

# Matthew Brown

## Fin Simonetti

*Hardening*

712 N La Brea Ave

November 18, 2023–January 13, 2024

Fin Simonetti's second solo exhibition at Matthew Brown, *Hardening*, is a study of affect theory in the key of sculpture through two distinct but interconnected bodies of work. The pair of conical stone sculptures (*Hardening 1 & 2*, 2023), hand-carved from orange honeycomb calcite and black Portoro marble, are a formal composite of two distinct high-low symbols of authority that exist in public space: the Gothic spire and traffic cones. Meanwhile, a series of modular black steel fencing winds through the gallery, regulating movement by partitioning and splicing space to create the architectural scaffolding for the artist's love-lock bunny sculptures (*Hardening 4–10*, 2023), which are made by shearing fired ceramic with stone carving rasps, combined with steel and polyurethane and coated in industrial chrome.

Simonetti's bunnies are ravaged like half-eaten game or a Velveteen Rabbit maimed by rough play—some are missing an ear, all are missing a leg. Thoroughly culturally metabolized, the bunny is a highly flexible symbol, whose ubiquity precipitates a loss of specificity. Simonetti's bunny forms are hybrids of two disparate poles of reference: in one vein, anthropomorphized comfort objects (Disney's *Fantasia*, stuffed animals, and chew toys), and in the other, semi-intact bodies rendered for consumption (Peking duck, pigs on a spit, rotisserie chicken). Combined, they negate each other, while pointing to the absence at the center: the actual animal. Processed through both an anthropomorphized (closer to humans) and abstracted (closer to object) lens, they reveal the hubris of human double-think, which imbues more or less sentience, depending on the need, to that which is deemed "other."

*Hardening* plays out in the recursive note, one in which the syncopations, remixes, and rhythms of the artist's repetitions of form suggest the messy ambiguities of the boundaries that regulate and demarcate the private or public, safety or threat. While a fence can literally block movement and flow, drivers slow down in response to traffic cones not because they are physically prevented from acting otherwise, but because they unconsciously adhere to a signal of restricted access. Love locks articulate a powerful private wish within the realm of the public and the real, serving as prosthetics to human fantasy. And guard dogs and talons, which reappear in the conical sculptures as a longstanding motif of the artist's, further denote the human drive towards domination and possession, while symbolically linking the two bodies of work. Here, Simonetti gestures and superposes the suffusion of materials, patterns, and paradoxes of these individual and social processes, reminding us that thrones have always tottered on fragile bases.

Text by Hiji Nam

Fin Simonetti (b. 1985, Vancouver, British Columbia) is a Canadian artist and musician based in New York. Simonetti received her BFA from the Ontario College of Art and Design in 2009.

Recent solo exhibitions include *Our Denomination*, Cooper Cole, Toronto, Canada (2022); *My Volition*, Matthew Brown, Los Angeles (2021); *Fin Simonetti: An Appeal to Heaven*, alongside Louise Bourgeois and Chris Currei, Esker Foundation, Calgary, Canada (2021); *Head Gusset*, Cooper Cole, Toronto (2019); *Pledge*, Company Gallery, New York (2019); *Pastoral Emergency*, SIGNAL, New York (2018); *LIFEMORTS*, Interstate Projects, New York (2017); and *IS PATH WARM?*, Good Weather, Little Rock, AK (2017).

Group exhibitions include *Drawings by Sculptors*, Helena Anrather, New York (2023); *Second Best Scenario*, Francesca Minini, Milan (2022); *Summer Nights*, curated by Kahil Irving, Canada, New York (2022); *Summer Days*, curated by Kahil Irving, Klaus von Nichtssagend, New York (2022); *Concrete Spiritual*, Morán Morán, Los Angeles (2022); *Recent Sculpture*, Matthew Brown, Los Angeles (2022); *Realism of the Game*, Tranzit, Bucharest, Romania (2021); *Material Conditions*, Matthew Brown, Los Angeles (2020); *To dream a man*, Clima, Milan (2020); *Har-*

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*vest*, curated by Bob Linder, Slash Art, San Francisco (2020); *Dog Days*, Clearing, New York (2019); *New Moon*, Hotel Art Pavilion, New York (2019); *Cerrajería*, Lock Up International, Mexico City (2018); *Eye to Eye*, Arsenal Contemporary, New York (2018); *Altered*, Company Gallery, New York (2018); *Cerrajería*, Lock Up International, Mexico City (2018); *At the End of the Game*, Alyssa Davis Gallery, New York (2018); *Pleasure Over Matter*, The Space Company, San Francisco (2018); *Fear Faire*, Marinaro, New York (2018); *The Belly & the Members*, MX Gallery, New York (2018); *Paperweights*, Fisher Parrish, New York (2017); and *Industry Woman*, MoMA PS1, New York (2016), among others.

Simonetti was artist-in-residence at Otion Front Studios, Vermont Studio Center, Sunoco Design Park, and HALO HALO. Recent projects include a book with Rita Ackermann published by Innen/Nieves, and her debut album ICE PIX on Hausu Mountain, 2017.

Her sophomore album *Cleats* will be released by Hausu Mountain in the spring of 2024.