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ARTS REVIEW

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Art review: Work by world-class couple evokes a physical response

Sculptor Rona Pondick and painter Robert Feintuch are internationally known artists showing together at the Bates College Museum of Art.

BY DANIEL KANY

藝評：引起身體的共鳴的作品出自世界一流夫妻

國際知名藝術圈神仙眷侶 — 雕塑家羅娜·龐迪克（Rona Pondick）和畫家羅伯特·芬特赫（Robert Feintuch），共同在培茲大學藝術博物館展出。



"Untitled Animal" by Rona Pondick, 1999-2001, carbon steel, 6 by 44 by 21 . Photo courtesy of Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London/Paris/Salzburg; Sonnabend Gallery, New York; Zevitas/Marcus Gallery, Los Angeles; and the artist

“Rona Pondick and Robert Feintuch: Heads, Hands, Feet; Sleeping, Holding, Dreaming,

"Dying" at the Bates College Museum of Art is profound, engaging, disturbing and exciting. It's also almost over and likely will be the best show in Maine this year, so don't miss it.

培茲大學藝術博物館展出雙人展「羅娜·龐迪克與羅伯特·芬特赫：頭、手、足；睡眠、持握、夢境、死亡」。本次展出是深刻且引人入勝的，一方面令人感到不安，一方面又令人興奮。本次展覽即將結束，它將是緬因州今年度最好的展覽，所以千萬別錯過了。

Feintuch is a Bates professor and has work in the collection of the Portland Museum of Art. But don't get the wrong idea. Feintuch is a New York artist who commutes, and the chance to see his work is rare in these parts.

羅伯特是培茲大學的教授，他的作品也被波特蘭藝術博物館收藏。千萬別搞錯了，羅伯特其實是一位在紐約工作的藝術家，他只是通勤到這個地區教學，因此要在紐約之外看到他作品的機會是很少的。



"Fat Hercules" by Robert Feintuch, 2011, polymer emulsion on honeycomb panel, 30 by 22 inches. Photo courtesy of Sonnabend Gallery, New York; Zevitas/Marcus Gallery, Los Angeles, and the artist

"Heads," in fact, is a much rarer opportunity than one might think: While Pondick and Feintuch are a married couple who met at the Yale University School of Art in 1975, this is their first major two-person show, and Feintuch's first at Bates.

事實上，本次展覽十分難得：雖然羅娜和羅伯特在1975年相識於在耶魯大學藝術學院並結為夫婦，但這是他們第一次舉辦雙人展，也是羅伯特第一次在培茲大學展覽。

Despite his local footing, Feintuch is an important international artist. Both he and Pondick show with Sonnabend Gallery in the U.S. and across the pond, but she is a worldwide art star – and for good reason. Her sculpture, which combines human and animal elements, is striking, uncomfortably odd and powerful. It's also some of the best crafted sculpture I have ever seen – and that purview includes classical sculpture that I studied in Europe.

羅伯特不僅在當地很有影響力，他在國際也極具影響力。他和羅娜都在美國紐約的索納本德畫廊展出過。羅娜在國際的影響力也不容小覷，她的雕塑融合了人類和動物的元素，引人注目，令人感到不適的同時又強而有力。在我於歐洲學習古典雕塑時，她的雕塑作品是我見過最精湛的作品之一。

Pondick's "Wallaby," for example, is a smooth-as-glass stainless steel with a stylized wallaby body, a tiny human head and a full-size human forearm as its left arm. The figure's tail juts out straight, making it about 4 feet long. The subtle right bend in the tiny human neck and its gesture down to the left betray a deep understanding of Mannerist painting – the hyper-sophisticated affected style that immediately followed the High Renaissance. The creature seems to be aware of its own disproportion, the monstrosity of its own human arm.

羅娜的〈小袋鼠〉是一尊光滑如玻璃的不銹鋼雕塑。風格化的袋鼠身體、微小的人頭和左邊全尺寸的人類前臂。雕塑的尾巴部分筆直伸出，長度約4英尺。微妙的人類頸部微微向右彎曲，手勢指向左側，顯示出對矯飾主義繪畫的深刻理解 — 緊隨文藝復興全盛時期的一種深受影響且極為複雜的風格。這個生物因為畸形的人類手臂，意識到自己的不平衡。

The viewer's response to a work like "Wallaby" (and therefore any of Pondick's works) is a blend of physical revulsion and amazed captivation. The Freudian term for this type of oddity is "the uncanny" – a primary vehicle of Surrealism. To encounter something uncanny is to encounter something that is questionably alive. Moreover, this type of psychological response is palpably physical to the viewer, and the physicality of the viewer's mental response is a basic element to the work of both Pondick and Feintuch.

