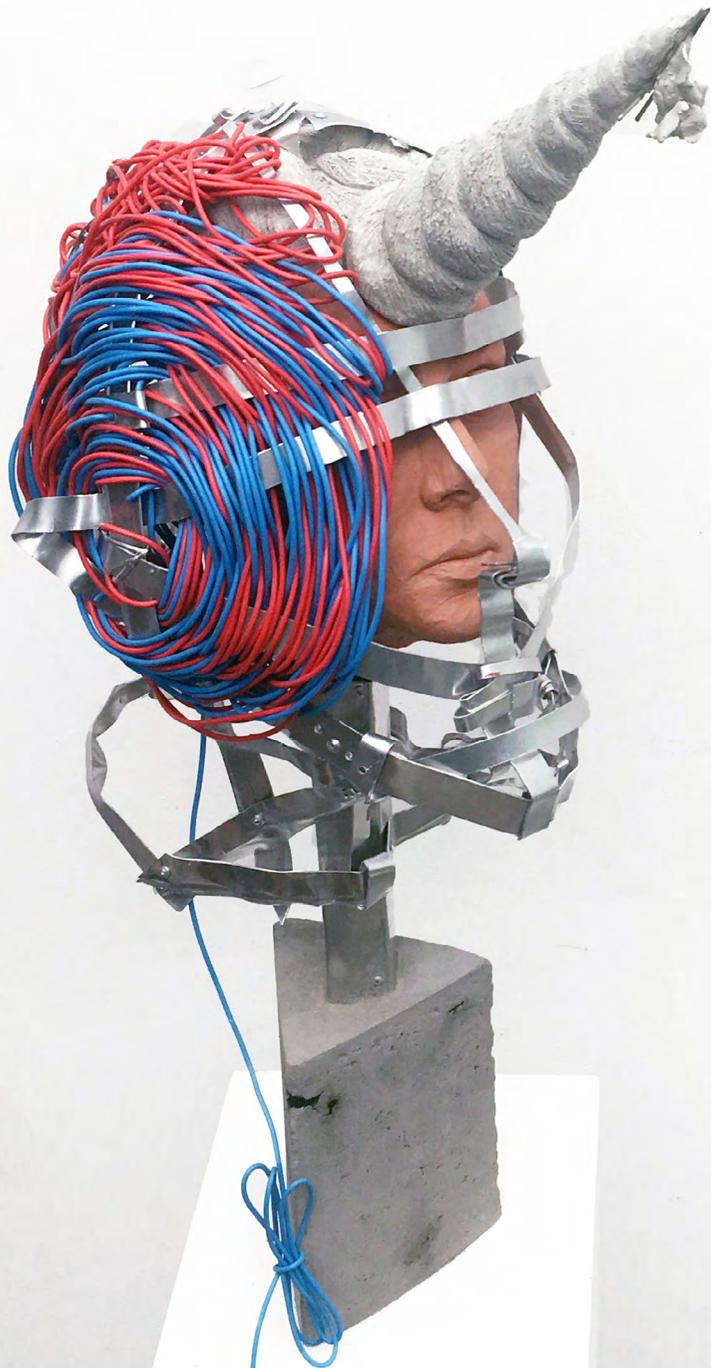


LA VERTICALE DU BÂILLEMENT

2020. 32 x 17 x 12 cm.

Clay.





THE OFFICER

2018. 75 x 36 x 20 cm.

Fired terracotta clay, air dry clay, aluminium sheets, blind rivets, automotive wires, concrete, artificial rotted moss, a bobby pin.

Referencing Franz Kafka, *In the Penal Colony* (1919), *The Officer* is a self satire portrait of the artist's own utopia.

Hazard, mektoub, chance, I spent last year drawing lots, daily decisions I was supposed to make but didn't want to, my mind was too blurry at the time to realise it wasn't sticking up to its bravery standard.

I felt that by presenting a broad range of answers I was letting it a chance to tell it truthfully.

So as my life was a mess of indecisiveness, in just one lot, different answers to non-existing questions were to be found.

Too scared of the harsh decisiveness of hazard, in each draw, there was always one piece of paper mentioning «DRAW LOTS AGAIN», just in case hazard needed an other chance.