〈小袋鼠〉（以及羅娜的任何作品）所得到的觀眾反應是：身體上的厭惡和驚訝的吸引。這種奇怪現象，用弗洛伊德的話說為「離奇」 — 超現實主義的主要表達方式之一。當遇到離奇的事物就會讓人懷疑是否真實存在。此外，這種心理反應對觀眾產生明顯生理上的感覺。觀眾從心理反應所產生的生理感受是羅娜和羅伯特作品的基本元素。

And while both are technical virtuosos, Pondick's sense of sculptural finish moves beyond virtually anything in America. Maine museums have plenty of great painting. But we don't have sculpture like Pondick's. We see this in her work across finishes: Her strongest works

include a milk-perfect, forward-facing painted bronze beaver with a human head, a cast rubber splay-legged marmot with the same close eyed head hugging the ground with mismatched human hands for arms, and the bizarre rust-colored “Untitled Animal” that looks like a big cat crawling into being from a discarded human leg.

兩位皆是創作技術高手，尤以羅娜的雕塑在美國幾乎無人能及。緬因州的博物館有許多出色的繪畫作品，但我們卻沒有羅娜那樣的雕塑。她最出色的作品包括一個完美無瑕、朝前的塗漆青銅海狸。這件作品有著緊閉雙眼的人類頭像、海狸的身軀、纖長的尾巴貼著地面，以及不匹配的人類手臂。這個奇異的鐵鏽色「無題動物」，看起來就像是一隻大貓從被丟棄的人類腿中爬出來般。



“Wallaby” by Rona Pondick, 2007-12, stainless steel, 24 by 44 x 10 inches. Photo courtesy of Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London/Paris/Salzburg; Sonnabend Gallery, New York; Zevitas/Marcus Gallery, Los Angeles; and the artist

Feintuch’s abilities appear more easily in his earlier works. “Standing with Newspaper” (2007) features a bald standing man seen in profile with his head bent forward, wearing only (white) shorts, holding a newspaper in his near hand. Behind him a simple table remains only partially painted. Feintuch’s touch with acrylic emulsions rivals that of the best watercolorists. The wall behind and the absent shorts act like the white of watercolor paper. The reductive scene gets complicated with open form. It’s a masterwork of feigned simplicity.

羅伯特的才華早在他的早期作品中展露無遺。〈持報紙站立〉（2007年）描繪了一位禿頭的男子側身站立，頭低低地彎著，只穿著（白色）短褲，手里拿著一份報紙。在他身後，一個簡單的桌子只有部分塗上顏色。羅伯特使用壓克力顏料的技巧可以媲美最優秀的畫家。背後的牆和缺失的短褲如同畫紙的白色。這個簡約的場景因為開放的形式而變得覆雜。這是一件假裝簡單的傑作。

Feintuch's newer work incorporates the sense of volume in a way that activates our physical (rather than just visual) response. We see "Fat Hercules" (2011), for example, from behind. He is bloated, soft-pink from disuse and propped up by a crutch at his side and another at his lower back. Next to the butt crutch is a cudgel Hercules also hides behind his back. The club has a double effect: It reminds us of his offensive ferocity, but also of his personal need to make up for the deficits of his befallen state. As both a potent phallic stand-in and a sign of his increasing impotence, it's a mixed message.

羅伯特的新作引入體積感，以激發觀眾的生理反應。例如，我們從背後看到了〈胖赫拉克勒斯〉（2011年）。他浮腫，因懶散而變得柔軟。一根拐杖撐在他的身邊，另一根撐在他的下背部。在臀部拐杖旁邊，還有一個棍棒，赫拉克勒斯也把它藏在背後。這根棍棒有雙重效應：它讓我們想起他的攻擊性兇猛，但也讓我們想到他個人需要彌補他不幸狀態中的缺陷。一個強有力的陽性代表對比他日益無助的標誌，傳達混合的信息。

Pondick's figures are similarly complex, and she competently spreads out in several directions. Her "Dog" combines a seemingly symmetrical (but nothing here is so simple) and highly-polished yellow stainless steel dog body with a close-to-life-sized human head – a leitmotif of Pondick's work that, with its closed eyes, we should take as a self portrait of Pondick's own head. (It's also the main event in the little "Mouse," among others.) It's part sphinx, part watchdog and part nightmare. The closed eyes hint at the process of casting a person's head, but also at dreams or death, an idea that carries over to Feintuch's most iconic works.