ODDS ARE

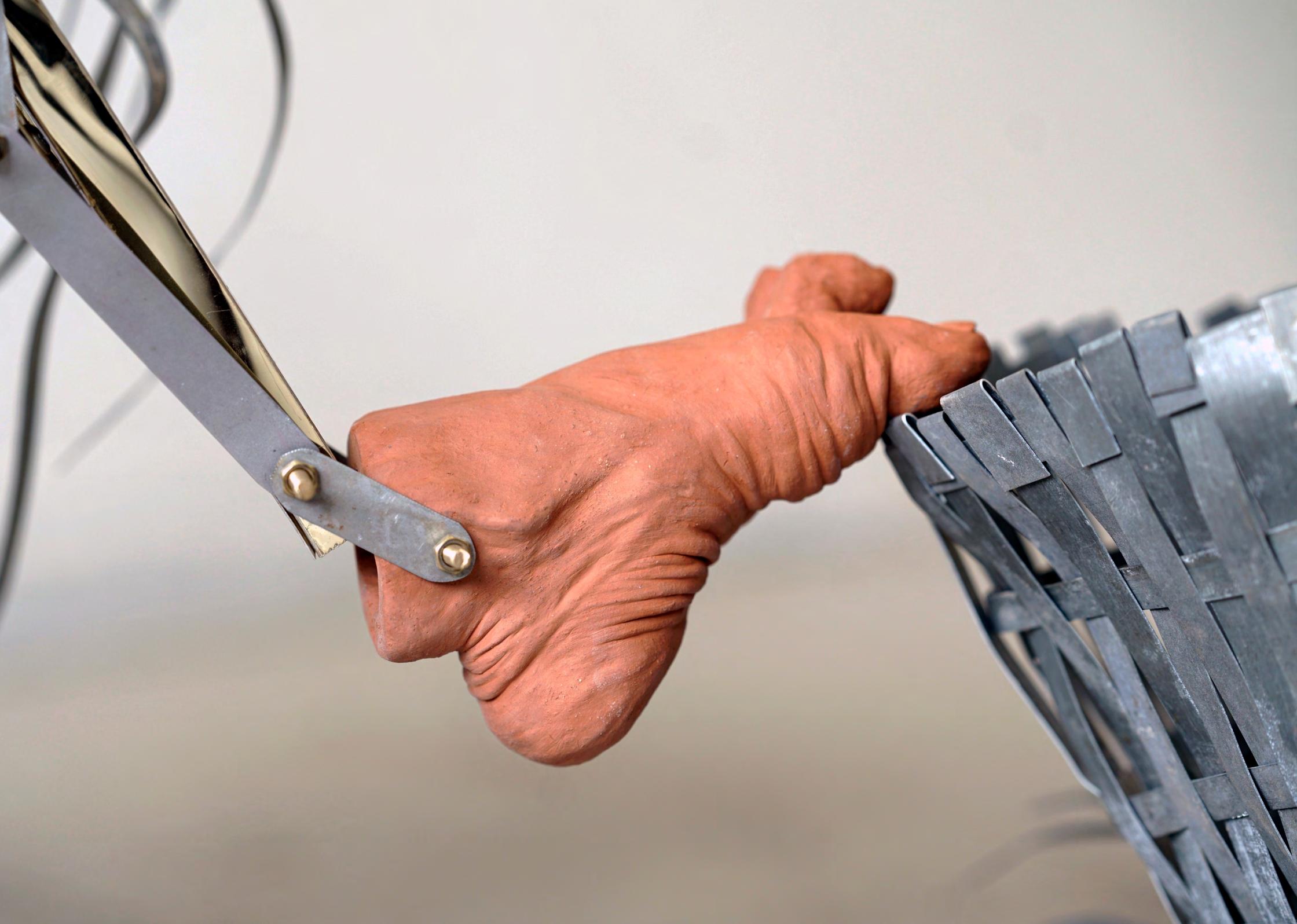
2021. 90 x 80 x 90 cm.

Clay, zinc, aluminium, blind rivets, bolts, nuts, screws, washers.

Odds Are is the first sculptural element of an upcoming larger installation. The basket recalls the ancient African tradition of weaving and its purpose: a container allowing travel that protects intimacy. The baskets become protection and armour, storytellers of bodies' narratives.

The narrative presented here is about fear and its influence on staticity.





WAHSHANI

[link to video documentation \(00:00:23\)](#)

2019. 82 x 130 x 53 cm.

Aluminium sheets, oxidised zinc and steel sheets, copper sheets, fired clay, jesmonite, acrylic and oil paint, chive, screws, washers, nuts, castanets of my childhood.

Wahshani questions our bodies' permeability. It narrates the tension between the different compiled identities of the artist and the plurality of her "home" entities.





As an exercise to gain back joy and intentionally decide to uninvite looseness, this summer I started to regularly write down again things I was thankful for.

I chose a purple notebook, offered by one of my students a few months before, quoting on its cover Apollinaire in golden letters:
«The time has come to light the stars again».

So as the days and weeks were going by and I was grateful for even a greater lists of people and a greater lists of pleasurable moments, my perception and reality had shifted. The whisper of synchronicity had already operated.

My mektoub (literally translating to «it is written» in Arabic), my fate and destiny I got written down, cause I needed to make sure it was properly done since no one allowed me to proofread it.

EL BINT

2019. 65 x 54,5 x 15 cm.

Jesmonite, aluminium sheets, copper sheets, oxidized steel sheets, coral pearls, brass screws, a safety pin, embroidery threads, buttons, glue, oil paint, acrylic and gouache.

El bint presents itself as a religious alike icon, inspired by Coptic traditions. It questions our contemporary challenges, our origins, futures and our relationship to the feminine and the masculine.





HOMO DEUS
Eusebio

2021. 90 x 70 x 15 cm.

Plaster, paint, zinc, aluminium, embroidery threads, wood, blind rivets.

Homo Deus is a series of three portraits of inhabitants of Aubervilliers. This series was commissioned by L'Écluse in partnership with the City of Aubervilliers.

Inspired by the Coptic religious icons of her childhood, the artist chose to sanctify the portrait of the inhabitant, thus making the unknown citizen, a deified figure.

The title *Homo Deus* was borrowed to the writer Yuval Noah Harari.

I need to cut my fingernails, I can see their dirt under building up as a black undefined line.

There are details like this that are just stopping myself from moving forward in my day.

Procrastinating, I can only allow masturbation (over clothes only cause of the dirt) and sleep, a self-indulging session to avoid the reality of this task that needs to be done to feel like a functioning self again.

A breach,

the moment I can finally decide that this insignificant task for some, brutally mind-bullying for myself, will open the path to my writing day.

I now realise I certainly wasn't avoiding the task of cutting my nails by overindulging myself just a few minutes ago, it was my writing work I was trying to delay or was I just waiting for the impatience to build up till it bursts?

I shall then let my under fingernails' dirt be, as thick as the writing needs to flow. And when its moment of falling death, abandoned to the sink will have arrived, it shall feel like a reward for my accomplished work.



TOO DIMENSIONAL

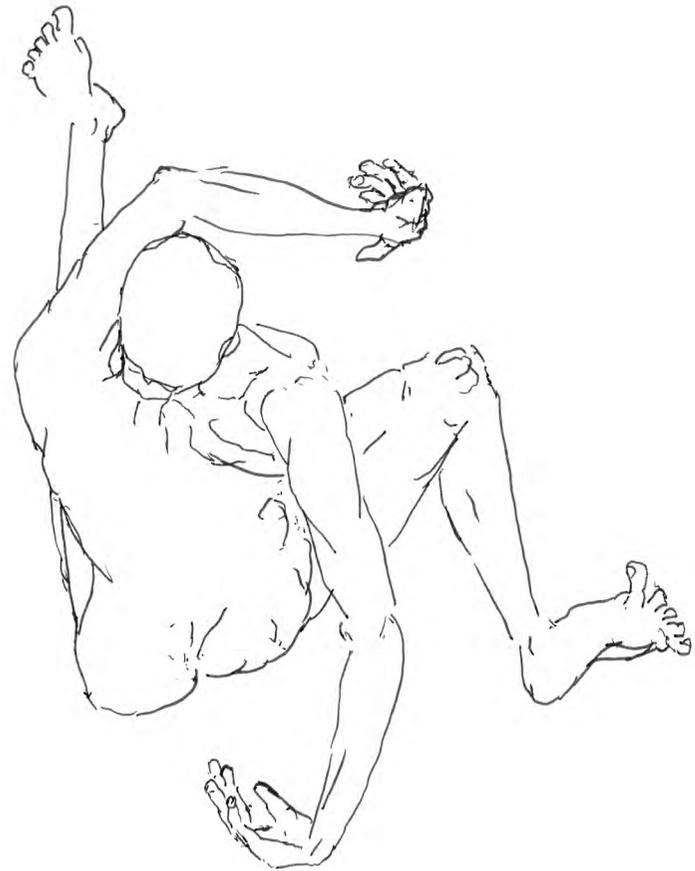
2020. 80 x 87 x 24 cm.