羅娜的雕塑同樣複雜，她巧妙的多方展開。她的「狗」結合了一個看似對稱（但沒那麼簡單）且高度拋光的黃色不銹鋼狗軀體和一個接近真人大小的人頭 — 這是羅娜作品的主要特徵。這些閉著雙眼的頭像都被看作是羅娜的自畫像。（它也是〈老鼠〉等作品中的主要元素。）它既是人面獅身像的一部分，也是看門犬的一部分，又是惡夢的片段。閉著的雙眼的頭像不僅顯示出鑄造過程，也暗示了夢境或死亡的概念，這個概念也延續到羅伯特最具標誌性的作品中。



“Legs Up” by Robert Feintuch, 2013, polymer emulsion on honeycomb panel, 28 by 36 inches. Photo courtesy of Sonnabend Gallery, New York; Zevitas/Marcus Gallery, Los Angeles; and the artist

“Legs Up” (2013) might be Feintuch’s most complete image. Clouds occupy the center of the image, with a soft blue sky above and groundlike clouds below. (He is a cloud master.) Between the two layers of cloud is a sliver of a man’s torso and head with a pointing-fingered hand at the edge. Rhetorical gestures such as this hand were a mainstay of Renaissance painting (think da Vinci’s John the Baptist or God’s gesture toward Adam in Michelangelo’s Sistine Chapel), and they play a key supporting role in both Pondick’s and Feintuch’s work. The legs – two feet with necrotically pole-thin lower legs jutting straight up – of “Legs Up” can read as a symbol of death; and they certainly cannot line up with the torso. Then again, the torso could be a dreaming sleeper, with the hand gesture as a reminder that a dreamer is a type of creative god. The legs, from that perspective, could read in many ways, including as a symbol of someone diving deep into a dream.

〈腿〉（2013年）可能是羅伯特最完整的圖像。雲朵占據了圖像的中心，上面是柔和的藍天，下面是地面狀的雲朵。（他是雲朵的大師。）在兩層雲朵之間是一個男人的軀幹和頭部的一小片，邊緣處有指出的手。這樣的手勢出現在文藝復興繪畫中（想想達·芬奇的〈施洗約翰〉或米開朗基羅的西斯丁教堂中上帝向亞當點頭示意的手勢），它在羅娜和羅伯特的作品中起到了關鍵的支持作用。作品〈腿〉中，有兩隻帶有壞疽的豎直下垂的小腿 — 可以被解讀為死亡的象徵，因此它們當然無法與軀幹對齊。另一方面，軀幹可能是一個夢中人，手勢是提醒夢想者是具有創造性的上帝。從那個角度看，畫中的腿可以有多種解讀，也包括作為深入夢境的象徵。

Nor is this creative god-like perspective unique for “Heads.” Besides Hercules, Feintuch presents himself as the wine-god Bacchus, again from the back (the big flat pink back is a thing; and it’s brilliantly hilarious), alone with his beloved grapes. We see Feintuch as Bacchus again in “Two-Fisted,” but this time with a more direct reference to Mannerists like Michelangelo (yup), with a deliciously affected left hand (curved fingers and matching gestures). “Two-Fisted,” as well, is a testament to Feintuch’s ability with the brush. The left hand is thrown into relief by the figure’s flat, chair-like back, and it’s complemented by his scratchy swaths of salt-and-pepper hair – an extraordinary passage of painting.

這種上帝創造性般的視角在〈頭〉中並不是唯一。除了赫拉克里斯外，羅伯特還將自己變成葡萄酒神巴克斯，同樣是從背後（那塊大而平的粉紅色背部是一個元素，而且非常幽默），與心愛的葡萄獨處。在〈雙拳〉中我們再次看到羅伯特扮演巴克斯，但這次更直接地參照了像米開朗基羅（是的）這樣的矯飾主義，具有美妙的左手姿勢（彎曲的手指和相配的手勢）。〈雙拳〉也證明了羅伯特運用畫筆的能力。左手在人物扁平像椅子一樣的背部，顯得格外突出，與他灰白相間粗糙的頭髮形成對比——這無疑是一幅非常出色的繪畫。

“Heads” is truly a remarkable exhibition on many levels. Feintuch and Pondick are both notably spare, which adds a sense of clarity. Their work digs deep in art history (while the nods are to the Mannerists, the true shadow is cast by the late Philip Guston), but since the work elicits a physical response in the viewer, it’s accessible to anyone. The work is dazzling from a technical perspective (a little star power doesn’t hurt), and it is gorgeously displayed in the museum’s handsome main gallery.

在許多層面上，本次展覽非常出色。羅伯特和羅娜都以著稱的簡潔為展覽增添了清晰感。他們的作品深入探討了藝術史（儘管是向矯飾主義致敬，但菲利普·古斯頓的影子是才是隨處可見），這些作品是平易近人的。從技術角度來看，這些作品的在博物館的主展廳中得到相應精美的展示。

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