Paper, glue, plaster, pigments.

Too Dimensional questions the dimensionality of our bodies. The body represented is sculpted as a relief, belonging to flatness. The distortion creates an anamorphosis. It evokes a past action of the body trying to extract itself, calcined in time and space, in between flatness and volume.







TOO DIMENSIONAL

2020. 21 x 14,8 cm.

Ink on paper.

Impatient longing for meaning, longing behaviour for the impatient mind, till it bursts.
YAANI is certainly the most used word in Egyptian conversation. It means «it means».





UBUNTU

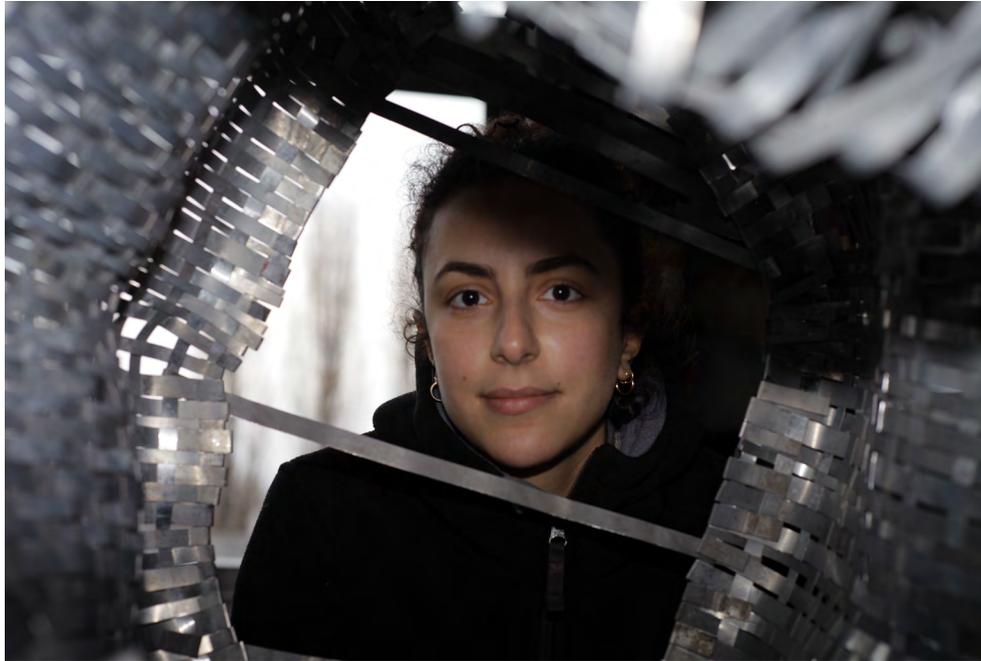
[link to video documentation \(00:00:29\)](#)

2016. 300 x 500 x 500 cm.

Aluminium sheets, steel tubes, fabric, scaffold clamps, blind rivets, bolts, nuts, washers, metal wire, pulley wheels, public.

Ubuntu fluctuates and operates with the audience entering the space. The pulleys, attached to the doors of the space, activate the awakening of the structure. The installation challenges the spectators' status by making them involuntary performers. *Ubuntu* questions one own part in the synchronicity of an underlying whole.

THANK YOU



(b. 1991, Paris, France)

Fattouche's research emerges from her attraction to structural mechanics: mental, bodily and environmental. Between repair and improvement, a minor dysfunction to breakdown, a precarious impulse to stability, the mechanics of movement implies a margin of uncertainty. Without fracture of the line, the leg or the thought, there can't be any pivoting possibilities.

Her assemblages take inspiration from her Egyptian descent and her childhood in Paris. Her work actively questions themes such as femininity, visual narratives and beliefs systems.

After completing her MA in Fine Art in 2016 at Chelsea College of Arts London, Fattouche was granted the Mercers' Arts Award. In 2017, as one of the winning artists of the Red Mansion Art Prize, she was invited to spend one month's residency in Beijing. Her work was exhibited at the Hockney Gallery, Royal College of Arts London, in 2018. In 2019, she was honoured to be part of the artists' shortlist for the Mark Tanner Sculpture Award at Standpoint Gallery London.

Fattouche lives and works in Paris.

Exhibitions

CARE DON'T CARE. Basis Projektraum.
Frankfurt. Germany. July 2021.

YAANI. Toula Gallery.
Online Solo Show. February 2021.

AIR COMPETITION 2020-2021. The Muse Gallery.
London. UK. February 2021.

MUSE. Toula Gallery.
Online. Till October 19. 2020.

THREE PILLARS. Chelsea Gallery. Old Town Hall.
London. UK. 2019.

ART CAR BOOT FAIR. Granary Square. Kings Cross.
London. UK. 2018.

HARBINGERS : THE RAPTURE. Harbingers.
London. UK. 2018.

PARADISE UNDERGROUND. Sugar Cane.
London. UK. 2018.

BATTERY HORIZONS. RED MANSION ART PRIZE.
Hockney Gallery. RCA.
London. UK. 2018.

OPEN STUDIO. Red Gate Residency.
Beijing. China. 2017.

CAST OF MY SHAPE. Curation + exposition. E1 7TP.
London. UK. 2017.

FORTUNE. Safehouse 1. Maverick Projects.
London. UK. 2017.

THE SACRED 419. The Square Gallery.
London. UK. 2017.

HOTEL 419. The Muse Gallery.
London. UK. 2016.

UBUNTU. Punctum Gallery.
London. UK. 2016.

ONE. Cookhouse Gallery.
London. UK. 2016.

CONVERSATION IN PROGRESS. Mills Centre Gallery.
London. UK. 2016.

Press & Publications

[CHINA EXCHANGE. The Red Mansion Foundation publication. Page 271.](#)
London. UK. 2021.

[NOT REAL ART. Q + Art: Marie Aimee Fattouche Explores Dysfunction with Bizarre Mechanical Sculptures.](#)
Los Angeles. USA. 2021.

[THE MUSELETTER. January 2021. Page 4.](#)
London. UK. 2021.

[SCORPIO JIN MAGAZINE #42. Cosmic Idols.](#)
Miami. USA. 2020.

[IRK MAGAZINE. Silver Lining.](#)
Paris. France. 2020.

[INTERVIEW. Follow My Art.](#)
Bleu Carbone Production.
Pantin. France. 2020.

[INTERVIEW. The Yawners.](#)
Pablo Saguez + Yohann Vorillon.
Pantin. France. 2020.

[CANAL PANTIN. No.282. Page 6.](#)
Pantin. France. 2019.

[LIEU IMPROBABLE. October 20, 2018.](#)
Pantin. France. 2018.

[THE MARGIN. Issue No.1.](#)
New York. USA. 2017.

[ONE YEAR ON. Chelsea College of Arts blog.](#)
London. UK. 2017.

[PUNCTUM Journal. Issue No.3. Page 35.](#)
London. UK. 2017.

[PUNCTUM Journal. Issue No.2. Page 20.](#)
London. UK. 2016.

Awards & Residencies

AIR COMPETITION 2020-2021. The Muse Gallery.
Shortlisted.
London. UK. February 2021.

MARK TANNER SCULPTURE AWARD. Shortlisted.
London. UK. 2019.

RED GATE RESIDENCY.
Beijing. China. 2017.

CELESTE ART PRIZE. Weekly Editors' Choices.
London. UK. 2017.

THE RED MANSION FOUNDATION. Art Prize.
London. UK. 2017.

MERCERS' ARTS AWARD.
London. UK. 2016.

Education

MA FINE ART.
Chelsea College of Arts.
London. UK. 2015 - 2016.

FOUNDATION YEAR.
Graphic design and interior architecture.
Esag Penninghen.
Paris. France. 2009 – 2010.

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